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**SOCIAL CAPITAL, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE OF
LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN AZERBAIJAN**

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Abstract: Eight years of municipalities in Azerbaijan reflect lacking of social capital in communities. We will argue that in municipal reform particular attention should be paid to social capital building and civic engagement in the communities since this an integral step in guaranteeing successful reform of local self-government, as well as political stability and economic progress in the country.

Key words: social capital, civil society, civic engagement, performance of local self-government, community, development.

INTRODUCTION

Eight years of municipal reform in Azerbaijan reflect lacking of social capital in communities. Without building social capital, achieving effectiveness of governance, as well as political stability and economic progress in the country appears bleak.

This paper seeks to study factors such as set of informal values, tolerance, social trust, norms and networks of voluntary associations which contribute to social capital formation within the communities of Azerbaijan. As a way of exploring the problem, we have focused on one specific area of governance – the construction of infrastructural services (i.e. roads, housing and communal services, water supply, and sewage) in Baku, the capital of the country, and in Khachmaz and Masalli, districts of Azerbaijan. The point is to highlight and clarify of the effectiveness of municipal governments in different communities of Azerbaijan from the standpoint of civic engagement and its role in this process.

This paper will argue that in municipal reform, particular attention should be paid to social capital building in the communities since this an integral step in guaranteeing successful reform of local self-government.

The research is focused on attempting to answer two questions. First, what is the role of social capital in civic engagement in three separate municipalities in Azerbaijan: Baku, Khachmaz and Masalli? Second, how are the norms and networks of civic engagement linked to the quality of public life and the performance of local government?

The research hypothesis is the following: weak social relations (low levels of mutual aid, cooperation and trust) and insufficient community building skills among the people (getting together to resolve common problems) are the main factors contributing to explaining weak civil engagement in Azerbaijan.

Methodology and methods of research

A questionnaire survey was distributed territorially to achieve an effective sampling. The survey covered communities in Baku (the capital of the country), Khachmaz (a district in the northern part of the country) and Masalli (a district in the south of Azerbaijan). Within each district, we took a sample of different precincts. The Central Election Commission provided the lists of all precincts.

To ensure systematic random sampling, surveys were distributed between four precincts from three districts of Baku (totally 12 precincts from Yasamal, Binaqadi and Surakhani) and per 5 precincts each from the districts of Khachmaz (Khachmaz city, Mukhtadir, Mushkur, Charkhi and Gobugiraq municipalities) and Masalli (Sharafa, Kalbakhuseynli, Chakhirli, Khirmandali and Bina-Khodjavar municipalities).

The sample size for each district is distributed equally between each of its selected precincts. One hundred respondents were surveyed in Baku, (8-9 respondents in each precinct), in Khachmaz – (20 respondents in each precinct) and in Masalli – (20 respondents in each precinct) for a total of 300 respondents within the communities.

The list of eligible voters by district, which is available from the corresponding Precinct Election Commission, provided the sampling frame. Respondents were chosen from the list by systematic method. If no one was in one house, the interviewers moved to the neighbouring family. A pilot study was conducted to test and ensure the quality and validity of the survey. The questionnaire consists of formal, standardized questions focusing on important aspects of the topic being studied.

Within this study we have collected and analyzed data on social contacts and community building. To measure social contacts we have looked into the problems of trust, mutual aid and reciprocity, and tolerance within the community. To measure community building we have

looked into the citizens' participation in community projects and involvement in decision-making within their municipalities.

To achieve high efficiency we have conducted qualitative research – focus groups and targeted interviews before the mass surveys were distributed in order to refine our survey and to more closely identify factors of social capital formation which are relevant to local infrastructural issues.

We conducted focus group research three times in three different places. The first focus group took place in Baku among university professors and scholars; the second and third focus groups took place in Khachmaz and Masalli among a heterogeneous group of people.

We also interviewed several experts on local government including representatives of government and non-government organizations as well as members of some municipalities and have also analyzed the major laws and statistical data related to the problem being studied.

To compose our questionnaire we used the materials from the work: Franke, Sandra. September, 2005. *Measurement of Social Capital. Reference Document for Public Policy Research, Development, and Evaluation. Policy Research Initiative Project: Social Capital as a Policy Tool.*

The demographics of the respondents to the survey are as follows: in Baku, 56% male, 44% female. In Khachmaz, 87% male and 13 % female and 68% male and 32 % female in Masalli. The majority of the respondents were between 30 – 60 years old.

The percentage of respondents who are Azerbaijani in Baku was 96%. In Khachmaz, 80% were Azerbaijani and 92% in Masalli. The rest of the respondents were representative of minority nationalities living in Azerbaijan: Lezghins, Meskheti -Turks, Talish and others.

The overwhelming majority of respondents were people with secondary and higher education; in Baku - 50% and 39%, in Khachmaz - 61% and 28 % and in Masalli - 87% and 10%.

On a social position, the significant majority of respondents in Baku were distributed as representatives of intelligentsia (35%), workers (31%) and employees (26%), in Khachmaz - workers (34%), representatives of intelligentsia (24%) and peasants (19 %), and in Masalli - workers (42%) and peasants (38%) as Table 1 illustrates.

The respondents' social position

Table 1

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Workers	31	34	42
Peasants	5	19	38
Entrepreneurs	3	4	6
Intelligentsia	35	24	8
Employees	26	19	6

Table two shows that the overwhelming majority of respondents have lived in their in their territory for 10 years or more.

The data on respondents on the period of residing in the given territory

Table 2

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
For 5 years	6	3	4
6-10 years	11	3	19
11-15 years	20	9	28
16-20 years	12	12	19
21-25 years	13	10	23
26 - 30 years	5	63	7

According to our survey, the monthly income per family member in Baku was 50 manat* for 55 % of respondents and 51-100 manat for 23 % of respondents. In Khachmaz and in Masalli this indicator was 50 manat for 86 % and 92 % of respondents. This information was the result of asking direct questions regarding the income of each respondent. Apparently, poorest among the respondents are inhabitants of Masalli, and then Khachmaz. However we did not identify any relationship between the incomes of the population and their civil participation in communities.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC OF MUNICIPALITIES IN AZERBAIJAN

Since declaring of its independence, the Azerbaijan Republic pursues policies of a legal state and regards civil society building as the main strategic task confronting the country. The municipality is one of the most important institutes of a civil society. Creation of a viable local government is seen as the most urgent problem to the establishment and development of democratic process, the government's ability to effectively address approach to the needs of the people and to stimulate an efficient economy.

