

***Between Town and Countryside: Social Networks and Personal Trust of
Urban Agrarian Entrepreneurs***

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Abstract

The paper focuses on trust/mistrust relations, strategies of cooperation, and emerging conflicts throughout the establishment of capitalist reforms in Bulgaria after 1989. In this frame, trust building, as a key challenge for a successful transformation process, is analyzed as a premise for cooperation and social integration in the process of reforming governance, establishing local institutions, rebuilding civil society, and validating the acknowledged human and natural potential of a “fragile state” like Bulgaria. Of specific significance is the analysis of the so-called “low-trust societies” in which individuals possess mainly personalised types of trust and cooperation and are wary of systemic trust. Low-trust societies as the post-socialist Bulgarian one are permeated by an organisational culture based on highly personalised networks. Although its members might consider such type of relationships, together with the related action strategies, as immoral, abhorrent, and illegal, these are used because being socially legitimate they represent the best way for the parties involved to protect themselves from the dangers and traps scattered over the entire public sphere.

The analysis of the empirical materials reveals that the agents involved in present capitalist agriculture do not follow the abstract model proposed by transition/consolidation theories but rather they confirm the validity of the *multiple modernities* approach proposed by S.N Eisenstadt.