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This project is supported by the Institute for Sustainable Communities  
within the program Civil Society Advocacy Initiative CSAI

## Public opinion on decentralization and regionalization in Central Serbia



### **What are the greatest advantages of decentralization and possible regionalization of Serbia, in your opinion?**

*„The greatest advantage would be life liberation, leaving the state of forced immaturity that we are into and taking over the responsibility for our own development, liberating the potentials that exist and are completely blocked now. What I have in mind is, primarily, the development of entrepreneurial spirit which is trapped, the competence, the free market of ideas and projects. When you have the opportunity to control your own life, you become free and creative in finding the best solutions for yourself. On the contrary, when you do not have that opportunity, you can be a genius, but if you are born, for example, in Leskovac, and some “loyal administration” from Belgrade makes a decision on your life, then you are hopelessly frustrated and blocked. I am convinced, also, that decentralization would necessarily lead to partocratic government that we have on the local level, too, which is totally artificial“.*

**From the interview with Suzana Dimitrijević from Leskovac**

# „Identity card“ of the survey



## ***The techniques of data collecting:***

- Standardized direct interview(*face to face*)
- Thorough interviews with 16 citizens (adepts in the topic)
- „Pilot“ survey on the 120 examinees sample,
- Consultations with the experts in decentralization.

## ***Sample***

- The first stage – the choice of municipalities in Central Serbia – forming a set of three, based on the national income, the degree of urban development and average personal income. Random selection of every third municipality (total number 30).
- The second stage- quota sample based on the criteria: sex, age, education and address; 40 examinees from each municipality.
- Planned sample -1800 examinees, realized sample -1740 examinees.
- Field research was done in April 2008.
- Initial plan for the sample – to form three subsamples : citizens(600), local opinion creators (300), current and potential local authorities (300). However, “pilot” survey showed that the lack of information on decentralization is not dominant, so we gave up from the mentioned sample concept.

# General conceptual starting point



- Local community is a birthplace of politics, and decentralization represents the return of the politics to its birthplace.
- In complex communities of the modern civilization, only in local community can politics be assumed directly and can be participated in directly, without mediation.
- All other communities are more or less imaginary (primarily from the aspect of citizens' participation), and local community is the only community in which one can live politically, or outside the politics.

# Basic research hypotheses – the first



- Local community is incomplete basic **life community** of its citizens. The imperfection and shortage of the local community, also in a way *incompleteness of the community*, derives from the fact that it is not real basic **political community** since numerous policies are excluded from that community and transferred to the upper level.
- Only with the decentralization, by transferring the *politics* to the level of local community, it becomes basic political community too, by which it is complete and full, it becomes totality – local community becomes a basic life community in full meaning of the word.

# Basic survey hypotheses – the second



- A State in contemporary world starts losing its massive *Leviathan-form*, going back to its original range, by transcending one part of authority to supranational integrations, and another part to local community – from where it is more-less irrationally taken away
- Europe of the future is Europe of local communities federation.

# Basic survey hypotheses – the third



- On the current phenomenological scale the citizen appears in three characters:
  - as a social and political being who should participate in local policy
  - as a vassal who fulfills or does not fulfill particular duties
  - as a man with problems, a man who expects help or the solution from the local community
- The majority of local authorities communicate only with the second character of the citizen, some with the second and the third, very rare (if there are any) are those who communicate and respect all three characters

## Conditions for establishing democratic, efficient and effective local politics - the first condition



- The development of citizens' motivation for the participation in solving the problems of local community – getting the citizens interested in solving the problems of local community and its proper functioning in general, as well as motivating them to participate in the policy of local problems resolving; there is no motivation if there is no sense of potency and potential effectiveness of the participation.

## Conditions for establishing democratic, efficient and effective local politics – the second condition



- Developing citizens' identity in the context of identification with the local community – that citizens in local community have their own feeling of individual identity but also the feeling of identification with the local community; developing the awareness of citizens' participation as a specific interest (but also as the value and the need) of the citizens themselves and the interest of authorities (but also its value and need);

## Conditions for establishing democratic, efficient and effective local politics – the third condition



- Informing the citizens about the problems of local community and the policy of solving these problems so that the citizens are well acquainted with all major aspects of local community policy; so that they can recognize it and understand it

## Conditions for establishing democratic, efficient and effective local politics– the fourth, the fifth, the sixth condition



- Mobilization and organization of the citizens' support - that local community policy is supported by the majority of the citizens; that local authority and its institutions have citizens' trust.
- The citizens' participation in creating the local community policy – that citizens participate in creating the policy of local community.
- The citizens' participation in local community policy realization- that citizens, to a certain extent, participate in its realization.

