

I shall try to combine the text of Mislav and Danijela and the new presentation of Danijela with my comment and thoughts.

This will not be easy, but it is an interesting challenge.

I would like to start with our thesis that the work of the Ostroms to realize a kind of reasonable and responsible governance helps to understand the causes (and the causers) which make sustainable development in the sense of the Brundtland report impossible. The methods of the Ostroms can help us to develop scientific approaches to elaborating strategies against the causes (and the causers) which are presently making sustainable development impossible.

The discussion on the theoretical heritage of the Ostroms, on its theoretical and practical uses, on its supporters, its critics and critical inheritors helps to bring individual and collective actors together and thereby to strengthen the forces aiming at sustainable development in the sense of the Brundtland report.

One of the main problems to be addressed will be to understand the difference between aiming at good governance and aiming at a good society having a corresponding kind of good governance.

Here we can take up the contributions by Danijela and Mislav which have the aim to strengthen social struggles around the commons by integrating a structural critique of capitalism with the imperatives of social equality, radical democracy and ecological sustainability. Beyond this Danijela and Mislav aim to make headway toward a socialist governmentality where labour, the labourers and land would have a special status.

Our friends say that they focus on Elinor Ostrom's and Branko Horvat's

- understanding of moving 'beyond states and markets',
- their view on ownership and its relation to production and use of resources, and
- the way they treat the underlying fundamentals of economic growth and material sustainability.

While Horvat is motivated by abolishing exploitation of labour by capital, Ostrom is motivated by avoiding unsustainable exploitation of resources. In stark contrast to Ostrom, Horvat represents an attempt at theorizing a radically transformed society which follows after capitalism.

For Horvat capitalism and state-socialism are both inefficient and politically unacceptable – hence he develops the theory of the self- managed socialist enterprise. It is the central institution based on the principles of participatory democracy and social ownership. Horvat stresses the role of the state as a vehicle of domination.

Danijela and Mirek understand societal transformation as a process of expanding social power over as many domains of social life as possible.

The Ostroms have made it clear that commons as resources should be distinguished from particular forms of property rights.

Elinor Ostrom was centrally concerned with principles of governance. She strived to identify key principles for successful collective action. So she emphasized local needs and the task of ensuring that those affected by a given rule participate in the making of it. For bringing about sustainable and equitable governance regimes collective action needs to be deeply democratic, reliant on self-organization and firmly based on the principle of subsidiarity. The basic principle regulating the way in which actors should develop binding rules that govern their collective action should be democratic deliberation.

In addition to Ostrom's focus on self-governing systems, she has analyzed ways in which such communities form nested tiers and overlapping entities in a polycentric system of governance.

She has attempted to identify the main foundational principles of successful collective action. She has relied upon an understanding of human societies as complex adaptive systems, composed by a large number of elements which 'produce emergent properties that are not easy to predict by analysing the separate parts of a system'.

Horvat deals with societal hierarchies. He distinguishes between two forms of hierarchy:

*Controlling* hierarchy is the end product of class struggle in capitalism or state-socialism that can be removed.

*Coordinating* hierarchy is the result of the functional division of labour and cannot be removed.

This distinction corresponds to a division of a self-governing economic unit into two different domains, one in which each community member can participate as it is concerned with value judgments, and the other in which decisions are made by experts.

Horvat and Ostrom devoted attention to devising principles of self-government of small communities, inescapably raising the question of scaling up direct democratic principles to address global problems. But Horvat regards the participating actors as members of a society with or without special social hierarchies and with concrete coordination hierarchies in different social forms.

Ostrom advanced the concept of polycentricity, particularly in the context of climate change. Polycentric systems are characterized by multiple governing authorities at differing scales rather than a mono-centric unit, where each unit exercises considerable independence to make norms and rules within a specific domain, while using local knowledge and adapting over time.

This is interesting for Danijela and Mislav who underline that in the theory of self-management, rights to resources are derived from work and participation, not from ownership. All those who participate in a common have an equal voice in making decisions on the provisions and rules which govern its management. Apart from fulfilling the imperative of individual emancipation, pursuing such a strategy has important implications for the viability of a materially sustainable development of human societies.

Our two friends regard capitalism as inherently reliant on economic growth, and with capital accumulation occurring at a compound rate of growth, the ensuing threats to land and labour escalate in scale and intensity over time. The current developmental model which relies on indefinite growth is leading to a collapse of the material base of human life.

