
Political Theory

Pregledni članak
316.42.063.3(497.5)
Primljeno: 1. srpnja 2008.

The Globalisation Theory in Croatia

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Summary

The author gives a review of the globalisation debate in Croatia. According to him, there was no globalisation discussion in Croatia during the nineties, the so-called golden age of globalisation. Still, many articles and books have been published after 2000. The author claims that two collections of essays, *Globalisation and Democracy* and *Globalisation and its Reflections in Croatia* are the most important contributions to the early stage of the discussion. There are four questions being asked in these collections: what globalisation is, what are its normative implications, whether globalisation is an old or a new phenomena, and what are its costs and benefits for the small nation states.

In the second part of the article, the author reviews the ‘current’ state of discussion. He gives a critical review of the new books on this subjects (*Politics of Identity*, *The West on Trial* and *The World Empire and its Enemies*). In these books the same questions are repeated, but globalisation is no longer considered as something set in stone by the laws of history or by the activities of multinational corporations.

Key words: globalisation debate, Croatia, culture, identity, liberalism, meta-politics, nation-state



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Introduction

We can safely say that globalisation is perhaps the most important issue of our time. Consequently, social sciences all over the world produce countless texts, i.e. books, on globalisation and its consequences. In Croatia the situation is similar. Dozens of texts and a comparatively large number of books have been published. This is quite surprising, for in the 1990s, the so-called 'globalisation decade', not only were there no consistent and elaborate theoretical contributions from Croatian scientists, but the Croatian publishers, for their part, displayed no particular interest in translating, at the very least, the key studies on globalisation. All this in spite of the fact that even then one had at one's disposal a 'boundless range of literature... testifying to the relevance and currency of the issue' (Prpić, 2004: 1). The new decade, however, brought about a change, with the translation of the first volume of Castells' trilogy, edited for the Croatian public by the sociologist Vjeran Katunarić. In subsequent years the remaining volumes of the trilogy were translated, along with many other central theoretical works on globalisation (Beck, 2001; 2001a; 2004; Friedman, 2003; Giddens, 2005; Gray, 2002; Hirst/Thompson, 2001; Ohmae, 2007).

The said neglect of the globalisation issue is also due to the fact that in the 1990s Croatia had to fight a war for independence, and that tremendous efforts were put into territorial stabilisation of the nation-state. The political turn following the rise to power of the left-liberal government in 2000 was accompanied by a change of the intellectual atmosphere. As a consequence of the simultaneous abandonment of nationalist politics and inclination towards a more liberal one, the Croatian public developed a sudden interest in the globalisation process. Very soon, however, the basic idea of globalisation and the economic, social and political unification of the world came to be regarded ambivalently. Union leaders and some entrepreneurs perceived globalisation as an almost fatal 'natural disaster', while others, mainly political leaders, some intellectuals and business consultants, hailed the globalisation and came to advocate greenfield investment and radical change in Croatian work habits. Ideological differences also arose, since the traditional left/right divide began to fade. Thus, adherents of the left-liberal government, embracing the rhetoric of economic globalisation, stepped forward with statements such as this: 'My perception is that left and right differ primarily in their relation towards the economy. From this perspective I am... a moderate right-winger, at present, I take the side of the capital'. Accordingly, many political leaders came to assert that their new task in the age of globalisation is precisely to provide favourable legal conditions for an inflow of foreign investment. They announced therewith that the key tension in the globalisation age was not one between labour and capital, but rather one between capital and politicians representing the interests of the nation-state.

The opening of the globalisation debate in Croatia should also be looked at in the context of the above-described political and socio-economical changes. Even though many different studies were published, the very beginning was marked by two edited volumes. The first, entitled *Globalizacija i njene refleksije u Hrvatskoj (Globalisation and its Reflections in Croatia, 2001)*, was edited by Matko Meštrović, social theorist and a senior researcher at the Economic Institute in Zagreb. The second volume, entitled *Globalizacija i demokracija (Globalisation and Democracy)*, was edited by the experienced political theorist Ivan Prpić. *Globalisation and Democracy*, which was not published until 2004, consists of papers delivered in the autumn of 2002 at the equally named scientific conference on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. In essence, most of the texts published in the two volumes dealt with three, i.e. four problems. The first is undoubtedly the definition of globalisation, while the second, and often stressed, problem is its history, i.e. the question when did it begin. Still, early in this decade the Croatian authors were primarily interested in the advantages and/or disadvantages that globalisation brings to small nation-states like Croatia. We must not forget here the normative assessment of globalisation, which would prove to be largely dependant on the theoretical (even ideological) inclinations of a particular author. Thus, at least on the level of the basic problems, the debate on globalisation in Croatia actually was more or less in accord with the debate going on in the world (Scholte, 2000; Wallace Brown, 2008).