The precedents of a comprehensive system of local government existed during various periods of Azerbaijan's history. Under the USSR, the local government was exercised through local soviets and executive committees (Mamedova et al. 2002, 375). The new Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic which was adopted on 12 December, 1995, became the primary basis for the establishment of local self-government in the country. One of the sections of the Constitution is completely devoted to municipalities and explains in detail the problems of local self-government. The so-called Transitive Positions of the Constitution had established biennial term for creation the institute of local self-government in Azerbaijan. Officially it was explained, first, with the lack of such structure in a Soviet period and, second, with the impreparation of the citizens of republic to perception the new institutions of local self-government. However, there was another problem: within the established political system in the country the executive

* 1 Azeri manat=\$1.2 (the information on August 1, 2007)

authority actually dominated over other branches of authority and did not want to share its comprehensive power for the sake of reduction of its role in the political establishment of the republic.

In 1995, Milli Mejlis, the parliament of the country, has created the standing commission on local self-government for preparation of a package of appropriate laws. The campaign for creation of municipalities actually began after July 1999 when The Law on Municipal Elections and The Law on the Status of Municipalities were adopted.

The holding of democratic municipal elections was one of the requirements of the Council of Europe in order for Azerbaijan to be accepted as a member. The first municipal elections took place on December 12, 1999 and the newly elected local governments started their activity in January, 2000.

According to Articles 124 and 142 of the Azerbaijan Constitution, local government is carried out both through local bodies of the state administration, and the municipal government. At the same time, questions exist in the interpretation of the constitution with regards to the definition of the status of municipalities, division of powers between municipalities and state bodies, etc. (Tofiqli 2007)

According to The Law on Municipalities, municipalities operate autonomously and separately from the system of state administration. Municipalities and the state administration should cooperate in the preparation and realization of local programs. Appropriate laws and the legislation in both these areas are continuously developing*.

The administrative-territorial division of Azerbaijan, to a significant degree, is saved from the Soviet era and consists of villages, settlements, districts and cities. These units are a basis for definition of municipal territories in The Law on Municipal Territory and Lands. Municipalities have been established in villages, settlements and cities rather than on a regional basis.

The municipality has one-tier structure. Each municipality is elected for 5 years, operates as an independent legal unit, not recognizing either a vertical, or a horizontal subordination. Cities can be subdivided into administrative and territorial units where each unit includes in itself separate municipalities.

In Azerbaijan, the presence of numerous municipalities and the one-tier system of municipalities is a barrier to development of local self-government. At the time of municipal elections in December, 1999, there were established 2,667 municipalities in the country while at the time of municipal elections in 2004 that number had risen to 2,735. However, when comparing Azerbaijan with countries such as Sweden or Poland, their quantity of municipalities

* Up today there were adopted 20 laws regulating the activity of municipalities.

is much smaller and in addition they use a multi-tier system of municipalities. Transitioning to a two or three-tier system would create a formal equality among the municipalities and enable them to solve local problems more efficiently and effectively.

Analysis of the Azerbaijan legislation shows that the reforms of local government are based on the decentralization of state authority. The existing legislation provides opportunities for the independence of bodies of local self-government at all levels and there is a general tendency to transfer the greater authority to municipalities (*Azerbaijan belediyyeleri: imkan ve perspektivler* 2003, 18).

There is a Council of Local Self-government in the administration of the President for the regulation of the activity of municipalities. There is also a Center for Work with Municipalities at the Ministry of Justice which is designed to maintain the administrative control over the municipalities and the implementation of orders and regulations issued by the state bodies. This is a process of institutionalization of national associations uniting the city, settlement and the rural municipalities, incorporated in six associations.

SOCIAL CAPITAL IN COMMUNITIES

Civil society is a sphere of society which consists of the voluntary associations and the organizations (different kinds of foundations, schools, churches, public associations, etc.) that are situated outside the boundaries of the market and the state. With their help, citizens establish networks of reciprocity. These organizations connect people; help them establish trust and mutual understanding on the basis of altruism without any obligation to each other. This field of activity, services and the associations created by a civil society forms a source for social capital (Sandra 2005, 1; Barber 1997, 24-30; Heinrich 2004).

Although there are a great number of definitions of the concept “social capital,” the majority of them are connected to problems of democracy, political participation and cooperation. Even in the 19th century thinkers such as James Madison (“The Federalist Papers”), Alexis de Tocqueville (“Democracy in America”), John Dewey (“The School and Society”) and others investigating the relationship between the associative life and democracy, have included some aspects of a social life where they expressed ideas similar to the social capital concept.

The first known use of “social capital” as a concept was by L. J. Hannifan, the state supervisor of rural schools in West Virginia in the USA in 1916. He used this idea to emphasize the importance of community involvement in the creation of successful schools (Putnam 2000, 19). Later on, Pierre Bourdieu (1972), by distinguishing between culture, economy and society, defines social capital as “the aggregate of resources” linked to institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. He uses the concept of social capital to demonstrate how

people gain access to powerful positions through direct or indirect social connections (Bourdieu 1983, 249).

In the late 1990s this term gains popularity due to a research program by the World Bank and R. Putnam's well-known works. In particular, R. Putnam tries to describe the social capital as the producer of “civil participation” and the creator of healthy relations within the community. In the book “Bowling Alone” R. Putnam argues that social capital is connected as to the recent decline of political participation in America (because of the low level of trust to the government), and as the growing tendency to a more conservative, right-wing policy. The social capital of a society can be measured by the sum of trust and “reciprocity” in a community between individuals. Hence we can talk about two main components of social capital: “bonding social capital” which he refers to social connections between homogeneous groups of people and the “bridging social capital” which he considers as the social connections among heterogeneous social groups.

James Coleman in his work “The Basis of the Social Theory” (1990) theoretically defined this concept, noting that social capital is some kind of potential for mutual trust and the mutual aid, purposefully formed in interpersonal space (Shveri 1966, 32).