Horvat and Ostrom discuss modes of production with respect to their efficiency, which opens the question on the end pursued by this efficiency. Ostrom's crucial contribution lies in theorizing principles of collective action which are successful in managing natural resources sustainably – that is, extracting principles of governance from those communities that have learned to live within the natural limits of their environment.

Danijela and Mislav have contextualized the struggles for the commons within the recent history of Left thinking and have emphasized the need for a renewal of Marxist theory in understanding contemporary political economies of Southeastern Europe.

They have offered an experimental juxtaposition of Ostrom's theory of the commons and Horvat's theory of self-management in Yugoslavia as a way of advancing the theory of the commons. Ostrom and Horvat have raised several interrelated questions which are crucially important for developing a socialist governmentality capable of addressing central problems of 21st century societies: Horvat's discussion of the Yugoslav experience has reminded them that progressive politics must not stop at defending existing public institutions and services against advancing commodification, but that it must also incorporate a critique of the state as a vehicle of domination.

Danijela and Mislav do suggest that the current focus on the political claim for common ownership rights as a crucial institutional innovation important for the socialist project is based on an overemphasis. They have shown that the specific Yugoslav experience has not been able to solve the problem of class control. They do see the crucial contribution of the theory of self-management in the realization that only devising democratic governance principles would disable the formation of class control and hierarchy.

But I would like to mention three weaknesses of the approach of our friends:

Their notion of socialist governmentality is highlighted as something for the society to come after our present societies, but it is not conceptually elaborated as a radical criticism of the mainstream debate on governance. It is also not conceptually

elaborated as a project for dealing with the current crucial social, ecological and global challenges, i.e. as a project of and for socialist transformation.

Actually, Danijela and Mislav also do abstract from property as an appropriation process and from the challenge to intervene in the current capital accumulation process which threatens to destroy all possibilities for producing a society beyond the on-going social and ecological destruction and therefore would make any kind of socialist transition utterly impossible.

Therefore supporters of socialist governmentality will have to focus on the social nature and the power structure of the actors participating in the official governance discourse (and its ways of being “put into practice”) which excludes actors and which will have to be researched and highlighted. They will have to develop theoretical approaches to the present reality, as well as conceptions for political strategies to improve the living conditions of the socially and globally weakest, to strengthen their position in the society and so begin to change the society.

Within modern societies “society” means the summing up of individuals, but also, and above all, of the unequal relations between these individuals as involved in the complex social construction with its complex relations between individuals and society, as well as the interrelations between individuals, society, and nature, or metabolism.

So one of the challenges is to show the chances and the limits of the theory of the Ostroms, of the different discourses on it and of the reflection of both within strategies for dealing with the current fundamental social, ecological and global challenges.

Danijela and Mislav stay on a too abstract level of the debate.

Such terms as “capitalism”, “capital”, “accumulation”, “class” are needed, but do not yet adequately appropriate the complexity of social inequalities and social relations which has to be reflected in working on political strategies.

Modern socialist researchers have to address most especially the role of capitalist oligarchies and of financialization and therefore have to analyse the concrete reproduction of social and global hierarchies, as well as of property and power relations.

In addressing these tasks the controversial heritage of the Ostroms could be helpful. But at the same time it needs to be criticized, because it can also be used for improving strategies aiming at reproducing and at strengthening the existing power structure with its ensuing tendency towards social and ecological destruction. In seeking possibilities of political action within contradictions, in analyzing and discussing these issues, we have, in particular, identified three political areas of action, which are interconnected (or, at least, liable to be connected):

The active striving for democratic, for social and for ecological standards (1), for the maintenance and democratization of the public sphere, above all of public finance (2) and for a constructive local and regional development (3).

Participatory processes as such do constitute an essential connecting bridge between (1), (2) and (3). We do see really existing and potential possibilities for people here to appropriate knowledge and capacities for solidarity-based cooperation, for dealing actively with the causes and perpetrators of social and ecological problems, and – in so doing – for creating (or becoming able to create) viable political alliances and for positively changing (or becoming able to change) a kind of collective and social life pursued in a sustainable way of action, via solidarity networking, locally and regionally, supraregionally, on the European level and globally.