The first objective of this article is to offer a critical overview of the basic focal points in this ‘early’ stage of the globalisation debate, drawing upon the above described theoretical standpoints. Its second task is to portray the actual situation of the debate in Croatia, which (for the most part) is no longer conducted through edited volumes, but through an increasing number of books written by a single author. Among these, a prominent position belongs to books whose authors have a developed theoretical position on globalisation and its implications. I will refer here to three books. The first of the three, according to the date of publication, is *Proces zapadu: metapolitički ogledi (The West on Trial: Metapolitical Essays, 2003)* written by the philosopher Mario Kopačić. Already the title makes it plain enough that the author draws upon the tradition of the European (radical) intellectual right and it is an attempt to ‘metapoliticise’ globalisation from such a starting point. The second relevant book draws upon the opposite tradition. In his book *Politika identiteta: kultura kao nova ideologija (Politics of Identity: Culture as a New Ideology, 2005)*, Žarko Paić, a productive social theorist, builds upon the theoretical influences of post-modern, i.e. cultural studies. With such a methodological, i.e. theoretical-political starting point, he perceives globalisation as a ‘triumph of freedom in the enjoyment of ever new forms of consumption’. This we can perhaps counter by a ‘re-politicisation of cul-

ture', i.e. by seeking out its 'original sense' (Paić, 2005: 12). Finally, the third book, *Svjetsko carstvo i njegovi neprijatelji (The World Empire and Its Enemies, 2007)*, written by the distinguished liberal philosopher and social theorist Darko Polšek, puts forward a somewhat bitter recapitulation of the operation of global capitalism. After having fervently advocated liberalism, i.e. Fukuyama's 'end of History', from the late 1980s, he now argues that 'the philosophical optimism of the 1990s was completely inappropriate' (Polšek, 2007: 12). Except for raising the question of the 'irreversibility' of globalisation¹, the three books do not open any new problems in comparison with the 'early' stage of the globalisation debate. They are, however, theoretically and methodologically more systematic and round up (this applies in particular to Paić's book), derived with relative precision from the particular theoretical perspectives taken up by their authors.

The 'Early' Stage of the Globalisation Debate

As I already pointed out, the two edited volumes (*Globalisation and its Reflections in Croatia* and *Globalisation and Democracy*) did in fact initiate the academic debate on globalisation. Intellectuals of a nationalist sensibility soon joined in with two readers of their own: *Globalizacija u Hrvatskoj (Globalisation in Croatia)*, *Hrvatska u globalizaciji (Croatia in Globalisation)* and *Globalizacija i identitet: rasprave o globalizaciji, nacionalnom identitetu i kulturi politike (Globalisation and Identity: Debates on Globalisation, National Identity and Culture of Politics)*. The entire debate was marked by three, possibly four, problems.

The first problem was the definition of globalisation. In this context I must stress the contribution of Ivan Prpić, who devoted particular attention to the concept of globalisation. He argues that globalisation is a 'process of establishing a historically novel nexus of multiple connections between states and societies, as well as within them, which constitute the present-day global system' (Prpić, 2004: 1). His definition clearly outlines the second problem to come up in the Croatian debate: is globalisation a new phenomenon or a mere continuation of old trends? In his concise preface to *Globalisation and Democracy* (GD) there is no doubt that globalisation is a historically new process and phenomenon, because it seeks to cancel out the legal, cultural and economic differences caused by territorial demarcation, i.e. by the existence of (in most cases) nation-states. Globalisation becomes manifest in two ways: first, as a natural necessity it gradually encompasses the

¹ I must point out that Dag Strpić commented on the issue in the 'early' stage of the debate, saying that 'regardless of how much we support it, make it legitimate or declare it to be irreversible, globalisation as we know it today will unavoidably fail. At least in respect of the goals proclaimed by its champions' (Strpić, 2004: 54).

whole world, thus acquiring a spatial dimension; second, 'it simultaneously permeates more and more spheres of man's activity (finance, property, technology, science, consumption, lifestyle...)' (3). All those changes confronted the social sciences, and political science in particular, with considerable difficulties. For it is by no means easy to capture such a radically altered world with traditional concepts. In that respect Prpić advocates the 'laying of a new methodological foundation of political science or the quest for a new scientific paradigm' (3). Matko Meštrović, editor of the reader *Globalisation and its Reflections in Croatia* (GRC), seems to possess a similar methodological sensibility. He thinks that it is no longer possible to understand all consequences of global changes on the local level, and that it is 'necessary to deconstruct the firmly established conceptual categories' (Meštrović, 2001: 1).

In his text 'Globalisation or Journey into a New Division of the Globe' (GD), Davor Rodin, professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences, takes a somewhat different approach to the problem of defining globalisation. To be sure, he tends, like Prpić, to consider globalisation primarily as a phenomenon of de-territorialisation and de-temporalisation, i.e. as a suspension of the time/space distinction.² According to Rodin, the compression of time and space is caused by the micro-electronic revolution, which has made it possible for 'time, space and laws... like fictional entities, to become questionable, and this results in discomfort and anxiety' (Rodin, 2004: 11). Unlike Prpić's text, Rodin's is actually characterised by a post-modernist tone, since the phenomenon which he terms 'globalism' (here Rodin draws no clear distinction between 'globalism' and 'globalisation') is considered neither a theory nor an ideology, 'but a hermeneutic situation... affecting all groups'. He seeks to find that which he refers to as the 'new post-modern paradigm of inscenation' of a global political community, which, in point of fact, is yet to emerge. This should happen when 'new borders of distribution of the world's resources' are established, ones which 'would ignore the borders of the traditional nation-state' (Rodin, 2004: 15). On such a methodological foundation Rodin strives to find a subject of globalisation which would establish some sort of generality. In contrast to Beck, he does not focus on corporations and the potential for a possible politicisation of consumption, neither, as Hardt and Negri in *Empire*, does he focus on the multitude (*multitudo*). He actually tries to avoid the bourgeois/proletarian, *Communist Manifesto*-type of controversial dualism, and opts for the 'media' as subjects which make possible a new 'inscenation' of a global political community in globalism. Thus he argues that globalism becomes an answer to 'both the

² We come across a similar standpoint in the reader *Globalisation and Identity*. Đuro Njavro argues that 'present-day communicational and informational interconnectedness has cancelled out the relevance of space, and we are witness to the phenomenon of compression of time and space, which is a prerequisite to the globalisation process' (Njavro, 2004: 34).

xenophobic thesis of incompatibility of different cultures, and the colonising universalism of European modernity...' (23).

