



Similarities and Connections between Postsocialism and Postcolonialism: Analysis of Postsocialist and Postcolonial Countries

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PODOBNOTI A SPOJITOSTI MEZI POSTSOCIALISMEM A POSTKOLONIALISMEM: ANALÝZA POSTSOCIALISTICKÝCH A POSTKOLONIÁLNÍCH STÁTŮ

ABSTRAKT Předmětem studie je teoretická analýza postsocialistických a postkoloniálních států z hlediska jejich současného stavu a budoucího rozvoje. Studie se zaměří na analýzu a interpretaci sociokulturního vývoje bývalých socialistických společností po roce 1989 a bývalých koloniálních území. Cílem studie je postihnout podobnosti a odlišnosti mezi postkoloniálními a postsocialistickými státy. Pojem postsocialismus je užíván jako označení historického období, které vystřídalo vývojovou fázi socialismu. V interpretaci vztahu socialismu a postsocialismu po roce 1989 jsou sledovány přístupy a současně jsou zdůrazněny geografické, politické a ekonomické aspekty sociokulturní změny. Pojem postkolonialismus je ve studii užíván jako označení historického období po získání nezávislosti bývalých kolonií. Ve studii jsou analyzovány sociální, hospodářské a politické faktory a situace, které v bývalých koloniích a v metropolích vznikly v postkoloniální době. Studie zdůrazňuje charakteristiky postkoloniálního státu, k nimž patří absence národního cítění, lokální identita posilovaná na úkor centra, nefungující centrální ekonomika i centrální instituce nebo neodpovídající distribuce veřejných statků. Studie usiluje zodpovědět, jakým způsobem probíhal proces ustavení a zformování státní identity v postsocialistickém i postkoloniálním období. Cílem studie je pochopit a interpretovat procesy sociokulturní změny, k nimž došlo v průběhu transformace socialismu v postsocialismus a kolonialismu v postkolonialismus.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA postsocialismus; postsocialistický stát; socialismus; postkolonialismus; postkoloniální stát; kolonialismus; sociokulturní změna

ABSTRACT The subject of this study is a theoretical analysis of postsocialist and postcolonial countries seen from the perspective of their current situation and expected future development. The study will focus on the analysis and interpretation of socio-cultural development of former socialist societies after 1989 and former colonial territories. The aim of the study is to describe details and differences between postcolonial and postsocialist countries. The term postsocialism is used to denote the historical period that came after the early phase of socialism. When interpreting the relation between socialism and postsocialism after 1989, different approaches will be observed together with geographical, political and economic aspects of socio-cultural change. The term postcolonialism is used in this study to denote the period after former colonies became independent. The study analyses social, economic and political factors and situations that occurred in former colonies and metropolises in the postcolonial era. The study points out characteristics of a postcolonial country that include, i.e., the lack of patriotism, local identity enhanced at the expense of the centre, inefficient central economy and central institutions or inappropriate public goods allocation. The study tries to describe the process of establishing and forming a national identity in the postsocialist and postcolonial period. The aim of the study is to understand and interpret processes of socio-cultural changes that occurred during the transformation of socialism into postsocialism and colonialism into postcolonialism.

KEY WORDS postsocialism; postsocialist state; socialism; postcolonialism; postcolonial state; colonialism; socio-cultural change

THE ORIGINS OF POSTSOCIALISM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The term *postsocialism*¹ or the adjective *postsocialist* denotes the historic period that came after socialism and is linked to the dynamic transformation of postsocialist countries. The prefix *post-* in the word postsocialism refers to historic continuity as well as discontinuity. It admits the fading impact of a former socialist system on the current and future development of postsocialist countries. Postsocialism is used as “a temporal term denoting the period after the socialist system (defined by state-controlled ownership of the most important means of production and the political monopoly of the Communist Party) had been dismantled, and replaced by democratizing systems” (Cervinkova 2012, 156). Postsocialism represents overcoming the socialist political and economic system and a new phase of postsocialist country development. The term postsocialism encompasses geographic, political and economic connotations that refer to the transition from a totalitarian regime to democratic government and the transition from central planning rejecting market mechanism to neoliberal free market economics. Inseparable parts of the postsocial situation are also cultural connotation and stereotypization, since people who lived in postsocialist countries have a different view of postsocialism than people living in countries commonly called as “the West” (Rose 1992).