## Conditions for establishing democratic, efficient and effective local politics – the seventh condition

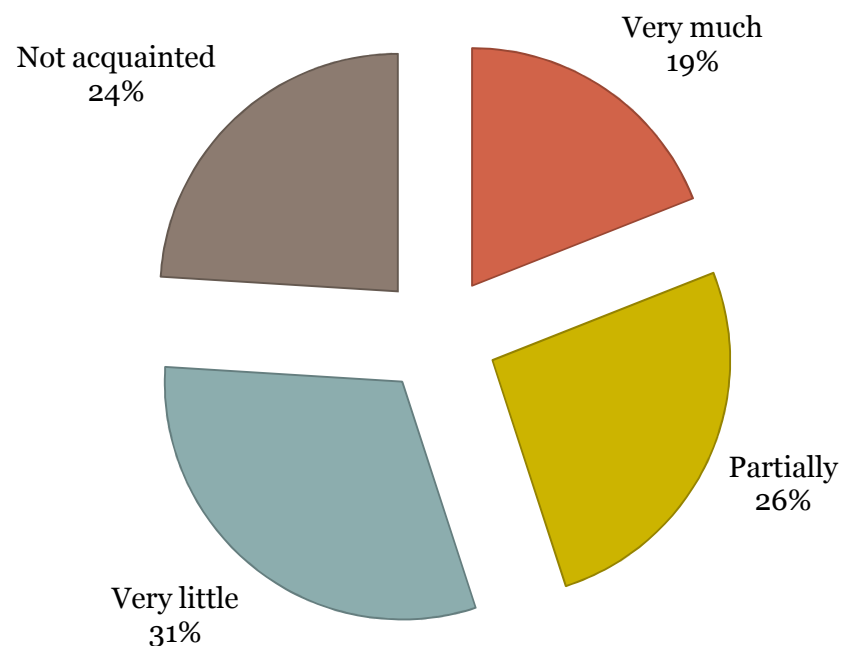


- The evaluation of local authority and its organizations and institutions- the citizens can evaluate what is done, consider what is not done, evaluate the work quality of all of them who organized local policy, as well as their professional potentials.

# Survey result – The knowledge on local authorities' work



## Graph 1. Knowledge on local authorities work



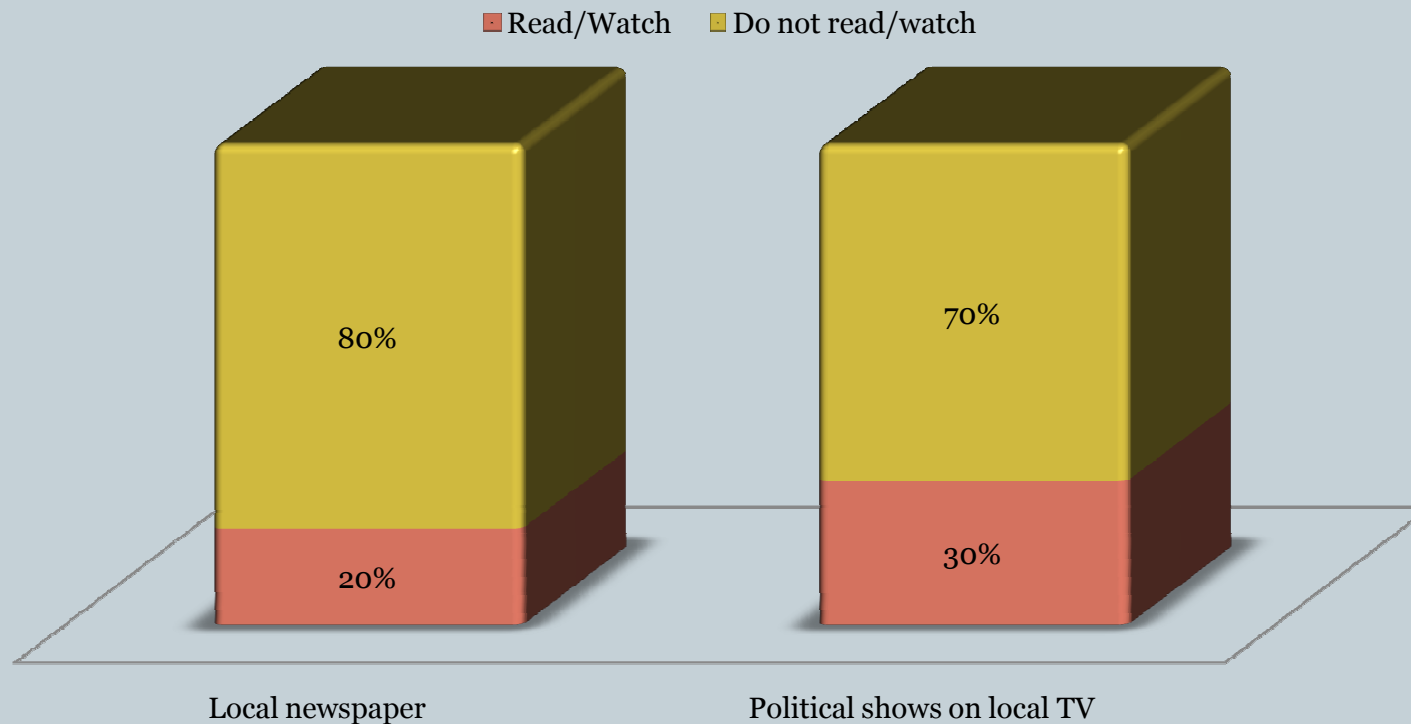
Average self-evaluation of the knowledge on local authorities work (marked from 1 to 5) is 2,43.