Although it is potentially problematic that Rodin seeks to suspend (European) modernity, while in fact he maintains it with different means, his (and Prpić's) method raises at least one more point of contention. Obviously they are both theorists who perceive globalisation as a geographical, i.e. spatial phenomenon. Rodin asserts unequivocally that 'globalism is not an application of capitalism, *technopole* and liberal-democratic state to the entire globe, but a simultaneous discovery of new borders, which, in... other media divide the globe, uncovering in it resources that are not attached to any space or time' (23). On the other hand, Prpić accepts the time/space compression thesis with no special interest for the methodological implications thereof. The problem is this thesis can hardly be used as the foundation for a theory of globalisation (Rosenberg, 2005: 13-15; 2000). Namely, since no one has ever demonstrated clearly that globalisation is a new set of social relations which represent a basis for spatial-temporal expansion or compression, already in the early 1990s was it trendily accepted that everything ought to be founded upon expansion and/or compression as such (or 'inscenation', as Rodin puts it). The more recent theoretical research has shown that, with no adequate social-theoretical foundation, it is hardly plausible to ascribe causal consequences to the above hypothesis. Researchers have accepted this with relatively feeble resistance, and it is likely to exert an influence on researchers in Croatia as well.

In his text 'Freedom and Globalisation' (GD), Vladimir Gligorov, the liberal economic theorist, presents, though with some reserve, a liberal defence of globalisation. He discusses criticisms directed against liberalism, i.e. against globalisation. His central viewpoint is that, in spite of all difficulties, liberalism should not be rejected, and that, on the contrary, one should 'keep tearing down the walls which constrain people and nations' (Gligorov, 2004: 76). He also tackles the problem of defining globalisation, which he perceives as the 'liberalisation of global economy', i.e. the 'extension of market relations beyond state borders' (60). In his view, globalisation in the normative sense is essentially a positive phenomenon, which 'collides with democracy due to the national character of the state, and not to its international character'. This conflict can be solved in two ways: through limitation of international trade or through internationalisation of political institutions.

Concerning the EU, Gligorov argues that, from the viewpoint of small nation-states, this community is a sort of globalisation, for at the present time it implies, first of all, the liberalisation of the European economy. He asserts quite resolutely that there is no compatibility between globalisation and socialism, or between globalisation and nationalism. In respect of his

postulate regarding nationalism and globalisation, I must point out that historical sociology would disagree. The history of relations between sovereignty and transnationality has been explored, for instance, by Michael Mann in his comprehensive work *The Sources of Social Power*. Essentially inspired by Weber, he demonstrates that capitalism was historically accompanied by nationalist organising, i.e. aggressive geopolitics. Mann suggests that capitalism and industrialism were ‘three-dimensional’. In fact, market competition ‘was inherently transnational, offering diffuse profit opportunities to property owners wherever commodities could be produced and exchanged, regardless of political boundaries’ (Mann, 1993: 255). The second dimension has to do with the fact that the above mentioned process leads to an ever more pronounced embeddedness of politicised social classes in ‘their own’ territorial state. And, finally, the third dimension puts particular emphasis on the fact that, as much as ‘capitalism became caged by the state, it picked up colonial and European territorial rivalries’. This goes to show that capitalism and industrialism ‘were always and simultaneously transnational, national, and nationalist, generating complex, variable power relations’ (255). So it was historically, for sure, but how do things stand today?

Apparently, the situation has not changed in essence, since globalisation, as Prpić argues, is a contradictory process which does indeed unify the world on one level, but on another, new divisions emerge or else old ones are aggravated (rich-poor, north-south, centre-periphery). The said divisions go hand in hand with the legitimacy deficit which accompanies large corporations, because they reach unauthorised decisions that affect the lives of many people. Alongside the idea of legitimacy deficit, considerable attention was attracted by the opinion that, in conditions of globalisation, ‘the borders of the classical – territorial, cultural, nation- – state become a superfluous obstacle to rational management of globalisation’ (Prpić, 2004: 2). To put it in a more clear-cut way, the nation-state as the key political subject ‘gradually ceases to be the fundamental factor of the international order...’. Here I must point out that this widely accepted notion in the globalisation theory of the 1990s did not manage to hold its ground either theoretically or empirically. Clearly the states have not ceased to be subjects of the international order, and theoretical research has shown that the process of transnationalisation and the emergence of nation-states unfold simultaneously (see Rosenberg, 2005). Again, stated in a more clear-cut way, capitalism in fact does not need globalisation, at least not one which proceeds from an intrinsic need to put an end to ‘geopolitical fragmentation’ in order to ‘expand its own reach or further its development’ (Rosenberg, 2005: 25).