The idea of postsocialism was first formulated by Arif Dirlik, whose definition of this term was inspired by *postmodernism*. By using this term, Dirlik referred to the historic period of China’s development until the end of Mao’s rule, when Chinese socialism started losing its position as a sovereign political theory and ideology. Dirlik does not consider the phase of postsocialism to be the end of socialism and the beginning of a qualitatively new developmental stage, but quite the contrary: as a possibility to reassess the essentials of the socialist system during a crisis. From this point of view, postsocialism is seen as an opportunity for restoration and transformation (Dirlik 1989; Taras 1992). The term postcommunism was first used in Europe by Zbigniew Brzezinski. He used this term to denote a developmental stage between a totalitarian regime and Western democracy. He connected the concept of postsocialism to the theory of modernization (Brzezinski 1989; Taras 1992; Hann 2002).

Generally, postsocialist countries are those that have gone at some moment of their history through a period of socialism. These are the countries of Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania), Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Commonwealth of Independent States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and Asia (Turkmenistan, Georgia, Mongolia, China, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) or Africa (Ethiopia, Mozambique). A specific situation was in the

German Democratic Republic which reunited with the Federal Republic of Germany at the beginning of the 1990s. This accelerated its transformation and formation of characteristic features that differed from those of other countries that were once under Soviet domination (Forsyth, 2005). The phenomenon of postsocialism is different especially from the perspective of different continental conditions. “In many countries is a rather unpredictable propensity to ‘turn back’, or at least a resolute refusal to abandon values and expectations associated with socialism among sectors of the population” (Humphrey 2002, 13). There is no universally valid and shared development of postsocialist countries. Postsocialism in East-Central Europe needs to be perceived differently than in Asian countries that were once a part of the Soviet Union or China. European postsocialist countries were satellites of the Soviet Union and have about a forty-year long experience with its dominancy. Former republics of the Soviet Union could feel Russian imperialism much more intensely and for 74 years. Both geographic regions thus show qualitatively different features of the postsocialist situation. Also, postsocialist societies of Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America show specific socio-cultural features and are often studied under a unifying theoretic term: *developing countries* (Hann 2002).

POSTSOCIALIST STATE

Postsocialist countries that gained independence after 1989 can be considered final products of historic events that were started by the Russian Socialist Revolution in 1917. After the fall of a socialist regime there is also a certain void that cannot be simply filled by democracy. “Each country in East Europe has its own history and political culture. One of the delights of 1989 is the rediscovery of these differences. Thus, every country deserves its own explanation.” (Dahrendorf 1990, 15–16). Politico-economic transformation of postcommunist countries is a process of catching up with the wasted opportunity for development (Offe 1991). What made its way through instead of innovative and future-oriented ideas in postsocialist countries was the effort to return to a democratic legal state and following in the footsteps of the capitalist developed West where the “state apparatus becomes dependent upon the media-steered subsystem of the economy” (Habermas 1990, 351). The platform for socialist countries’ transformation into capitalist countries were not new innovative and progressive ideas; traditional Western capitalist models, processes and strategies were adopted instead (Habermas 1990). The hope for “normality” or “return to Europe” was a reaction to the trauma caused by socialism and chaos as well as optimism of early postsocialist phase. The concept of postsocialist normalization included restoration of geographical continuity and the unification of Europe (Korte 1990). One of the interpretations of the return to normality that became widespread in all postsocialist countries takes this return as restoration of national states from the interwar period (Kernohan 2004).