We asked the examinees which budget is used for employees' salaries in the health centers in their municipality. Generally speaking, one half of the examinees gave the correct answer, another half incorrect or partly correct.

# How do the citizens inform themselves



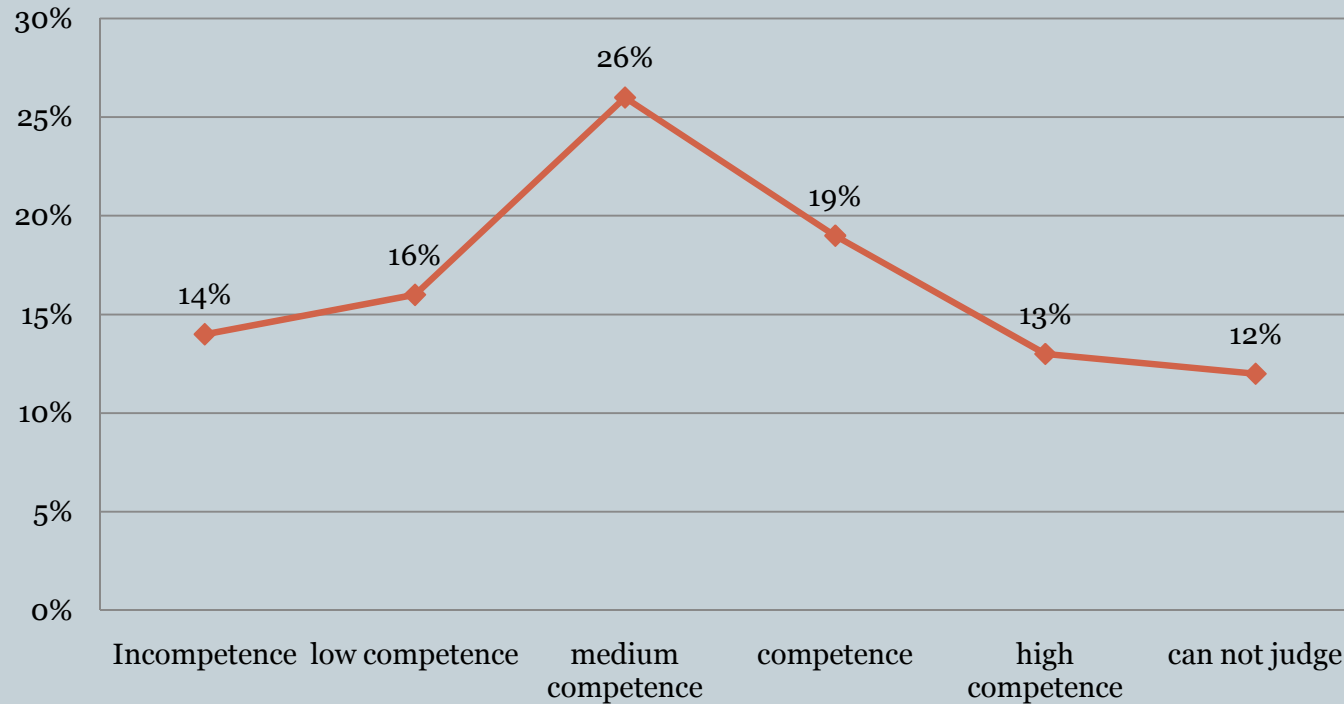
**Graph 2. How do the citizens inform themselves:  
newspaper and local TV stations**