According to Francis Fukuyama, the social capital is a certain set of informal values and norms shared by group members for supporting cooperation between them (Fukuyama 1999).

Thus, social capital is similarly defined by academic scientists, on the one hand, as civic participation, and, on the other hand, as the networks of cooperation and solidarity (Sandra 2005).

In this article, we understand social capital as a certain set of informal values, tolerance, social trust, norms and networks of voluntary associations that permit people to coordinate and cooperate for mutual benefit.

In the former USSR, even before the building of communism, there were weak civil traditions. After the Bolshevik revolution the Communist Party tried to abuse even the limited stock of social capital, undermining all forms of horizontal connections for the benefit of vertical connections between the party-state and the individual. Practically all civic participation and allocation of public services through youth and female organizations, trade unions, sport and cultural societies was strictly supervised by the state structures (Sattarov et al. 2007, 19). The result is that post-Soviet societies are deprived of both mutual trust between people and a civil society.

The initial unit of a civil society, as we know, is the person that constitutes the various communities and groups. Facing the necessary difficulties of a transitional period (that is not yet finished in Azerbaijan) people spend their energy on individual survival instead of finding and

understanding group interests. Today in Azerbaijan, the most widespread social type has become an individual who is actually disconnected from the control of their own environment, with its partially destroyed traditions and norms, and is instead focused on their own aspirations and their own family.

The connection to family problems in the condition of weak ‘organic’ public relations gives way to increasingly individualistic, socially irresponsible and consumptive behaviour. In the West, both the free individual and public relations are based on skills of mutual trust (known as “social capital” (R. Putnam)) constitute foundations of a civil society. Nevertheless, the post-Soviet type of individualism generates “an immoral familism” (term used by E. Benfield, American researcher), which means the incapacity of an individual to coordinate the interests of his/her own and his/her “circle” with the interests of a society as a whole. Hence we can state that the Azerbaijan society, in its present condition, is weakly structured, amorphous and atomized, where the individual consumer institutions prevail (Hasanov 2003, 205).

That proves to be true also of our empirical data. In the regions we investigated, the social capital level is low. To the question, “If you have money and someone asks you to borrow, to whom would you prefer to give it?” the majority of respondents have preferred members of their family and close relatives. Neighbors and comrades at work are left behind (Table 3).

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
“If you have money and someone asks you to borrow, to whom would you prefer to give it?”
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 3

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
To members of my own family	32	47	51
To close relatives	28	19	20
To the closest friends	13	15	17
To the closest neighbor	14	13	10
To the closest comrade at work	2	2	1
To nobody	11	4	1

Relative isolation in his/her world (individual and family) and weak social ties are reflected in how respondents prefer to spend their spare time. The majority of them prefer a narrow family circle to wide public relations (Table 4).

**How respondents spend their spare time
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 4

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Read newspapers	6	16	31
Read books	28	12	14
Spend my time with family	32	36	22
I go to coffee-house/ <i>chaykhana</i>	6	11	9
Spend my time with friends	3	8	6
Watch TV	12	5	8
Work on the Internet	1	0	0

Engaged in a hobby	3	1	0
Go in for sports	0	0	5
Spend my time with the neighbors	3	0	0
Visit to my relatives	2	0	0
Do my homework	4	4	1
Work on my household	0	7	4

As Robert Putnam notes, "strong" interpersonal ties (such as family-relative and intimate-friendly) are less important, than "weak" ties (such as acquaintances or memberships in secondary groups) which, in turn, rally a community and intensify collective action (Putnam 1993, 175). Strong enough family/relative relations are the reason for an absence of the wide, generalized social trust outside family. The narrow 'radius of trust' is characteristic for them. Intra-group solidarity limits the ability of group members to cooperate with people that are placed outside the group (Rajab et al. 2007, 19).

The low trust that respondents feel in relation to other people is reflected in their answer to a question concerning trust of other people. Thirty percent of respondents in Baku, 47% in Khachmaz and 37% in Masalli responded that "people can be trusted", whereas 70% of respondents in Baku, 53% in Khachmaz and 63% in Masalli consider that "In relations with people it is necessary to be cautious" (Table 5).

**Answer distribution of respondents on trust to people
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 5

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
People can be trusted	30	47	37
In relations with people it is necessary to be cautious	70	53	63

These ideas prove the data of the research, which had been carried out from May, 2004 to November, 2006 in Azerbaijan, in the Civil Society Index Report for Azerbaijan, coordinated by the wider international Program of CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation (which has been applied in 50 countries). In a scale measuring the indicators of a socio-cultural context in Azerbaijan between "0" (the lowest rating) and "3" (the highest rating), such data as "trust" has received "1" but "tolerance" has received "2". According to this research, only 24% of respondents believe that it is possible to trust the majority of people, whereas 58% feel "it is necessary to be cautious in relations with people". At the same time 18% of respondents do not know how to answer this question (Sattarov et al. 2007, 19).

The information given in the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of the World on interpersonal trust in Azerbaijan is also interesting for our investigation. This map, which measures all major areas of human concern (religious, social life, etc.), is designed on the basis of two dimensions: (1) traditional/secular-rational and (2) survival/self-expression values. Factor scores here are between "-2" (very low) and "2" (very high). In the Cultural Map, Azerbaijan along with neighboring Armenia and Georgia is placed among the countries with "traditional

values” (with a score of – “-0.3”) and “survival values” (with a score of – “-1.5”). According to this map, societies “which rank high on self-expression values also tend to rank high on interpersonal trust” (World Values Survey).

Therefore, in Azerbaijan, which insignificantly differs from other post-Soviet republics, public mistrust is widely spread. The previous experience with a totalitarian regime and “a socialist way of life” has left many people upset and it, in any measure, contributes to a high level of interpersonal mistrust in Azerbaijan society.

However, we could also reveal the positive aspects which are able to promote development of the social capital. For instance, it has been found that residing in close areas with people for prolonged periods in a certain territory helps them know each other better which in turn causes good relations between each other that positively influence their lives and labor activity (Table 6) and as a result, the territory on which they live, is considered their native lands (Table 7).