According to another interpretation, postsocialist countries

1 The term is often used interchangeably with postcommunism.

and societies do not follow the developmental trajectory of Western capitalist countries or societies they once were – in the presocialist era. Transformations produce brand new and unpredictable social forms; what contributes to their formation are long-term aspects such as geographical location, geopolitical position, strategic importance, economic resources, level of modernization, political history or cultural traditions. That is the reason why we cannot expect from European society integration, but rather diversity (Illner 1999). Revolutions of 1989 “started establishment of a new social order composed of unknown mixture of components of various origins. It was a significant cultural and civilizational turning point” (Sztompka 1996, 10). The year 1989 is considered to be the end of history and the point when mankind achieved the peak and at the same time the end of the ideological evolution of mankind. Liberal democracy is the final phase of ideological evolution of mankind and the new order – that will bring the end of history – has been established. The Western type of liberal democracy becomes a universal and final form of rule. “As mankind approaches the end of the millennium, the twin crises of authoritarianism and socialist central planning have left only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potentially universal validity: liberal democracy, the doctrine of individual freedom and popular sovereignty.” (Fukuyama 2006, 42). The world will be divided into a historic and posthistoric part, where international relations are built on the basis of economic cooperation. History will be fading away in a small part of the world and it will be distinguished by regional conflicts between nations and countries (Fukuyama 1989). However, this aspect may be understood in its broader sense as a clash of civilizations resulting from the abandonment of democracy. 1989 is interpreted as the third wave of democratization followed by diversion towards undemocratic regimes. The multi-civilizational character and non-versatility of the civilization start to become evident. “The West’s universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations” (Huntington 2007, 20). This is demonstrated by the clash of cultures and conflicts that may take the form of fights among local groups or fights between dominating countries (Huntington 1991).

Postsocialist countries exhibit a social construct of normality, which is a construct of a special kind of internal environment. It is a process, where scientific and commercial interests literally form normality by constructing conditions as well as conventions. “When statistical normality is taken to represent normality in the ‘real world’, the range of practices and conditions that might be so described is inevitably narrowed” (Shove 2003, 33). This example reveals the main difference in using the world *normal* in Eastern Europe. The ways how East Europeans use the world *normal* are public, not private. The metaphor of *normal* served in the discourse of velvet revolution the purpose of describing and explaining social and political processes. At the same time, Eastern European velvet revolutions were driven by consumption motives. In Bulgaria expressions such as “living normally” or “living like a normal person” were synonyms to “living like a white man”. The consumption nor-

mality was burdened by racist and colonial nuances. However, bureaucratic normalization of the new Europe got into conflict with traditional culture of postsocialist countries. People from Eastern Europe had old work habits and different time routines; they had different attitudes towards food, health and communication and a different opinion of what a quality life was. The effort made by West countries of the European Union to promote common universally-valid normative and legal procedures, unification and standardization also in postsocialist countries met with symbolic resistance. As soon as it came face to face with the real bureaucratic Europe, the desire for European normality turned into a feeling of disappointment and utopia actually evoked the opposite reaction – a new desire for difference, authenticity and community (Zehfuss 2002; Skalník 2014; El-Ojeili 2015; Horvat – Štiks 2015).

DESCRIPTION OF POSTSOCIALISM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Postsocialist transformation represents a new type of a qualitative social change. In consequence of newly formed balance of powers in the world and European politics and economy, these transformations differ from most social and political revolutions of the past. This applies particularly to Central-East European types of societies, i.e. a group of postsocialist countries that became new members of the European Union. The transformation resulted primarily into a socialist system in an extensively industrially developed and undercapitalized society. This system developed during the postsocialist period towards a democratic, market society and a meritocratic or class system typical for early stages of postindustrial societies. This process consisted of two phases. The first phase saw a transition to a democratic parliamentary political system connected with fast and radical economic changes. Growing economic problems and social tension in the late 1990s augured the second phase that was influenced by incorporating postsocialist countries into the European Union and by increasingly intense economic collaboration with developed European countries. Modernizing aspects of transformation and the need to consolidate the closeness of transforming societies came to the fore (Eyal – Szelenyi – Townsley 2000).

Each postsocialist country has its specific features. These are usually hybrid combinations of ongoing bureaucratic and egalitarian relations and new meritocratic and class relations. Young democratic systems develop a corresponding political culture and search for the balance between administrative regulation and civic society. Only some of the experts in corporate sector achieved respectable economic and social position, the others bore upon their shoulders the consequences of egalitarianism that weakened the position of new middle classes. The expansion of petty bourgeoisie and the class of middle-sized entrepreneurs and managers resulted into the formation of a class consisting of senior managers and large capital owners. An aspect that often goes hand in hand with economic transformation in postsocialist countries is high

unemployment rate, poverty, social exclusion and social polarization between its highest and lowest social positions (Tuček et al. 2006).