# The citizens' ability to participate in local community governance



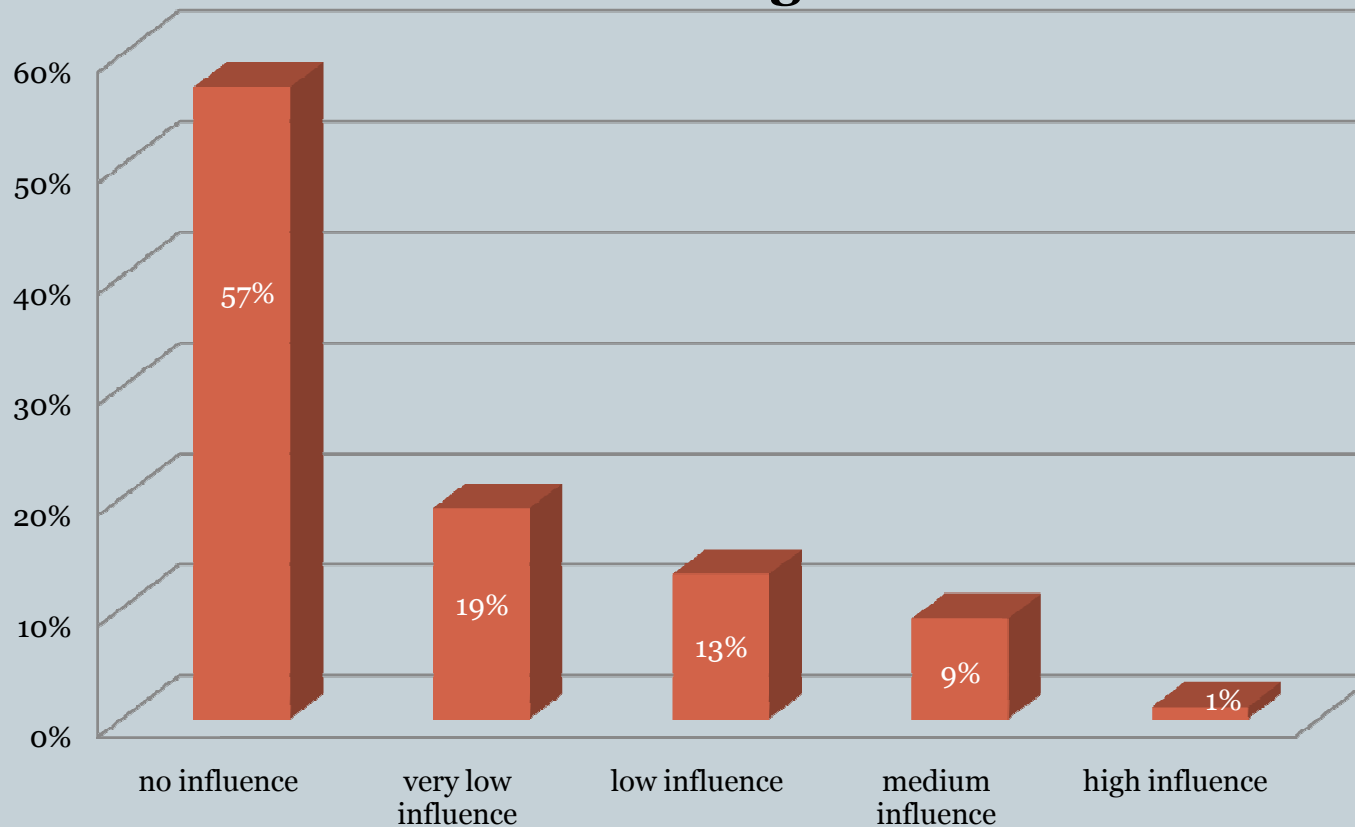
**Graph 3. Evaluation of citizens ability to participate in local community governance**



# Self-evaluation of citizens' participation in local authorities' decision making



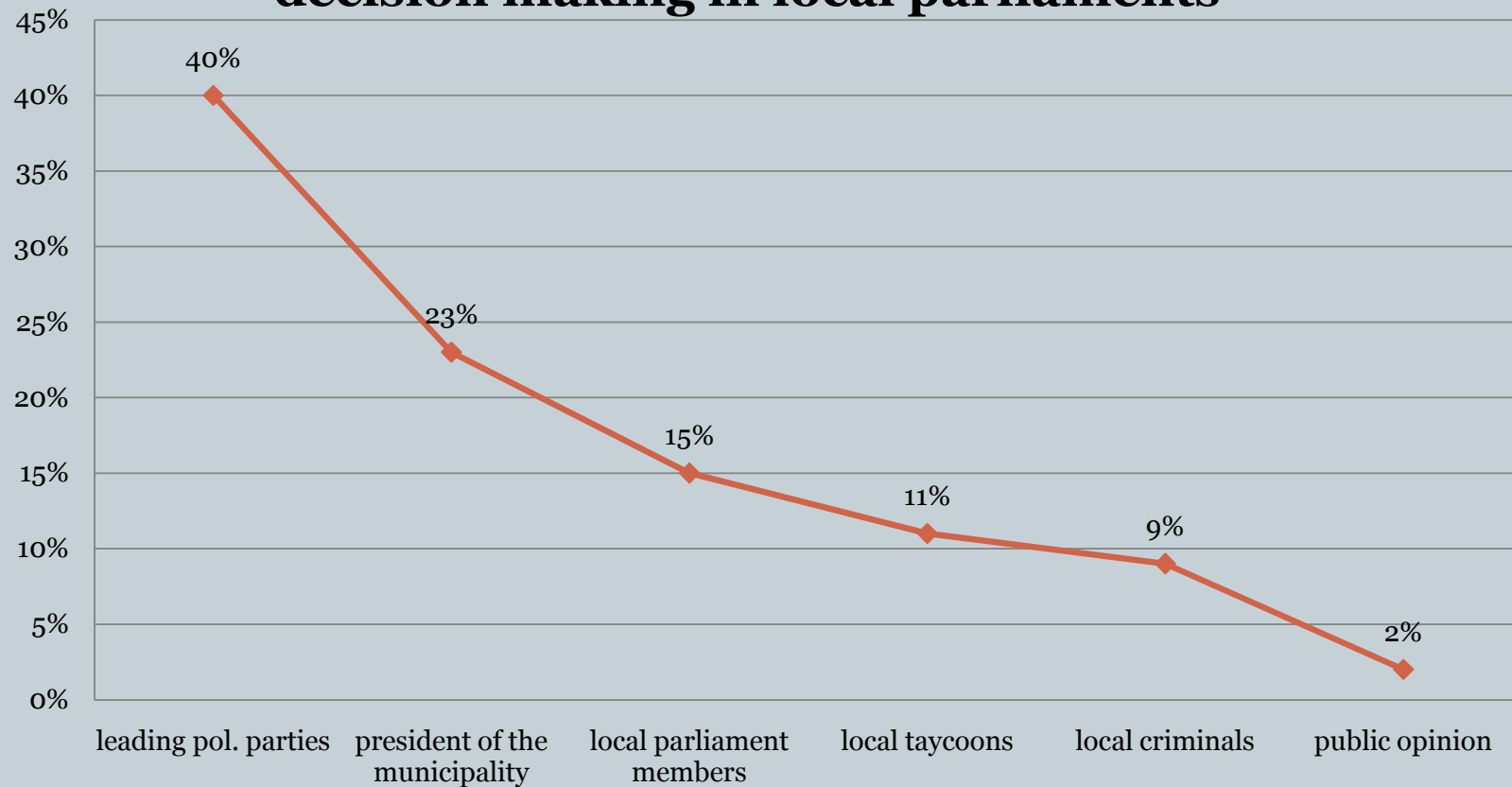
**Graph 4. Self-evaluation of citizens' participation in local authorities decision making**