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
“Do you agree that good relations between people influence their life and labor activity?”
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 6

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	53	89	72
No	23	3	13
It is difficult to say	24	8	15

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
“In what degree do you consider the territory on which you your native live?”
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 7

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
This territory is native for me	64	92	66
Here I feel not bad	30	2	16
This territory is alien for me	6	6	18

Table 8 shows more survey data, that 39% of respondents in Baku, 92% in Khachmaz and 70% in Masalli believe that residing near the same people for a long time has a positive influence on the activities of the local municipality.

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
“Does sharing a close residence and knowing the people for a long time positively influence the activities of the local municipality?”**

Table 8

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	39	92	70
No	34	4	12
It is difficult to say	27	4	18

The Azerbaijan society is characterized as having a high level of tolerance. Actually, tolerance is the widely accepted norm and there are very few problems with xenophobia and intolerance in relation to any national/ethnic or religious groups. As is shown in Table 9, a very

insignificant quantity of respondents would express a xenophobic attitude to persons of another culture who have moved near to them (in Baku - 11 %, in Khachmaz - 3 % and in Masalli - 9 %).

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
“What would be your attitude to a person or family who has moved into your
neighborhood?”**

Table 9

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Would express an alien attitude to them	11	3	9
Would be neutral in relation to them	31	10	34
Would like to help them	20	24	20
Would be in good relations with them	38	63	37

As John Dewey writes, “...Democracy must begin at home and its home is the neighborly community”. Here the citizens participate in dialogues and, get social and civil skills which have crucial importance for reform and the organizations of society (Putnam 2000, 337).

Voluntary associations and social networks of a civil society, i.e. the social capital, make contributions to democracy as "external" contributors (influencing the state), as well as "internal" contributors (influential participants of associations) (Putnam 2000, 338). The absence of associational life or “a high level of the organization” may become a deterrent to both economic and political development of a majority of the countries of the world (Banfield 1958, 85). “Internal” associations represent a necessary precondition for effective self-government. Networks of civil participation, such as neighborhood associations, cooperatives, mass parties, etc. represent the horizontal form of interaction. Vertical networks of civil participation cannot support social trust and cooperation (Putnam 1993, 173). Performance of the government is directly connected with the civic awareness of the region (Putnam 1993, 38). As Amy Gutmann notes, “...without access to an association ... we have a very limited ability to be heard by many other people or to influence the political process” (Putnam 2000, 338).

For the last two decades, the III sector in the republic tried to garner more legitimacy and respect in the public. Adopted on 6 October 2000, The Law on NGOs promoted the institutionalization and the improvement of NGO activity. Having received the same legal status, as business structures and state agencies, NGOs began to implement a wider variety of projects in the regions. Azerbaijan NGOs can achieve significant results in the building of the social capital by contributing to the growth of trust, tolerance and spiritedness in a society.

In this respect, it is necessary to talk about the relationship between NGOs and the municipalities. As we have learned through several queries, such cooperation is achieved mainly because of grants. There is a great need for municipality participation in NGO projects. NGOs form projects and municipalities implement them. Cooperation between NGOs and municipalities also includes the trainings of both people among the population as well as municipality employees. For example, in interview with us, Vice-Chairman of Baladjari

municipality (Binagadi district of Baku) Nazir Iskanderov said, “In our territory the NGO activity is felt. For example, we participate almost in all discussions of Association for the Support of Civil Society. When the country is visited by members of the Council of Europe, round tables are organized where we are invited and where we participate in discussions”.* Another kind of cooperation is the search for donor organizations for the realization of concrete work among the population within a municipality. For example, Masalli district’s Chahirli municipality works with one of the foreign NGOs (USA) and is currently implementing three projects. In one particular project, a citizen can identify a need and receive 5 % from the common share and will provide the physical help on 50 % for the realization of the work, with the donor organization providing the rest. An example is a water pipe from an artesian well to a village 2.5 km away has been constructed with the help of the donor organization and members of the community.**

One of the problems of cooperation between NGOs, and municipalities and involving the communities to these projects is the fact that NGOs themselves choose the municipalities for cooperation. And it is necessary that the projects of the NGOs coincide with the desires and opportunities of the municipalities. In Azerbaijan the National Assembly of municipalities was created acts as a bridge to help attain the cooperation of municipalities with NGOs. It is also important to note a statement made in response to a question regarding the cooperation of municipalities with the National Assembly of NGO: while the head of NGO or a member of municipality will spread any information, the National Assembly will do it very quickly and qualitatively.

Despite obvious positive moments, the civil society organizations in Azerbaijan operate passively in sense of development and increase in potential of local communities. Examples of their creation of necessary conditions for resolving the common problems at the community level are very insignificant. This is because of a number of reasons: absence of their ability to mobilize the population on public performance issues, inability to effectively and qualitatively address social problems and so on.

In Azerbaijan, there are 2,500 NGOs listed, 1300 of which are registered, with only 150 of them today operating effectively (Mamedova et al. 2002, 385). The majority of NGOs are concentrated in the big cities, especially in Baku. The prevalence of so many civil society organizations in Baku can be in part explained by that fact that it is the capital and that staffs and offices of the majority of the organizations working on a national level wish to work there. There are more than 600 regional branches of NGOs located in Baku and only 280 NGOs operating in

* The participant of the focus group M. Askerova was interviewed on August 9, 2007 in Baku.

** Interviewed (in the focus group) on August 28, 2007 in Masalli.

the regions of the country (*Azerbaijan National Non-Governmental Organizations Forum 2003*, 23).

Citizen membership of in NGOs and their participation in joint projects conducted by both the municipality and NGOs remain very low. To the question, “Are you a member of any public organization?” 13% answered positively in the capital, 9% in Khachmaz and 31% in Masalli (Table 10).*

**Respondents who are members of associations
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 10

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	13	9	31
No	87	91	69

In joint projects conducted by the municipality and NGOs 13% of respondents participated in Baku, 26% in Khachmaz and 51 % in Masalli (Table 11).

**Participation of respondents in projects with local municipality or NGO
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 11

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	13	26	51
No	87	74	49

As has been discussed, one of the essential features of the social capital is altruism, philanthropy. In Azerbaijan philanthropy had its roots before the construction of communism.** However, it was almost reduced to nothing after the establishment of the authority of the Soviets. Today, with the development of a market economy, these traditions revive again.