Postsocialist countries of Central and Southeast Europe have no other alternative but to become a part of the world of developed European countries and cooperate with them. This process is accompanied by different spheres of influence. One sphere consists of combined influence of international economic institutions and international organizations. Another sphere of influence is represented by the European Union with its large network of economic, political, social and cultural institutions together with the European economy (Frič et al. 2011).

THE ORIGINS OF POSTCOLONIALISM AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The term *postcolonialism* refers to the historic period that is linked with the fall of colonial system and the formation of new, politically independent countries. Postcolonialism refers to “disparate forms of representations, reading practices and values. These can circulate across the barrier between colonial rule and national independence.” (McLeod 2000, 5) The term *postcolonialism* or the adjective *postcolonial*² first appeared at the beginning of the 1980s, when it started replacing the term *Third World*³ or Non-Western world (Moore 2001). Postcolonialism should be perceived particularly as a concept denoting extensive historical consequences of decolonisation that expresses the former colony population’s determination to achieve political and economic sovereignty. It also reflects the reality of nations that got into a new imperialist context of neocolonial economic (and sometimes even political) dominance of the West. The prefix *post-* refers to the period after former colonies became independent, while it also captures the social, economic and political situation and conditions that occurred in colonies and metropolises after political independence was achieved. Although many colonies became independent before, the term *postcolonialism* only appears in connection with extensive decolonisation after the Second World War (Lomba 1998).

The decay of the colonial system after the Second World War led to the formation of a new type of participants in the international system that may be referred to as postcolonial states. Former colonies became independent political units that were guaranteed their legal sovereignty. Although decolonisation occurred primarily in the second half of the 20th century, the

idea of nations’ self-determination dates back to the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The main factors of independence and self-determination are: 1) the end of the Second World War, (2) decline of traditional colonial powers such as the United Kingdom and France, (3) rise of Pan-African movement, (4) national liberation movements in Asia and the conference in Bandung in 1955, (5) formation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963, (6) change in international community’s and new hegemonies’ (the USA and USSR) perception of colonialism and imperialism that led to gradual decolonisation of the colonised territories (Betts 2004).

Postcolonialism seeks to abolish the ideological legacy of colonialism not only in decolonised countries, but also in the West. At the moment when the process of political and economic decolonisation starts, cultural decolonisation has to follow, which results into the deconstruction of the image of West in postcolonial countries. This process includes rejection of intellectual sovereignty and dominance of Western Europe and the United States. The main focus of postcolonial thinking is on coping with colonial past on the part of the colonised as well as colonisers and at the same time on the current situation in the world and position of the countries involved (Young 2001).

POSTCOLONIAL STATE

The right for independence was granted to former colonies regardless of their weakness or strength. A modern European country was formed for centuries and was a result of long-term political, economic and war conflicts. Building a modern nation state often included integration of different ethnic groups speaking different languages and having different religions and lifestyles. Very important for postcolonial countries were international norms that strongly favoured new weak participants. These norms includes particularly the inviolability of boundaries (former colonial boundaries), accepting their existence, invariability and protection. Despite the fact it gave rise to many ethnic conflicts, these norms helped maintain a certain sense of international stability and coherence. Postcolonial countries required equal position in the international system as well as some privileges that would help them receive extraordinary support and benefits in the international economic and political system. The postcolonial countries’ strong position on the international stage was mainly due to the fact they were represented in international forums, e.g. in the UN. New international standards virtually ensured inviolable independence and sovereignty to weak countries, while it prevented imperialistic confiscation of these states (Jackson 1990; Sørensen 2001).

Significant discrepancies could be observed between how quickly former colonial territories were expected to catch up with developed countries and the reality. With regards to the fact that the United Kingdom left in each of its colonies at least some basic administrative and legal system, it was not presumed it would be difficult for postcolonial countries to

2 The term *postcolonial* may be defined as a 1) literary description of the situation in former colonial societies; 2) description of global conditions after colonialism; or 3) description of the discourse connected with the above specified conditions (Dirlik 1994).

3 In the Three Worlds Theory the First World refers to Western Europe and North America, the Second World refers to former socialist economies and the Third World refers to everything else, basically all countries with weak economies (Moore 2001).