# Who influences the important decision making in local parliaments



**Graph. 5. Who influences the important decision making in local parliaments**

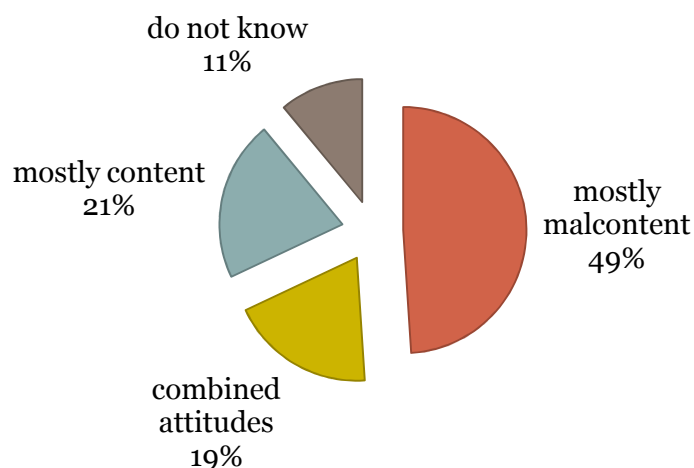


# (Mal)content with local authorities



(Mal)content	mostly malcontent	combined attitude	mostly content	Do not know	total	AS
Attitude of local authority toward examinees	48	24	19	9	100	2,43
Municipal administration	45	25	22	8	100	2,51
The president of local parliament	47	21	22	10	100	2,50
Local parliament	48	23	19	10	100	2,45
Local authority in the whole	45	25	21	9	100	2,52

**Graph.6. (Mal)Content with local authorities work**

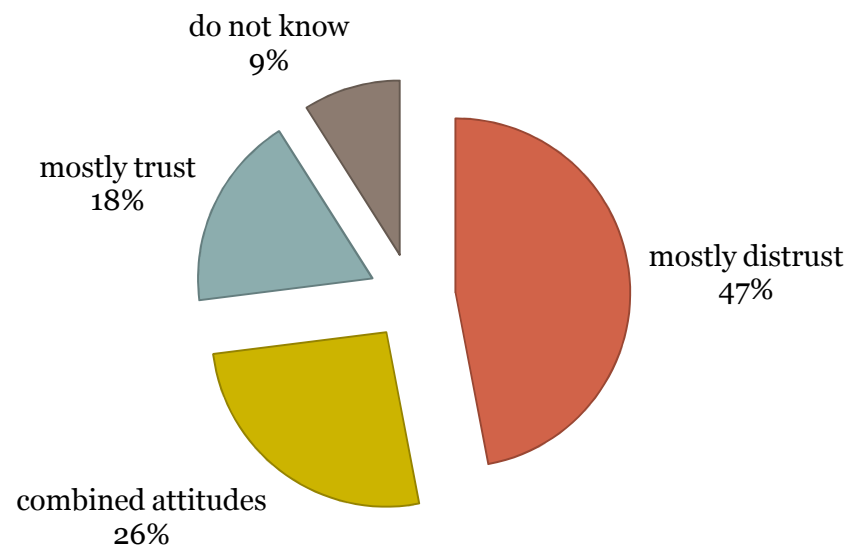


# (Dis)trust in local authorities



(Dis)trust in local authorities	Mostly distrust	Combined attitudes	Mostly trust	Do not know	Total	AS
The president of local parliament	48	21	21	10	100	2,47
Local parliament	48	23	20	9	100	2,48
Local authorities as a whole	45	26	20	9	100	2,53