Therefore, although we must conclude that global capitalism and the nation-state can be compatible both historically and presently, things are different when it comes to a small nation-state such as Croatia. Within the context of the Croatian debate on globalisation this matter has been dealt

with by the economist Zvonimir Baletić, member of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is a researcher who has probably written on globalisation more than any other author, so it is hardly surprising that he figures in no less than three volumes published in the ‘early’ stage of the globalisation debate. Baletić is of the opinion that globalisation is a ‘very old historical process, noted whenever someone spread his power, i.e. the scope of his activity, on the global scale, from Alexander of Macedonia to George Bush’ (Baletić, 2003: 13). Interestingly enough, however, he also thinks that globalisation is a ‘new concept’, i.e. that ‘before 1990 the word globalisation simply did not exist’³.

What is Baletić’s take on the definition of globalisation? In distinction to others, Baletić stresses the ‘political sense’ thereof. Globalisation as such is a ‘condition of hierarchical interdependence of the states’ activity, in which the means and possibilities of activity are not equally accessible to all’ (Baletić, 2003: 14). This clearly implies that, in his view, technology cannot be an autonomous vehicle of present-day globalisation, but that the key factors are ‘projects of power expansion, well thought out projects of certain forces – whether economic, political or financial – which seek to control certain processes and activities in as large a space as possible...’ (13). In that respect Croatia’s position is good, since ‘we have been globalised by others, rather than ourselves’ (Baletić, 2003: 15). It all resulted from ‘non-critical acceptance of the ideology of those who have supremacy and who want to pursue their interests here...’ (15). The responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the ‘conservative counterrevolution of the 80s’, which engendered the model of global free market, but in fact gave birth to ‘ideological violence over creative thinking, historical experience and actual relations and needs...’ (Baletić, 2004: 162). The problem, especially for small countries, is related to the fact that the above mentioned model, on the one hand, supports the ‘interests and aspirations of capital power bearers’, while on the other it conceals the real power relations.

As the finest expert on the history of economic thought in Croatia, Baletić sought to demonstrate the intellectual range of the project of introducing a global free market. He poses the question ‘how could Adam Smith have possibly become the idol of radical liberalism? Namely, ‘the radical spirit of *laissez-faire* differs greatly from both the spirit and the letter of the work of Adam Smith’ (Baletić, 2004: 158). In his analysis of Smith’s work he convincingly shows that ‘one needs to have understanding of human incentives not in order to make room for their unrestrained activity, but in or-

³ I must say that such an assertion is not commonly found in the literature on globalisation. Namely, the noun ‘globalisation’ can be found as early as in 1961 in the Webster American-English Dictionary, while Reiser and Davies came up with the verb ‘to globalise’ and the noun ‘globalism’ back in the 1940s (Scholte, 2000: 16, 43).

der to be able to direct them towards the common good'. Precisely Smith is not opposed *a priori* to state and tradition. Baletić finds a solution to this riddle in the fact that adherents of liberal enlightenment claimed Smith for their own and used him ideologically 'for an apology of the political project of liberal reform of the capitalist system'. This reform was supposed to create a new universal and rational system derived from human nature itself.

If we go beyond the boundaries of the history of economic thought, Baletić's understanding of globalisation and its consequences should be placed in the proximity of theorists such as, for instance, John Gray and Max Weber. With regard to Gray, Baletić translated his book *False Dawn* and shares his fundamental thought that 'the idea of a unified global free market system is a utopian idea, which has a long tradition dating back to the times of the Enlightenment...' (Baletić, 2002: 11). No single way of ordering economy can rightfully claim universality, because 'the world is plural, and plural it will remain forever' (12)⁴. Beside this reserve towards the free market as an utopian idea, a typical feature of Baletić's writings is the notion that national interests ought to be protected through use of instruments offered by the nation-state. This, however, is problematic, since the states, as traditional bearers of self-confidence, social cohesion and collective security, 'have become the main targets of attack of globalisation forces...' (Baletić, 2001: 191). Within this context, Croatia has 'entered unprepared in the insufficiently transparent world of great market forces and interest networks' (192). Here Baletić is plain-speaking: 'The foreigners have taken what interested them most – the information, financial and commodity markets'. It must be added, though, that, in his view, 'this would not be tragic in and of itself if the process worked both ways, and if through it we affirmed ourselves as a global factor and freed up space for our own activity...' (192).

This is where his standpoint can be related to the one which Weber developed in his text 'The Nation-State and Economic Policy' (Weber, 1994). It is well-known that Weber approves of the nation-state, although not as such, but first and foremost as an instrument of the nation. Consequently, he is interested above all in political leadership, i.e. in political ma-

⁴ In Croatia, a similar thesis is put forward by the economist Đuro Njavro. Njavro argues that globalisation represents a 'threat to the cultural and national identities which constitute the world's variety' (Njavro, 2004: 35). He refers to Fukuyama, who announced early in the 1990s 'the 'definitive political neutralisation of nationalism' in conditions of all-embracing centralisation and linguistic unification of the world'. This, however, is hampered precisely by 'the strengthening of cultural particularisms and the affirmation of national identities... (as the)... greatest opponent to the unification represented by the market rationalism and the global technological revolution'. Thus, in contrast to Fukuyama's thesis on some sort of universalisation of the world, it must be said that 'the world's social system can function only as a pluralistic system composed of different national and cultural identity, the autonomy of which must be preserved' (36).