However, there are problems which can be subdivided into three parts: legal, socio-psychological and organizational. First, the absence of a law about philanthropic or charitable activities, on the one hand, and tax privileges on the other hand, result in a decrease of motivation for people to make individual donations. Donors do not wish to give money when a significant portion goes toward taxes instead of investment in socially beneficial programs or projects. Not last role in it perform also such factors, as fear for the excessive information on sources of the incomes and bureaucratic red tape, connected with official registration of documents for planned work. The second aspect is consists of the fact that solvent people are engaged in charity under their own initiative, not testing special needs in advertising. Here a different other aspect of the problem arises: they are willing to invest money when they know the chairman of municipality or its members personally. Finally, it is necessary to speak about the

* To the same question of the aforementioned CIVICUS project has answered in general 21% of respondents that is insignificantly differs from our data.

** Private philanthropy in Azerbaijan emerged in the late of 19th and early 20th centuries. The reason for it was the so called ‘oil boom’ that helped oil magnates H. Z. Tagiyev, M. Nagiyev, M. Mukhtarov, Sh. Asadullayev and others to maintain a system of support in the fields of education, health protection and culture. They also helped poor people and sent talented youth to leading European countries to obtain education.

organizational aspect: the inability and inexperience of municipalities to build relationships with possible donors. The philanthropist rarely transfers money to the budget of a municipality, preferring to provide the help directly, without intermediaries (executive authority or the government of municipality). As Matanat Askerova, the senior lecturer of the Legal Education Center at the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan Republic, argues, municipalities should create favorable conditions for philanthropists to provide assistance. For example, they can assist in carrying out legal registration, providing labor assistance and other methods. Another example is if the philanthropist wishes to build road or a water pipe for a large sum of money. Without official registration it is difficult to do so. Municipal help here can be very useful. In an article about the budgets of municipalities there is a discussion on other methods of assistance. The point made is to allow such people as philanthropists to be involved in the process of drawing up the municipal budget and show their contributions in the budget. In the author's opinion, they can be made the "honorary members" of the municipality: the name and the work done by the philanthropist in this instance will receive due credit. This method is practiced in Turkey and also in Germany.*

We faced such a practice in one of the municipalities during our research. As we were informed by chairman of Chahirli municipality in Masalli Zijafat Mamedov,** they confer the rank of "honorable citizen" to the most distinguished people of their municipality. In conferring this rank, they take into account the degree of participation of the person in charities and in the done for the benefit of the villages. Currently, this rank it is awarded to three inhabitants of the village. One of them is a businessman. At the request of representatives of local municipality, he provided free-of-charge tents and inventory for wedding parties of deprived people. Another person supervised over this village and built social objects for fellow-villagers for a long time. Now he also participates in many other actions benefiting the whole community.

However, despite of all this, of the awareness of respondents to the actions charities and philanthropists remains very low. To the question "Are you informed on material aid of any philanthropist to the local municipality?" in Baku, 12% of respondents answered "yes," while the results was 41% from Khachmaz and 52% from Masalli (Table 12).

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
"Are you informed on material aid of any philanthropist to the local municipality?"
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 12

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	12	41	52
No	88	59	48

* The participant of the focus group M. Askerova was interviewed on August 9, 2007 in Baku.

** An interview is taken in the focus group on August 28, 2007 in Masalli.

Generalizing charities in municipalities, it is possible to come to the following conclusions: philanthropy in communities, as a whole, is weakly developed and is explained by objective and subjective reasons; philanthropy in districts is developed more than in the capital city of Baku, and finally, people in the districts are more aware of who is involved in charity than those in the capital.

PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF CIVIL PARTICIPATION

To that, municipalities yet have not proved themselves as the valid institutions of local government it is possible to add also low civic activity at two municipal elections which were held in 1999 and 2004. In result, in the head of many municipalities there were not those whom people would like to see there. The majority of the elected heads of municipalities actually were the candidates, supported by existing executive authority and consequently unable to operate independently (Mamedova et al. 2002, 396).

From here the important question is to gauge the knowledge of respondents about the members of their municipality. The lowest index here is in the capital: 82% of respondents do not have any information on members of the municipality. In this respect, the districts look better: in Masalli, 56% of respondents have certain knowledge, and 28% have wider information on members of municipality. These parameters in Khachmaz constitute accordingly 15% and 30% (Table 13).

Degree of knowledge of respondents about members of local municipality (In percentage to number of interrogated)

Table 13

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
I do not possess any information	82	11	1
I possess insignificant information	7	2	15
I possess the certain information	3	15	56
I possess the common information	2	30	28
I possess the wide information	6	0	0

What, in opinion of respondents, is the main thing for the improvement of work of the municipality? In all regions, respondents consider the holding of fair elections as most important as is shown in Table 14. In Baku it is considered so by 52% of respondents, in Masalli - 45%, and in Khachmaz - 34%. The next highest percentages of answers went to: correct personnel selection (in Baku - 18%), improvement of financial opportunities of municipalities (in Khachmaz - 19 %) and providing investment with additional powers to the of municipalities (in Masalli - 16%).

Answer distribution of respondents to the question “What measures, to your opinion, should be carried out for improvement of work of municipalities? » (In percentage to number of interrogated)

Table 14

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Fair elections should be hold	52	34	45
Correct personnel selection should be carried out	18	17	15
It is necessary to involve the population more closely in self-government	9	17	12
Work of municipalities should be constructed on a transparent basis	4	4	5
Financial opportunities of municipalities should be increased	5	19	4
It is necessary to give additional powers to municipalities	1	7	16
It is necessary to pass new laws in the field of functioning of the municipalities	6	2	1
It is necessary to improve the already existing laws in the field of functioning of the municipalities	2	0	1
Other answers	3	0	1

Further, we have decided to find out the degree of knowledge of the respondents about the work and kinds of work carried out by their local municipality in the sphere of infrastructure. Respondents in Khachmaz and Masalli are well aware of the work done by the local municipalities, both at 85%, while in Baku, the degree of knowledge is much lower, at 20% (Table 15).