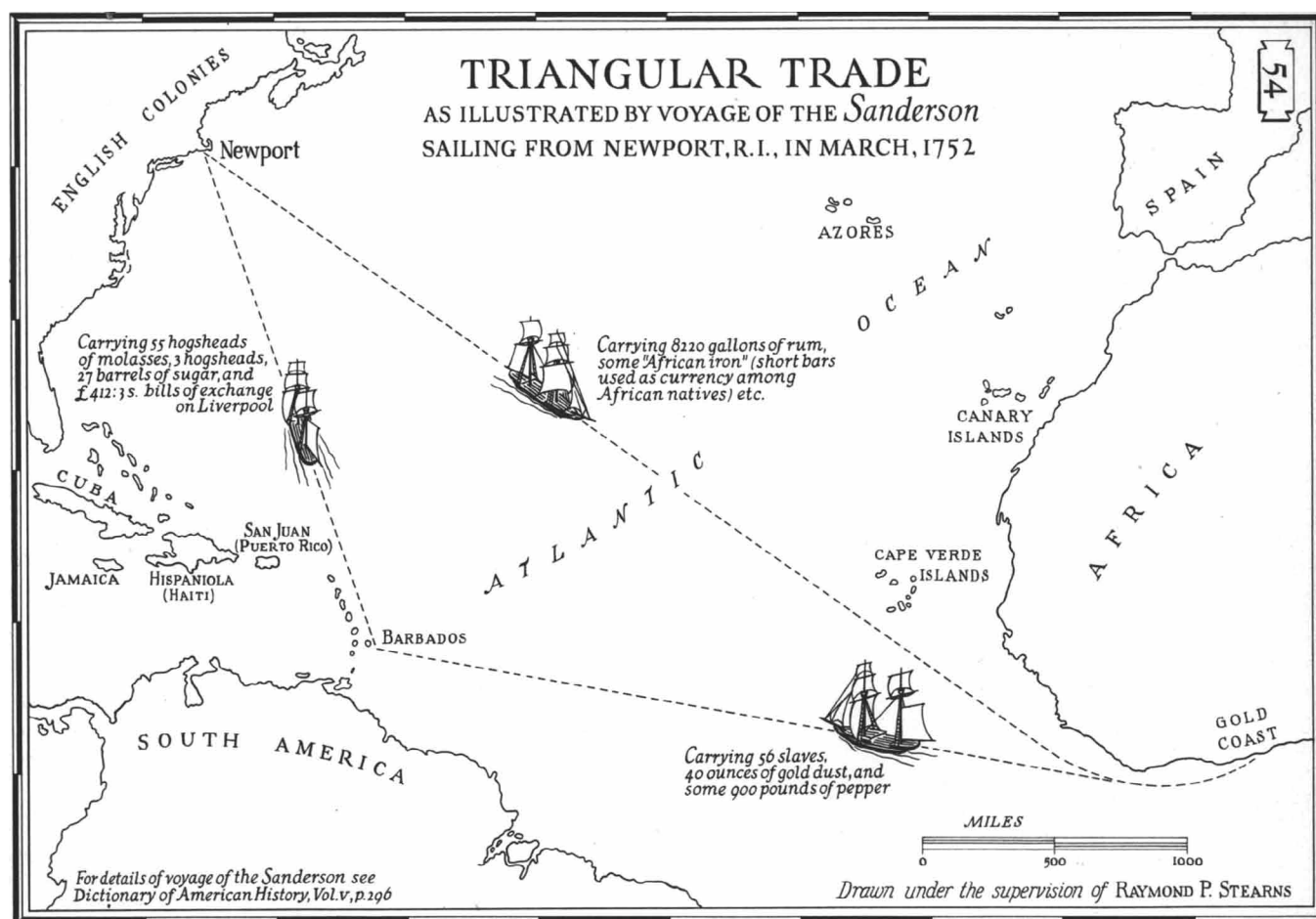


Fig. 1. The triangular trade was seen as the first system of global commerce which linked Britain, Africa and the Americas. The triangular trade continued for several centuries into the 1800s.

get adjusted to the Western standards of a modern state. The United Kingdom expected, in consideration of the values they left behind, uniform development and homogenization of the international sphere and economy. The political independence of postcolonial countries itself was actually not a sufficient guarantee of their economic and social advancement (Nálevka 2004; Kaiwar 2014).