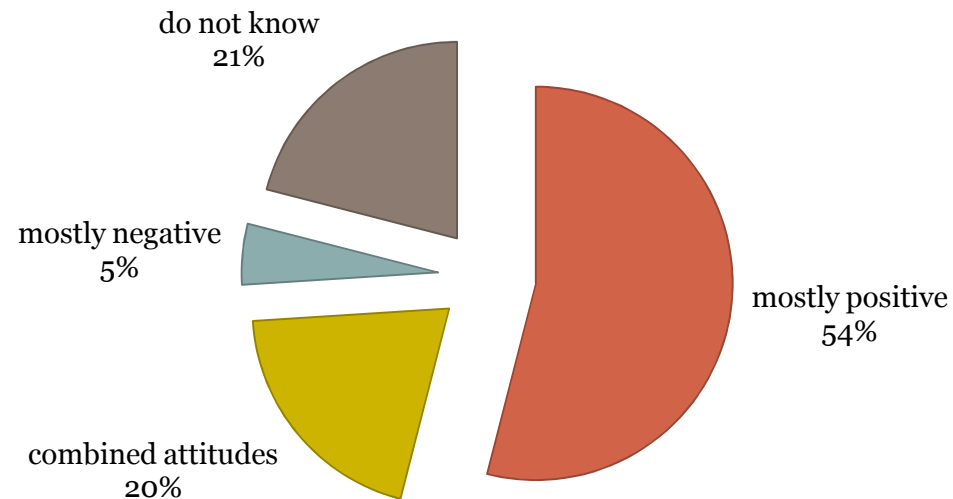
**Graph. 7. (Dis) Trust in local authorities**



# General attitudes toward decentralization



**Graph. 8. General attitudes toward decentralization**



There are two types of attitude related to decentralization and regionalization: **majority of citizens evaluate decentralization positively, while two fifths are divided into those who do not have an attitude or have mixed attitudes on this topic.**

# Individual indicators of general attitudes on decentralization



indicators (opinions, assumptions) of general attitude on decentralization and regionalization of Serbia	Attitudes toward D and RS			Ck
	Positive	Indecisive, do not know	Negative	
Bad thing is that there are too many people from Belgrade in political leadership	67	24	9	0,62
The best thing is to make decisions in the place which is closest to the one where they are applied	66	25	9	0,60
The presidents of municipalities should be chosen and set by the Republic Government	64	25	11	0,61
State property on the territory of the municipality should belong to that municipality	63	26	11	0,63
Power accumulated on one place leads to corruption and bribery	59	31	10	0,55
Division of Serbia on regions leads to collapse of the country	48	29	23	0,70
If the power is divided between republic, regions and municipalities, then the government will be more democratic, more visible and more legal	44	41	15	0,66
Decentralization and regionalization are too expensive and we are poor	30	43	27	0,63

# Survey results – the index of acceptance and rejection of decentralization and regionalization

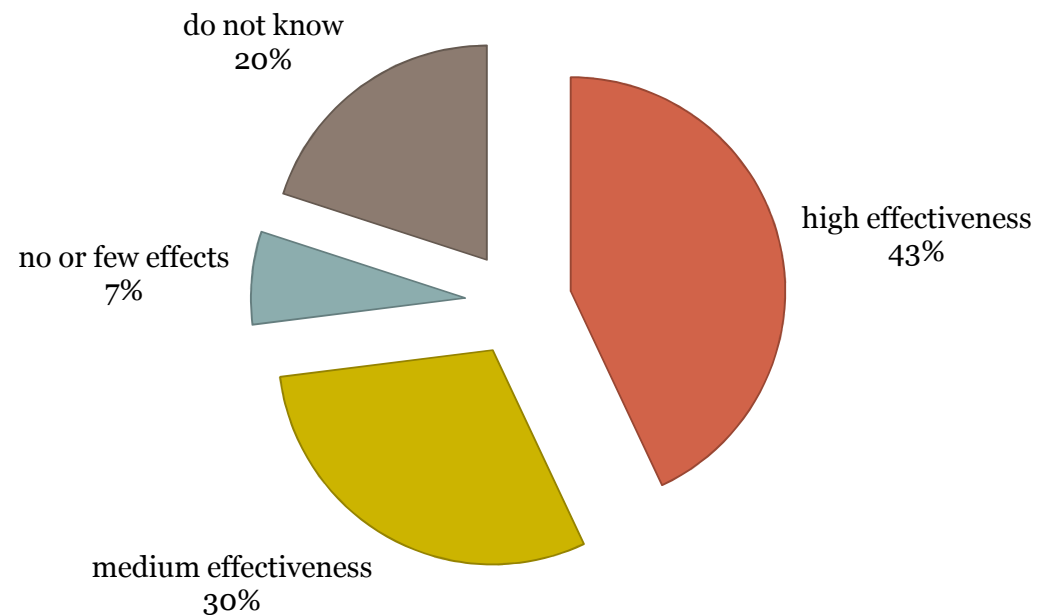


- Decentralization and regionalization are better rated in public when they are indicated through concrete steps in decentralization than when they are indicated through relation toward attitudes on decentralization. **Two thirds of examinees more or less accept concrete measures that lead toward decentralization and regionalization in Serbia** (43% extremely, 23% moderately ). **Decentralization is rejected by 6% of examinees. Somewhat more than a quarter of examinees (28%) do not have clear attitude toward decentralization:** indecisive , contradictory, lack of knowledge)
- Among five steps toward decentralization on which the examinees were making choice , the greatest support is given to:
  - Providing more money for municipalities (66% against 8% who are against),
  - 54% examinees supported increase of power for municipalities (versus 11% who were against),
  - A new division of power between the republic and municipalities was supported by 43% of examinees and were rejected by 6%,
  - That local public services should be organized by the municipality is supported by 36%, and 25% leaves that to the republic,
  - For the division of current municipalities is 24% of examinees, and the same number is against.