turity of a class or a stratum able to lead Germany. On the other hand, with respect to his 'science' which nowadays would be termed (political) economy, he is well aware that its postulates are not to be unquestionably accepted. Namely, Weber did not share the widespread view of the time that 'political economy is able to derive ideals of its 'own' from its subject matter' (Weber, 1994: 18). Indeed, he rejects the 'independent' criteria of the science of economy, since 'in the final analysis, processes of economic development are power struggles too, and the ultimate and decisive interests which economic policy must serve are the interests of national power, whenever these interests are in question' (16). Weber unequivocally states: 'The economic policy of a German state, and equally, the criterion of value used by a German economic theorist, can therefore only be a German policy or criterion' (15). In that sense, 'the science of political economy is political science. It is a servant of politics, not day to day politics of persons and classes who happen to be ruling at any given time, but the enduring power-political interests of a nation'. In short, Weber thinks that the German economic and political power-interests must have 'the final and decisive say in all questions of German economic policy...' (17).

In his writings, Baletić is inclined towards a more moderate variant of Weber's above-stated view. With regard to the science of economy, he starts from the assumption that capitalism is an 'evolutionary phenomenon which has been historically realised in different cultural traditions and civilisational frameworks' (Baletić, 2004: 162). However, present-day science of economy imposes the free-market model as the universal solution. He is reluctant to embrace such a 'recipe', and believes that the economic policy based on such principles let to Croatia's stumble.

Still, there is more than one 'culprit'! First of all, the lack of expertise of international factors and the pressure they exert. However, 'some of the essential strategic decisions reached by the state organs were certainly not dictated from abroad', and for them the highest political and social elites in Croatia must accept full responsibility (Baletić, 2001: 193). If, on the other hand, the errors 'were committed under pressure of certain domestic interests, the bodies which committed them must nonetheless be held responsible for acting contrary to the common interest'. Two factors must be taken into consideration here: the lack of financial resources in some nation-states, and 'strong internal forces which perceive their own interest in de-regulation, reduction of social rights and increase of debts'. The said 'internal forces' are to be found primarily in the financial and import sector. This is to suggest, according to Baletić, that the development (and internationalisation) of capitalism in Croatia has engendered significant differences between the interest of individuals and groups on the one hand and the interest of the political community on the other. Max Weber also stresses this problem: 'expanded economic community is just another form of the struggle of the na-

tions with each other, one which has not eased the struggle to defend one's own culture but made it more difficult, because this enlarged economic community summons material interests within the body of the nation to ally themselves with it in the fight against the future of the nation' (Weber, 1994: 16).

Baletić has been striving for years to alter the course of economic policy in Croatia, but so far to no avail. Not even the change in government could give prominence to his suggestions. In point of fact, each government preserved many of the elements against which his criticism was directed: the 'non-realistic' exchange rate of the local currency, the ceding of the banking sector to foreigners, the sale of national property to foreigners as a mode of settling foreign debts, the influence of foreign factors in the reaching of every relevant economic and financial decision... In this way, insists Baletić, we fail to 'turn our state, our institutions, into subjects capable of their own reproduction', and sink ever deeper into a 'debtor's globalisation'.

The Current Debate On Globalisation

1. The End of Liberal Globalisation?

In the second stage of the globalisation debate in Croatia, a number of authors wrote books which scrutinise the actual reality of globalisation from specific theoretical perspectives. One of them is *The World Empire and Its Enemies* (2007), written by the distinguished liberal sociologist and philosopher Darko Polšek. The book's title is clearly an allusion to Karl Popper's work *Open Society and Its Enemies*. As a matter of fact, Polšek professes in his book a certain disappointment 'due to the abandonment of the ideal of a liberal, even extremely liberal, society which was once symbolised by America' (Polšek, 2007: 9). This prompted him to write a record of the years when capitalism and democracy began to turn into a completely different regime, possibly a 'neo-feudalism' (11, 12).

According to Polšek, a time of imperialism has come, in which individual voices are no longer heard. A time when 'virtues are quite still, a time of unhappy awareness when one has no other option left but to be a stoic, a sceptic...' (194). It seems that September 11, 2001 was a turning point, because since that day events 'have become sinister not only in respect of new and unpredictable threats from international terrorism and the only remaining super-power, but also because entire generations might well forget the models of freedom and democracy' (114). While before September 11 one could argue that globalisation was legitimate due to its 'unique, transparent and relatively equitable criterion of justice: efficiency' (47), in this decade everything has been turned upside down by 'asymmetric wars'. This provided the opponents of 'open society' with a series of arguments, 'not neces-

sarily just against the remaining super-powers, but, much graver still, arguments in favour of interventionist measures, local ideological battles and all kinds of warfare' (47).

In that sense, Polšek is primarily disappointed by the fact that the 'transition from ideas of liberalism (freedom and equity of the market) into brutal imperialism was so abrupt', and that it was succoured by politicians from the countries which he refers to as 'models of democracy'. Thus, what he terms 'the world empire' (capitalism plus democracy in a global order of free countries) lost the will to export its values into countries which are chronically deficient in liberal democracy. This situation differs entirely from the one following the collapse of totalitarian ideologies, when 'it seemed that every social system in the future would have to take into account that a democratic and capitalist regime yields the best results, and therefore seems to be the only legitimate ideological option capable of survival' (25). Does the 'world empire' presently have an ideology? Polšek merely notes that, back in the 1990s, the US still sought justification for its political activity in the belief in freedom and equality, and in the striving towards a liberal society in which the state is but 'the least of evils we know of'. On the international level the states were to cooperate in the UN. However, as Polšek puts it, 'it was an illusion' (10).