However, many colonial powers left in former colonies only weak or non-functional administrative and institutional structures and a lack of qualified labour force and raw material or energy sources. Colonial rulers actually focused much more on building strong repressive institutions, military and police powers, while other components of a state apparatus remained insufficiently developed. That is the reason why in many postcolonial countries we can see “the rule of a strong man” who allocates positions in the state apparatus to his loyal followers. Instead of democracy, “personal rule” regimes that beat democratic law systems came to power in newly established countries (Jackson – Rosberg 1982; Reid 2012). “Confronted by weak administrative structures, fragile economies, and in some cases dangerous sources of domestic opposition, political leaders sought to entrench themselves in power by us-

ing the machinery of the state to suppress or co-opt any rival organisation – be it an opposition political party, a trades union, or even a major corporation. Rather than acknowledging the weakness of their position, and accepting the limitations on their power which this imposed, they chose to up the stakes and go for broke.” (Clapham 1996, 57) Therefore, state apparatus often became a source of income for the elites in postcolonial countries. The government is no longer subject to colonial power dominance, but the state is still usurped and exploited by its own elites (the ruler) that only think of and for themselves (Sørensen 2001). We see the dominance of neopatrimonial rule where the state authority is not linked to an institution, but a person who turned a state function into a very well paid employment. Neopatrimonial rule undermines the possibility of having an efficient government and causes the country to lag behind modern countries. Distribution of lucrative jobs and positions in the government, access to business transactions and profit all depend on the ruler’s preferences (Berry 1993; Záhorský 2012).

The institution of the army and/or police is fully loyal to the leader and serves exclusively his purposes obeying his orders instead of maintaining order. These institutions are a means



Fig. 2. Yinka Shonibare (born 1962) is a British-Nigerian artist living in London. He is influenced by the aesthetics of Romanticism in Europe and African textiles which he uses to create a complex dialogue around the politics of colonialism and postcolonialism. In the installation *Scramble for Africa* (2003) he depicted 14 life-size statesmen huddled around a conference table adorned with the map of Africa, who were European leaders dividing up the continent during the 1880s. Shonibare expressed the exploration of late Victorian England and territorial expansion into Africa which was formalized at the Berlin Conference in 1884–1885.

of compulsion. These authoritarian regimes are accompanied by revolutions, conspiracies, crises, factionalism, corruption or patronage (Thomson 2010; Jackson 1982). The state is not a guarantor of security, order or justice. It is a permanent threat to its citizens who seek protection against its apparatus. Elites controlling the state misuse social control and competencies for safeguarding its own income and profits. As the government lacks any legitimate authority from the population, it has no interest to respect its rules or regulations (Thomson 2010). The material aspect of citizenship, provision of services to the people and system of source provision in the form of taxes and other revenue is either underdeveloped or totally lacking. Immaterial aspects of legitimacy, loyalty and solidarity are also weakened. Solidarity in postcolonial countries exists particularly on local and ethnic levels. In case of need people do not turn to the government, but to its ethnic group or tribe. This creates a community of ethnic groups that compete one with another for access to power and resources (Záhořík 2012). *“The greater the competition and inequalities among groups in heterogeneous societies, the greater the salience of ethnic identities and the greater the likelihood of open conflict. When open conflict does occur it is likely to intensify, or reify, both perceptions of difference among contending groups and perceptions of common interest within each group. And the longer open conflict persists, and the more intense it becomes, the stronger and more exclusive are group identities.”* (Gurr 1994, 348).

Colonies were mostly used as sources of primary lucrative raw

materials, its economic policy focusing exclusively on export and neglecting local needs, especially in the countryside and internal market development. Countries were dependent on the export of these raw materials also due to the fact there was no demand for them in the internal market. They were also a market outlet of home countries, which was due to low or no industrialization (Thomson 2010). It is a one sided economy, where the reproduction system depends on the world market. The amount of the country’s revenue depends on export and import taxation. Economy is sensitive to price fluctuations in world markets. There are different manufacturing methods including modern industrial production and traditional feudal structures in agriculture in postcolonial economies. Although farmers were an important source of the country’s income, in profit distribution they were usually marginalized (Sørensen 2001).