# Expected results of decentralization: effectiveness (doing the right things – P. Drucker)



**Graph. 9. Expected effectiveness of decentralization**

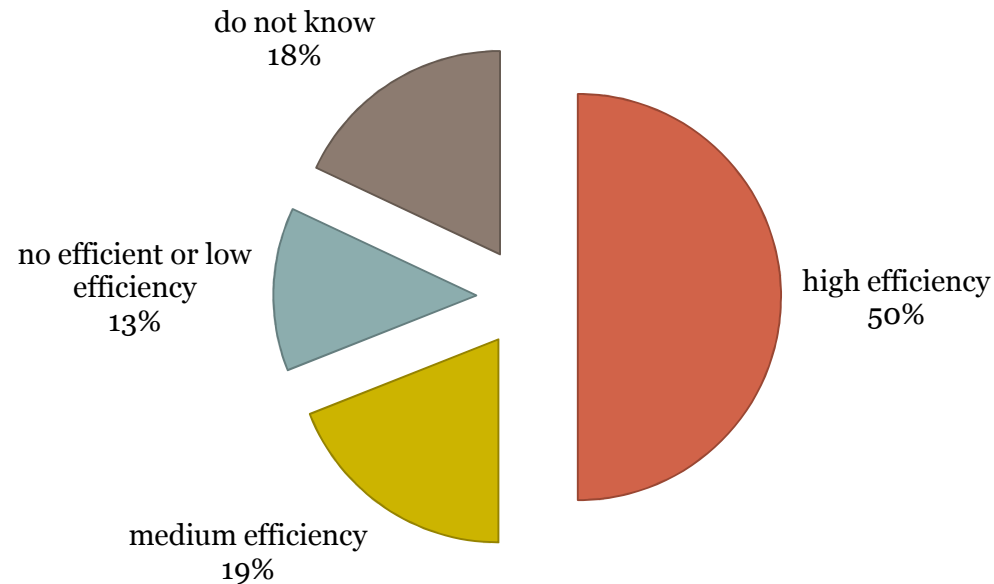


# Expected results of decentralization: efficiency



Efficiency = **doing the right things in the right way** (Peter Drucker)

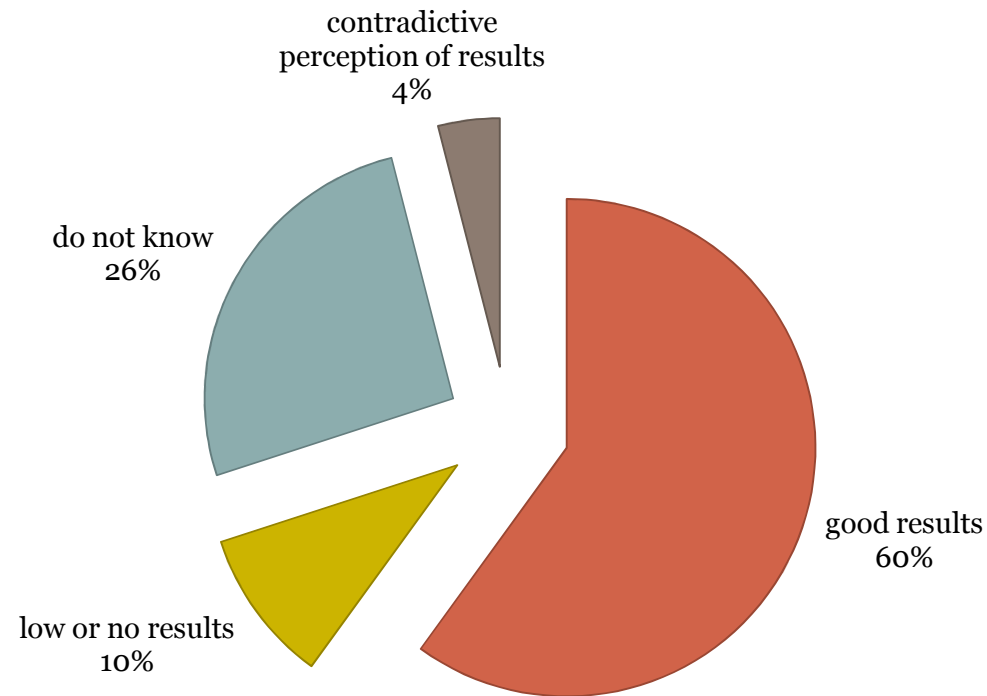
**Graph. 10. Expected efficiency of decentralization**