The matter of concert in all this are reactions to the poor condition of global capitalism and a possible reaction, i.e. retaliation of politics. Retaliation of politics can take place, as history shows, in the form of totalitarian regimes. Polšek demonstrates that chances for such a development vary from country to country. The countries which have a 'strong state' and relatively developed social networks of aid to the under-privileged classes have a 'better' foundation for totalitarianism than individualistic countries, for their structure 'is more apt to produce a more systematic, but also a potentially more unhealthy reaction to the alleged danger of globalisation – namely, scepticism towards democracy and capitalism' (41).

With regard to a possible totalitarian reaction to globalisation, the book *The World Empire and Its Enemies* should be assessed together with another Polšek's book, which is partly devoted to globalisation and its implications: the collection of essays entitled *Zapisi iz treće kulture (Writings from a Third Culture, 2003)*. Admittedly, the latter book was written with much more liberal enthusiasm, demonstrating that economic *laissez-faire* is 'de facto the only policy which is in accordance with the trends of globalisation' (2003: 117). In both books he writes about Karl Polanyi, whose 'analysis, unfortunately, has come back into fashion' (Polšek, 2007: 37). Namely, in his book *The Great Transformation*, Polanyi systematically shows that totalitarian regimes in the first half of the 20th century emerged in response to the globalisation processes. For Polšek, this was sufficient to justify the follow-

ing accusation of Polanyi: ‘instead of perceiving globalisation as the sole option capable of survival, he propounded a subtle justification of Nazism...’ (37).

He put forward two arguments against Polanyi. The first is found in *Writings from a Third Culture*, in which he wrote: ‘it must be odd how, at the time of the book’s publication, at the time of Gulag and concentration camps, Polanyi did not realise that precisely the inappropriate social reaction to market movements, in the form of collectivist, totalitarian systems of communism and fascism, was the real cause of the economic and social catastrophe’ (Polšek, 2003: 80). His second argument is derived from the theory of unintended consequences, for he conceded that globalisation may lead to totalitarian reactions, but only as an unintentional consequence (Polšek, 2007). In fact, there is not a single point in which he refuted Polanyi’s reasoning. Indeed, he even stated that Polanyi ‘correctly warns against the social dangers of global capitalism, but offers no adequate solution’ (Polšek, 2003: 80). On the one hand, Polšek’s arguments actually indicate to what extent intellectual liberals are unable to come to terms with politics which, in certain situations, cannot be neutralised. On the other hand, they evidence his assumption that liberal ideas of a social and economic organisation are appropriate, although the consequences thereof could be catastrophic. All in all, there is more to it than warning against the ‘social dangers of capitalism’; Polanyi asserted that one had to fathom the meaning of freedom in a complex society. In that sense, he rejects the liberal sign of equality between the economy, contractual relations and freedom. His proposal is to discover ‘society’ instead of the market, on which liberals so obstinately insist (i.e. Polšek).

How can Polšek cope with the demise of liberal globalisation which he outlines in his book? It has affected him deeply, but he should look back on his own tradition. For instance, Hayek’s writing *The Road to Serfdom* is full of lamentation over the ‘abandoned path’. Although Hayek seemed to have been sceptical regarding the prospects of reconstruction of a (global) liberal order, the history of the second half of the 20th century proved his scepticism unfounded. With that in mind, perhaps there is no need for Polšek to be so despondent either?

2. Metapoliticisation of globalisation

The book *The West on Trial: Metapolitical Essays*, written by the philosopher Mario Kopačić, undoubtedly represents the beginning of the second stage of the globalisation debate. Its very title indicates the author’s theoretical-political roots, which are to be found in the meanders of the European (radical) intellectual right. In respect of its genre, the book is

rather a collection of political essays than of academic articles. I must point out that, immediately upon publication, *The West on Trial* attracted considerable attention given Croatian circumstances. A critical review was published in the leading cultural biweekly *Vijenac (Wreath)*, and the tone was laudative: ‘extremely attractive style of writing’, ‘lucidly analysing the context’, and ‘exceptionally interesting analyses which truly succeed in putting forward a different view...’ (Valentić, 2004). Kopic’s book was assessed more or less identically in *Filozofska istraživanja (Philosophical Research)*, the central Croatian expert journal on philosophy. It inspired the journal’s editor to write an article of his own entitled ‘What Is Metapolitics’, in which he stated that the article ‘originated as a consequence of reading the book *The West on Trial* by the Croatian philosopher Mario Kopic, with the indicative subtitle: metapolitical essays’ (Krivak, 2005: 591). Two things readily come to attention here. First, that a mainstream journal showing interest in someone who is not a member of the academic community is a rare occurrence in Croatia. Second, with regard to Kopic’s theoretical-methodological pattern, which, as I have already mentioned, was based on the postulates of the European right, it is even more unusual that it received such panegyrics in the said journals. Such a reception is a consequence of Kopic’s theoretical innovation in the Croatian context, namely his central concept of metapolitics.