**Knowledge of respondents of the work done by local municipality
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 15

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	20	85	85
No	80	15	15

In the days of the Soviet Union, the rendering of public services was a prerogative of the state. Now, in Azerbaijan, now these functions are carried out by the state, municipalities and in a limited amount, the private sector. In The Law on the Status of Municipalities it is marked that municipalities are responsible for overseeing the important issues of local economic and social development and the protection of an environment that meet the needs and expectations of the community. They should not duplicate the works carried out or planned for completion by the state organizations and state programs.

The state continues to be in the lead in realization of public services since it has existing structures and financial resources for this purpose. According to The Law on the Status of Municipalities they can adopt programs on providing public services and create municipal units for their realization in the following areas: education, culture, public health services, communication, public catering, etc. They have a full autonomy in defining what public services are.

If one considers that the primary goal of municipalities is the rendering of local services, currently very few municipalities operate with a task in view. In the opinion of participants from three focus groups which have been carried out by us in Baku, Khachmaz and Masalli, it is difficult to find a municipality which created this sphere of service and renders services to the population, although in the Republic there are also exemplary municipalities (for example, Yasamal municipality in Baku). Municipalities do not have the necessary resources for the correction of infrastructural problems. Rather, they experiment on otherwise simple and inexpensive tasks such as the purchase of garbage machines and installation of garbage boxes, works to improve the territory, the building of parks, and public benches, etc. The state began to transfer a part of the services in the housing field as well as other services to the municipalities. If municipalities continue to provide these services at a quality level, all services related to housing and the other municipal services, currently carried out by the state, can be handed over to the municipalities.

To the existing financial problem it is also possible to add the absence of opportunities for taxation; professional and administrative opportunities for realization of the duties by municipalities, their actual subordination to parallel system of state authority (to local executive authorities) and action on the basis of uncertain system of laws and the rules demanding essential perfection. Hence the limitation of authority, influence and duties of the Azerbaijan municipalities which hardly meet the requirements of the European Chart of Local Self-government.

Frequently citizens do not know what kinds of works are carried out by the municipalities, associating their activity in most cases with sale of municipal lands. Therefore we are interested in finding out the awareness of respondents on the kinds of works carried out by municipalities. According to our research, the basic kinds of works which are carried out by municipalities which are most widely known by respondents are: construction of roads (63% of respondents in Khachmaz are informed on it, 54% - in Masalli and 35% - in Baku), work on an improvement of territory (accordingly 31% of respondents in Khachmaz, 27% - in Baku and 21% - in Masalli) and building of parks (14 % - Baku, 7 % - Masalli and 1 % - Khachmaz). Naturally, municipalities carry out also other works that are not named here. However, on our parameters, respondents are most informed of these activities (Table 16).

**Knowledge of respondents on the kinds of works done by local municipality
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 16

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Construction of roads	35	63	54
Work on improvement of territory	27	31	21
Building of parks	14	1	7

Water supply	10	1	8
Cleaning of territory from household dust	7	2	5
Cleaning of territory from sewage	4	0	2
Other answers	3	2	3

We also asked our respondents what they felt was necessary in order for municipalities to most effectively organize and work with the community. Answers, as usual, vary by region. In Baku and Khachmaz, respectively, 34% and 30% of respondents consider that the local municipality should report to the population as most important. “Carrying out frequent meetings with the population” was most important to 56% of respondents in Masalli, 34% in Khachmaz and 25% in Baku. “The timely response to appeals of the population” is considered necessary by 28% of respondents in Masalli, 13% in Baku and 12 % in Khachmaz (Table 17).

**Answer distribution of respondents to the question
“What is required for the local municipality to organize the work with the population?”
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 17

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
To report to the population	34	30	0
To make speeches in local press, TV and radio	9	1	1
To provide a financial transparency	8	16	15
Carrying out often meetings with the population	25	34	56
The timely response to appeal of the population	13	12	28
Demonstration of practical results	11	7	0

CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN MUNICIPALITIES

Participation of members of communities in the decisions influencing their future and well-being is one of the major democratic values. Participation is the process that helps citizens take up leadership roles alongside state officials for decision-making and developing a policy that is directly reflected in quality of their everyday life in their community (*Manual for Council in Azerbaijan 2003, 62*).

Citizens can participate in the local government in various forms, including referenda and preparation of municipal resolutions. According to The Law on a Local Referendum, which defines which questions can be solved on a local referendum and establishes procedures for the organization of a referendum, the publication of results and their introduction in the law, the municipality can hold a referendum on any question within the framework of the law, or by demand of at least 10% of the voters in the territory. Any referendum is financed from the local budget. Citizens can also participate in decision-making at a local level through public assemblies (in accordance with The Law on the Status of Municipalities) (Mamedova et al. 2002, 379-380). The local population can also initiate municipal decisions. Such suggestions should be

discussed at an open session of the council with participation of representatives of citizens and their results should be officially declared.

As he has noted in interview with us, Tofiq Hasanov, director of the department on work with municipalities of National Assembly of Azerbaijan settlement municipalities, citizens are invited to attend municipality sessions and to participate there when important problems for the territory are discussed. Which citizens can participate here? Any citizen who has applied or been invited there on a voluntary basis may participate. An inhabitant of one of the municipalities investigated by us (Baladjari municipality), told us in an interview that at inhabitants of one of parts of the municipality expressed problems concerning transportation. Some inhabitants then addressed the municipality directly and after two months, their requests had been approved. Inhabitants have expressed their gratitude to the municipality. However, such cases are very seldom. The reason is partly because of the psychology of the people which was generated during Soviet times and still continues to exist today: it is difficult to not be afraid before officials; people do not completely understand that they have the right to negotiate with officials and authorities. Very often citizens, do not know their rights. Citizens do not know the difference between the activities of the executive authority and the municipality. Even today municipalities at times confuse their authority with the authority of the executive body. Obviously, it is of utmost importance to provide legal and political education for the population.