# Expected results of decentralization



**Graph. 11. Expected results of decentralization**



# The expectance of the decentralization effects through individual indicators



<b>If some important authorities in these areas are transferred from the republic level to regions and municipalities, what will happen to..?</b>	<b>„worse“</b>	<b>„same“</b>	<b>„better“</b>	<b>don't know</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>AS</b>
... regional development financing	7	19	56	18	100	3,85
... citizens' participation in decision making	5	25	53	17	100	3,83
... publicity of politicians' work	7	31	43	19	100	3,60
... respect of human rights	5	42	34	19	100	3,51
... national minorities rights	4	45	30	21	100	3,49
... corruption	20	30	34	16	100	3,24
... Administrative costs	23	27	31	19	100	3,15
<b>Average</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,52</b>

# Expected efficiency of decentralization through individual indicators



If some important authorities in these areas are transferred from the republic level to regions and municipalities, will the work in these institutions be better, the same or worse?	worse	The same	better	Do not know	total	AS
Utility service	12	21	53	14	100	3,63
Culture, art, sport	11	22	51	16	100	3,63
Economy	14	18	51	17	100	3,62
Urbanism and spatial plan	12	19	52	17	100	3,61
Tax payment	14	22	46	18	100	3,54
Primary and secondary schools	16	24	44	16	100	3,43
Social protection	16	25	44	15	100	3,41
Health centers	20	21	44	15	100	3,31
<b>Average</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,52</b>

## Attitude toward decentralization and political status of the examinees



Almost three fifths of “ordinary citizens” have more-less positive attitude toward decentralization, whereas four fifths of elite have the same attitude toward decentralization, which is one fifth more. However, when we include education variable into inter-correlation, then we can see that in the background of public opinion stands the education level of examinees itself, so it appears as the factor which differentiate the attitude toward decentralization.

Highly educated examinees have extremely positive attitude toward decentralization, regardless of whether they belong to “ordinary citizens” or to politicians or to creators of public opinion. On the other hand those uneducated can be found among ”ordinary citizens” and these are the ones who did not even reach the moment of considering the question relevant for the decentralization.

# Correlates of the attitudes toward decentralization



	<b>Attitude toward politics</b>	<b>Attitude toward democracy</b>	<b>The level of general culture</b>
<b>Acceptance of decentralization</b>	0,39	0,40	0,34
<b>Effectiveness of decentralization</b>	0,42	0,39	0,36
<b>Efficiency of decentralization</b>	0,38	0,39	0,32
<b>General attitude towards decentralization</b>	0,43	0,46	0,36

# Socio-demographic variables and attitude toward decentralization



## Education and attitude toward decentralization

Ck=0,37	No school	Primary	Labor school	Secondary schools	Higher or faculty	Average
Negative attitude toward DC	4	6	7	5	3	5
“Combined“ attitude toward DC	17	24	25	21	10	20
Mainly positive attitude	29	35	44	44	50	39
Positive attitude toward DC	9	9	11	20	33	15
No attitude	41	26	13	10	4	21
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100



<b>Socio-demographic variables</b>	<b>Negative attitude toward DC</b>	<b>Positive attitude toward DC</b>	<b>“Combined” attitude and no attitude</b>
Sex: female	5	49	46
Sex: male	4	60	36
Age: 18-29	4	54	42
Age: 30-39	5	65	30
Age: 40-49	5	60	35
Age: 50-59	7	57	36
Age: 60 and more	3	39	58
Education: no school	4	38	58
Education: primary	6	44	50
Education: labor schools	7	55	38
Education: secondary schools	5	64	31
Education: higher school and faculties	3	83	14
Ownership working status: owner of MiSP	2	69	29
Ownership working status: employed in private sector	8	57	35
Ownership working status: employed in public sector	4	76	20
Ownership working status: unemployed	4	53	43
Ownership working status: pensioner	6	45	49
Ownership working status: farmer	4	38	58
Ownership working status: housewife	5	38	57
Ownership working status: pupil or student	3	54	43

<b>Socio-demographic variables (per household member)</b>	<b>Negative attitude toward DC</b>	<b>Positive attitude toward DC</b>	<b>“Combined“ attitude and no attitude</b>
Average income per member: 4001-8000	4	48	48
Average income per member: 8001-12000	5	63	32
Average income per member: 12001-16000	5	54	41
Average income per member 16001-20000	3	66	31
Average income per member: 20001-28000	4	73	23
Average income per member: 2801 and more	5	78	17
The Serbs	5	56	39
The Bosniaks	3	55	42
The Vlachs	-	58	42
The Roma	14	7	79
Others	-	72	28
The atheists	3	60	37
Not a believer but celebrates some feasts	4	54	42
Go to church (temple) occasionally	5	55	40
Go to church (temple) regularly	8	50	42
Remote village	6	46	48
Suburban village	5	51	44
The periphery	4	54	42
Wider center	6	61	33
The center	4	62	34

# End of the presentation



**Thank you for your attention!**