DESCRIPTION OF POSTCOLONIALISM AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Postcolonial societies and countries are influenced by a system formed by power structures within formal empires. Postcolonial countries have a specific position of former colonies in international division of labour. Postcolonial economy is influenced by its previous economic specialization. These countries are usually raw material suppliers, typically they only produce one commodity and remain buyers of finished products. Another unfavourable aspect is terms of trade that favour producers of goods with high amount of qualified labour to primary commodity producers. Demographic transition in postcolonial countries occurred in the period when the majority of people do not benefit from immigration policy, as there is a continuous surplus of labour force. Besides, trade of exchange is unequal and maintains the technological backwardness of countries with cheap labour, since their participation in world markets is not accompanied with corresponding profit accumulation. This results into deepening the peripheries’ dependence on strong economies of the world. Constant surplus of labour force in countries of the periphery keeps their prices very low and thus creates an effective obstacle to the development of innovative technologies (Dürschmidt – Taylor 2007; Aminzade 2013; Zein-Elabdin 2013).

Some postcolonial countries tried to achieve economic development and to increase the standard of living by implementing development strategies. Subsequently, they were not able to mobilize enough funds for these programs, so they took up a loan from international financial institutions or commercial banks (of the First World). The effort to adjust and modernize was pointed in the wrong direction and did not reflect the availability of sources and the nature of local economic situation. Many projects of economy modernization and industrialization required purchase of modern technologies from former colonial centres, which resulted in ever increasing indebtedness. Trying to make the national economy more in-

dependent, postcolonial countries actually made it even more dependent on the world market (Appadurai 1986; McCormick 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013).

Arbitrary demarcation of state boundaries connecting several ethnic groups within a country, while illogically dividing some others decreases political stability and state authority in many postcolonial countries. Colonial boundaries that were after the war – in the interest of maintaining *status quo* – left unaltered, include in many cases a large number of heterogeneous ethnic group, some of them are even adversary. Boundaries as colonial legacy do not territorially correspond with ethnic geographical distribution and are a frequent cause of conflicts. National cohesion and the sense of belonging to a common national identity will never be in postcolonial states on the same level as the case is with developed countries. Forming an internal political system is after the decomposition of colonial administration accompanied by political instability. Many postcolonial countries lack the phenomenon of nationalism, which is indispensable in the process of forming a united nation and free and functional government and economy. Nevertheless, in many territories nationalism supported interests of a certain region when an ethnic group tried to promote its interests. In fact, the transition to a national state has not actually started in many postcolonial states. The language of the colonial power remained in some countries the only communication medium among ethnic groups. Postcolonial world is filled with perceptible symbols of colonial power that cannot be easily erased, which is why we often see efforts to build a new capital city that would interrupt any linkage to colonial history and symbolize political culture of the new power (Francis 2006; Walder 2012; Franceschi 2014; Chowdhury 2014).

CONSEQUENCES OF COMPARING POSTSOCIALISM AND POSTCOLONIALISM

Both concepts “signify the complex results of the abrupt changes forced on those who underwent them: that is, becoming something other than socialist or other than colonized” (Chari – Verdery 2009, 11). Postsocialism is an orientaling cultural concept that was used to construct the picture of the postcommunist part of Europe. Unlike postsocialism, postcolonial theory remains the result of the original project of criticism aimed at power practices in colonial countries. Postcolonial thinking that was formed in the 1980s in literary and cultural studies criticised the continual discursive and practical consequences of colonialism. Postcolonial theory represents an intellectual project of epistemological dominance and conquest. Postsocialist countries refusing their socialist past collectivity strive to become a part of the global economic system, whereas postcolonialism keeps reminding of and warning about the past under the Western dominance (Kideckel 2009).

One of possible ways how negative and traumatizing consequences of a nation's past could be overcome lies in believing that differences are remainders of the former regime or rule

and will vanish with the transition to the Western-like social structure. In this connection we may mention the term *postcolonial amnesia* that is said to occur in societies that went through traumatizing historic events such as socialism or colonialism. Emerging societies try to erase from their memory the recent past and break any linkage to undesirable history. However, the process of system socio-cultural changes of a transforming society is not fast enough to make the mechanism of erasing a part of historical memory function efficiently. Moreover, if a society refuses to come to terms with its own history, it cannot understand how the old orders overlap with the recently introduced ones (Gandhi 1998; Heitlinger 1999).

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