Over the last several years in Azerbaijan, citizens began to apply to municipalities to resolve their problems more than ever before. This is confirmed with the data from our research. To the question “Have you applied to the local municipality for help in economic, social and other problems?” 76% of respondents answered positively from Masalli, 59% from Khachmaz and 10% from Baku. These appeals in individual and collective forms are carried out, respectively, in Khachmaz at 55% and 41%, 50% and 32% in Masalli, and 25% and 34% in Baku. Complete help from municipalities was given to 44% of respondents from Masalli, 49% from Khachmaz and 12% from Baku. The help received “in a certain level” and “in an insignificant level” from the municipality was recorded at 36% and 10% of respondents from Masalli, 31% and 9% from Khachmaz and 4% and 72% of respondents from Baku.

What concrete help have respondents received from municipalities? Let’s address the survey data shown on Table 18.

**Concrete help received by respondents from municipalities
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 18

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Received material aid	12	22	33
Received the help in the decision of household problems	24	12	17

Received the help in the decision of municipal problems	19	13	8
Received the help in the decision of other problems	34	53	30
Other answers	11	0	12

As is shown in table 18, respondents in Baku receive the most help in the decisions of everyday problems (24%) and help in the decisions of municipal problems (19%). Respondents received help in other problems in 34% of their answers. In Khachmaz, 53% of respondents received different sorts of help, among which is the plot of land, etc. Shown next are the following answers: “reception of material aid” - 22 % and “the help in the decision of municipal and household problems” at 13% and 12%, respectively. In Masalli, the main form of aid received is also “help in the decision of other problems” at 30% (also mainly reception plot of land), “reception of material aid” at 33% and “the help in the decision of household problems” at 17 %.

Do respondents participate at the municipality assemblies? To this question, "yes" was answered by 74% of the respondents from Khachmaz, 59% from Masalli and 10% from Baku. When respondents were asked about participating at meetings with members of local municipality discussing their problems, "yes" was answered by 75% of respondents from Khachmaz, 70% from Masalli and only 10% from Baku.

These results show that the strength of social ties in a city, and especially in the capital, is lower, than in a village. Generally in city municipalities, work with citizens is constructed poorly. People apply to municipalities when they are interested with a certain problem. Many people even do not know where the municipality is situated. In a district centre and villages people know each other better than in the capital: they have lived closely together for a long time, and knowledge of the events occurring in their municipality several times lightens the situation.

Inside Azerbaijani culture, there are some traditional forms of a civil society. It is possible to relate to them. For example, city (*mahalla*) or rural (council of elders or councils of *aksakkals*) communities represent unorganized structures of mutual support. In these communal associations people gather to solve the common social problems and to provide informal services. This is taken into account in The Law on the Status of Municipalities and Model Provision on Local Committees. According to which on the municipality territories for the decision of problems of the population can to be created voluntary associations - *mahalla* committees. According to the Model Provision on Local Committees, the territory of a *mahalla* committee is defined by the borders of one or several houses (*mahallas*). The *mahalla* committee is selected for two years at an assembly of the population living in the given territory by open ballot. At the assembly 5-11 members are selected to form a committee and among them

chairman, the vice-president and the secretary are chosen. Having received suggestions from citizens, the *mahalla* committees or councils of elders relate them to the municipalities. It occurs to participation of representatives of these structures on the standing commissions of municipalities. If these assumptions are accepted by the standing commissions they are farther considered at municipal sessions. The *mahalla* committee raises questions before the municipalities under the heading of decision of local problems. The *mahalla* committees are able to carry out their responsibilities due to voluntary donations which are and other donations, not forbidden by the Azerbaijan legislation. For example, in the territory of Yasamal municipality of capital, there are more than 60 *mahalla* committees.* As we were informed during the focus group by a member of the given municipality, Ali Akperli, chairman, the vice-chairman and members of *mahalla* committees are invited to each municipality session.** The vice-chairman of Baladjari municipality of Baku (Binagadi district), Nazir Iskanderov, has noted, “In Baladjari there are about 10 *mahalla* committees. Here we meet on a regular basis with the population, we learn their problems. As a result of these meetings, we have constructed 6 premises for the carrying out of various ceremonies.*** An agriculturist from Khachmaz, member of Khachmaz city municipality, Faik Maharramov, has told the following: “In a territory of the municipality we have created a council of elders and chosen its chairman with the participation of the population. In many affairs the municipality reckons with their opinion. For example, in Arzu village an artesian well was repaired, the lining of a new water pipe for a new inhabited complex has been installed with the participation of the population. On the other hand, with the help of members of the council of elders, the population is preliminary informed on completed work, and the population, in this case, provides feasible financial help”.

This brought us to the question of whether or not respondents are informed on the existence of *mahalla* committees and councils of elders in their territory. This question was positively answered by 67% of respondents in Masalli, 46% - in Khachmaz and 12% - in Baku (Table 19).

**Knowledge of respondents about *mahalla* committees or
Council of elders in their territory
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 19

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
Yes	12	46	67
No	88	54	33

The participation of respondents in the activities of municipalities is a problem that is solved differently. For example, according to Chairman of Mushkur municipality of Khachmaz

* The *mahalla* committees or the councils of elders are created and function in some municipalities of Azerbaijan.

** Interviewed on August 9, 2007 in Baku.

*** Interviewed on August 1, 2007 in Baku.

district, Feyzullah Hasanov,* before the accepting of the final decision on those or other questions, the municipality either invites interested persons to sessions, or the members of municipality go to the village and meet the local population there to learn their opinion. As the chairman of the Chakhirli municipality of Masalli district, Ziyafat Mamedov,** the transparency of the information on the budget of a municipality is the main factor promoting involvement of the citizens in communal affairs. Therefore, as he stated, the information on incomes and charges of municipalities is hung out on display in high-traffic areas and all peasants receive the detailed information on the work of the local municipality.

Our next question was, in what kinds of activity of the local municipality do the respondents take part? In Baku it is “the certain affairs which are carried out by municipalities” (15%), “participation at assemblies of councils of elders” (in the Baku villages) (12%) and other answers; in Khachmaz district - participation “in the standing commissions of municipality” (31%), in “the certain affairs which are carried out by municipalities” (29%) and “meetings with members of municipality” (36%), in “the certain affairs which are carried out by municipalities” (30%) and “on the constant commissions of municipality” (21%) (Table20).