Metapolitics can be defined as a condition of a certain vagueness, of cultural mess out of which a new virtue emerges, i.e. political faith, new politicisation.⁵ Such a diagnosis is very clearly expounded, for instance, in the work of Alain de Benoist, probably the leading theorist of the French right. Benoist argues that the present is a sort of ‘turning point or an “interregnum” marked by a fundamental crisis: the end of modernity’. Benoist’s ‘interregnum’ thesis is derived from a specific conception of “the political” nurtured by the *Nouvelle Droite*, and by practically the entire European right-wing theoretical scene. Relying on the doctrine of cultural hegemony (Gramsci) and the tradition of *sociétés de pensée*, de Benoist and his adherents develop the conception of ‘metapolitics’ (Benoist/Champetier, 2000; Griffin, 2000; Müller, 2003: 207-218). They reject participation in formal forms of the political, but also in ‘direct’ action, in order to ‘take over’ the media and, if possible, the educational system too. In this way, they create favourable conditions so that, at a certain point, their cultural supremacy should result in victory in the political elections. Namely, they start from the assumption that ‘the power to determine the content of concepts would sooner or later bring

⁵ Komel speaks of a culture of philosophy which has turned into a philosophy of culture ‘inasmuch as it is determined by crisis, avant-garde, revolutionarity, post-isms, and is manifest on the outside as a breakdown of identity, i.e. as an impossibility to identify humaneness with one’s own culture, its vagueness in the culture which it must now engage with’ (Komel, 2004: 627).

reality into line with one's conceptual scheme' (see Müller, 2003: 213, 207-218).

Kopić opts for the standpoint that 'ideas play a fundamental role... throughout the history of mankind' (Kopić, 2003: 5). Consequently, it is the ambition of 'metapolitics' to contribute to 'modernisation and creative modification of socio-historical notions'. In this way he seeks to stress that 'metapolitics' necessarily differ from political activity by other means. Neither does he want to have anything to do with the 'strategy' aimed at 'imposing intellectual hegemony', nor does he 'aspire to disqualify other possible attempts to approach the political'. I must say that it is not quite clear how he could distance himself from the practical-political implications of the interregnum, i.e. of a possible metapoliticisation of globalisation. It will become clear that Kopić's standpoint is identical to that of the advocates of rightist gramscianism. The said standpoint is based on the assumption that their cultural supremacy might, at some point, expand into a functional political power.

In his metapolitical campaign, Kopić predictably relies upon the German political theorist Carl Schmitt, who ranks among the intellectual favourites of the European intellectual right. Indeed, Kopić doesn't neglects the other members of this group. Thus, in the book we come across Ernst Jünger, Martin Heidegger, Julien Freund, Ernst Nolte, Alain de Benoist... . Kopić discovers Schmitt's potential precisely in the universality of his fundamental political concepts. One has the impression that he finds Schmitt the most suitable, since his 'political radicalism implies a conceptual platform fit for problematising the predominant political concepts' (28). Schmitt is interesting because of his 'theoretical struggle against liberalism... [i.e.] struggle against invisible power' (32). Namely, liberalism, as a theory of politics, rejects the existentiality of the political by transferring it into other spheres, above all into economy and ethics. Politics still operates in such a conceptual framework, the purpose of which is to neutralize and de-politicise. Furthermore, these concepts have the supreme power of signification, and consequently of determination of the enemy – for instance, liberal globalisation.

The second issue that Kopić is concerned about is Europe's fate in globalisation, which he perceives exclusively as an Anglo-Saxon project. Following his intellectual predecessors, he estimates that the EU is actually nothing more than 'the supremacy of economy over European politics and culture' (101). With no genuine substantial unity, however, the economic power of the EU is 'not only meaningless, but also untenable' (102). For the unity of Europe to be a more permanent balance of difference, 'it would have to have a higher, meta-economic and meta-political principle, and authority of a community spirit...' (105). Only thus could truly unified Europe be created, from Reykjavik to Vladivostok, according to the principle of bal-

ance between peoples and states. In Kopic's view, obstacles to this plan are the influence of the US and the international financial institutions under US control. For him, naturally, an additional obstacle is Great Britain, which is a 'Trojan horse of the American monetary elite which... diligently obstructs each and every project and initiative towards unification, starting with the common currency, which is to overcome the parasitical hegemony of the dollar' (116).

It is clear that Kopic wholeheartedly reiterates the main accents of the European intellectual right, reaching from historical revisionism, refutation of the 'ideology of democracy' and rejection of Western modernity, to visions of a unified Europe which alone is capable to withstand the 'global totalitarianism' of the US. As a conclusion, one may say that, if one of the key features of 'metapolitical' strategy is gradual mastery over the sphere of culture, of mainstream institutions, than Kopic has succeeded. Namely, the concept of 'metapolitics', as a concept of 'his own', has become part of the academic journal scene, so he can keep on metapoliticising globalisation. He has thus fulfilled his theoretical, but also his political, task, which corresponds to the 'mission' of the European intellectual right.

3. Culturalisation of globalisation

The metapoliticisation of globalisation expounded above, to which Kopic ascribes the tasks of criticising the duplicity of liberalism and establishing a new conceptual structure that should mark the ontological demise of Western modernity, is definitely a too limited standpoint to satisfy the social theorist Žarko Paić who is a radical critic of all ideological and/or cultural constructions. Paić comes from a lively Marxist circle which, in former Yugoslavia, centred around the late philosopher and professor Vanja Sutlić, who taught at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. In the 1990s Paić devoted his attention to various post-modern theories. Presently, he is one of the most prominent authors on Croatia's semi(alternative) theoretical scene.