**Participation of respondents in activity of the local municipality
(In percentage to number of interrogated)**

Table 20

Variants of answers	Baku	Khachmaz	Masalli
In the standing commissions of municipality	2	31	21
At meetings with members of municipality	8	25	36
At assemblies of the <i>mahalla</i> committee	5	5	7
At assemblies of the councils of elders	12	5	5
In the certain affairs which are carried out by municipalities	15	29	30
Did not participate anywhere	59	5	1

How do respondents assess the activity of the municipality? It is highly estimated by the respondents of Masalli (“so-so” - 15 %, “high” - 59 % and “very high” - 22 %) and Khachmaz districts (“so-so” - 14 %, “high” - 49 % and “very high” - 27 %). Unfortunately, respondents did feel the same in the capital (“very low” - 77% and “low” - 7%).

We asked the respondents about the practical role the population can play in the affairs of local municipality. Answers were distributed as follows: provide physical help by 36% of respondents from Baku, 61% from Khachmaz and 48 % from Masalli; help from their own means by 20% of respondents of Baku, 14 % in Khachmaz and 40% in Masalli. At last, 44% of respondents from Baku, 25% from Khachmaz and 12% from Masalli said they can participate in public discussions.

* Interviewed on August 16, 2007 in Khachmaz.

** Interviewed on August 28, 2007 in Masalli.

What prevents respondents to participating closely in the work of the local municipality? In Baku, the main obstacles respondents see are insufficient information about activity of local municipalities (38%) and mistrust to any changes (18%). In Khachmaz and Masalli the majority of respondents do not see any obstacles in the way of their participation in the affairs of their municipality (74% and 54%, respectively). The second most common answers in these districts were insufficient knowledge of respondents of activity of local municipalities at 10% and 12%, respectively.

What do respondents see as the reason for weak connections between local municipalities and citizens, if those take place? In Baku, the three most common answers are: weakness of the staff at 43%, insufficient knowledge by the municipality of the population in their own territory at 21 % and insufficient knowledge by the municipality of problems in their own territory at 14%. In Khachmaz it is a limitation of the budget of the municipality at 47%, weakness of the staff at 23% and general passivity of the population at 10%. In Masalli the common answers were: a limitation of the budget of municipality at 25%, weakness of the staff and general passivity of the population, both at 19%.

THE CONCLUSION

Reforms of the local government are based on decentralization of the state authority. The legislation that exists now offers opportunities for the independence of institutions of local government at all levels and there is a general tendency to transfer greater authority to municipalities. Meanwhile the real situation is that municipalities are practically subordinated to executive authority and operate on the basis of an uncertain system of laws and rules demanding essential perfection. From this we get the limited authority, influence and duties of the Azerbaijan municipalities.

Perfection of organizational forms of activity of municipalities proceeds with the process of institutionalization of national associations of municipalities, well grounded arguments about creation of two or three-tier system of municipalities, reduction of their quantity, etc.

Holding fair elections, realization of correct personnel selection and the improvement of financial opportunities of municipalities are the major problems in reforming municipalities.

Weak civil traditions, accompanied with the undermining of all forms of horizontal connections during Soviet times, have led to a loss of social trust within the civil society. Building of the social capital and reform of the government of local self-government in these conditions demands big efforts from both the government and citizens.

In city municipalities, work with citizens in general is done more poorly than in district centers or villages where people know each other better, than in the capital, Baku. This is due to

the fact that they have lived for a long time in close neighborhoods and have knowledge of the events occurring in their municipality.

The social capital which is situated in a space of family-relative relations is the reason of low trust which is tested by respondents with the survey we conducted studying the respondents' relations to others.

Connections between municipalities and NGOs exist because of grants. Cooperation between NGOs and municipalities come in two forms: trainings among the population and workers of municipalities, and searching for donor organizations for the realization of concrete work among the population within the municipality. It is necessary that projects of NGOs coincided with the desires, needs and opportunities of the municipalities. An important relationship to consider is the cooperation between the National Assembly of municipalities with NGOs, and also the cooperation of municipalities with the National Assembly of NGOs for effective work of municipalities.

The level of involvement of citizens in various sorts of associations and participation in joint projects of municipalities with NGO remains low. Relative isolation in the world (individual and family) negatively influences valuable expectations of citizens. Also due to their relative isolation, people do not see essential shifts in the spiritual relations.

There is a necessity for regulation, legalization and encouragement of charities for communities and informing the communities of these affairs. Both, state bodies and municipalities should be involved in these activities.

Municipalities simply do not have the necessary material and financial resources for the correction of infrastructural problems. Instead, they focus on rather simple and inexpensive tasks. If municipalities will continue to provide quality housing services and other municipal services that meet a high standard, then all services in this area, currently carried out by the state, can become a function of the municipalities.

Municipalities are a relatively new institute in Azerbaijan. Many citizens mistrust the recently formed institute of a local board. It is necessary to change the psychology of the people and to create conditions that allow them to negotiate with representatives of local authorities. Also, it is necessary for the government to politically and legally educate all citizens and to deepen democratic reforms.

In spite of the existing problems, last year appeals in Azerbaijan from citizens to their municipalities have increased. However, as a whole, in city municipalities work with citizens is conducted more poorly than in rural municipalities. One of the main reasons is low density and strength of social ties in city in the comparison with the districts.

In order for municipalities to effectively work with the population, our study has found that it is necessary and most important to report on a regular basis to the population about the work that has been completed, to carry out frequent meetings with the population, to react operatively to appeals of the population to achieve a transparency of budgetary charges of municipality and to raise a level of competence of the staff among other tasks.

It is also necessary to gradually replace the currently of still prevailing vertical networks of civil participation with the horizontal form of interaction in communities. Any practice, deeply inveterate on the local level, (for example, award of a rank of “honorable citizen”, etc.) should be closely investigated and integrated into the democratic process. Any practice, deeply inveterate on the local level, (for example, award of a rank of “honorable citizen”, etc.) should be closely investigated and integrated into the democratic process.

This study and article has shown that it is necessary for Azerbaijan, as one of the post-Soviet countries and part of the third world, to develop and strengthen the social capital to create last changes in economic, social and political aspects of daily life.

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