In the very beginning of the book *Politics of Identity: Culture as a New Ideology* (2005), Paić states that he is preoccupied with 'critical evaluation of the reach of contemporary sociological, philosophical and anthropological theories of globalisation in respect of the principal issue of our "post-historical" time regarding the meaning of identity' (Paić, 2005: 5). He has chosen this theme because he thinks that the articulation of social identities is a tremendous challenge for all social sciences, and for each country with liberal democracy. Namely, they all must constantly prove their credibility by integrating the demands of social identities. In order to 'clear a path towards an understanding of the new status of culture', Paić obviously explores the status of the concepts of culture and ideology in different theoretical patterns

which have developed over the last twenty years or so. Thus, the book offers very detailed insight into the theories of Robertson, Beck, Giddens, Huntington, Hall, Hardt and Negri, Žižek, Agamben and many others.

His study predominantly relies on the ‘cultural turn’ potentials, and may be defined as a ‘descriptive-analytical and critically interpretative attempt’ to fathom contemporary reality after the Cold War. The said reality is marked by the fact that we live in a ‘total age of culture’, which has therefore become relevant to ‘dispersed theories of globalisation, culture and identity’. However, although the concept of culture has indeed assumed a hegemonic position, this of course does not mean that ideology has lost its legitimising function. In point of fact, culture has taken over its function in the age of globalisation, thus becoming the basis for at least a partial integration of contemporary societies. That is why it should come as no surprise that in our time every single phenomenon, from art, spectacle, science, fashion and ecology to politics, is permeated with cultural meanings. Consequently, we should not be so ambitious to say that we live in an age of post-politics, i.e. of post-ideology, for it is primarily a ‘global disorder in which all conflicts and all relations of trust and tolerance – ethnic, regional, international, conflicts between different social identities – are decided upon by cultural determinants’. Culture takes up many forms, and thus has changing contents, one might term it flexible, but even as such it is capable of fulfilling its primary task, namely, ‘endow identity with meaning’ (6). Basically, Paić perceives culture as a ‘contemporary term for that which still connects man with his fellows, even when one is dealing with a completely different ‘cultural’ circle of meaning’.

As for globalisation, in Paić’s view it is a ‘mere continuation of modernity in a post-modern context... and... designates a state of transition and modification of the world’s economic-political-cultural framework’. He ascribes no goal to the process, but rather thinks that it is an immanent motion in an undetermined direction. Since the globalisation concept cannot be analytically reduced to capitalism or to late modernity, Paić conducts research into theories of globalisation with regard to their interpretation of the cultural turn. He notices that globalisation includes a mixing of modernity and post-modern forms, since post-modern identities emerge instead of the stable identity of family, class and society. The former are all changing, transnational, hybrid forms of lifestyle individualisation. While in modernity culture was used almost as a synonym of civilisation, in the post-modern age and the age of globalisation, which, in his view, is a reification of post-modernity, a turn comes about precisely when ‘fixed identities dissolve into transnational, post-modern identities, which are repeatedly constituted in a different way in new social situations’ (206). These transnational, hybrid identities are no longer an exception in the globalised world. This is indicated, for instance, by the migration of Third-World population to the West.

Namely, globalisation opens up the closed spaces of Western nation-states, thus bringing to a close 'the great story of cultural identity which expressly determines the life of a nation' (206). Nation-states become victims of globalisation due to a total culturalisation, i.e. particularisation. Paić therefore concludes that 'culture is the particular universality of globalisation'. Generally speaking, the study presents three conceptual possibilities of interpreting culture and identity as articulations of a new ideology: transnational hybridisation of culture, fundamentalist movements of spiritual renewal, and biopolitics of a 'third culture'.

Paić perceives globalisation not only as a normative concept, but as one performing a form of ideological repression. Namely, its repressive function is manifest in the rejection of any alternative to global capitalism. Its opponents are ideologies, which are based on the idea of saving nation-states, faith and cultural identity as fundamentalisms. A further problem he discerns with regard to globalisation is the fact that the idea of transition into, shall we say, a higher stage of development of society, conceals 'some sort of ideological bewitching of reality' (11). All of it is caused by the so-called cultural turn, in which culture is no longer a means of social integration, but the end/means of identity in general. According to Paić, this is due to the fact that culture itself has become ideology and, consequently, everything has become culture. Since culture becomes ideological to the extent that ideology has become cultural, Paić advocates the theory of mutual conditioning. The book proposes, as a possible way out, the so-called repoliticisation of culture, whereby the necessary condition for a deconstruction of its ideological content would be met. This would bring us closer to a radical 'reconstruction of its original meaning as self-activity of the human spirit aimed at perfecting humanity'.

In the book *Politics of Identity*, all 'endisms' are proclaimed to be failures, which in fact perform an ideological function. However, Paić also lives in anticipation of a similar end. It is the end of culture, for it is only 'a matter of time when the euphoria with identity and culture will come to its end' (202). Apparently, this will not disturb him too much, because he believes that nothing is enduring and permanent. All we have to do is resign ourselves to a new reconfiguration, since it is a sign of a new beginning!

Conclusion

The globalisation theory in Croatia has covered an almost heroic path. In less than ten years it has grown to full stature, from the initial situation when not a single text, let alone a book, in Croatian was available, to the current state of affairs, in which theorists of varying intellectual inclination write texts attempting to resolve questions which claim the attention of every

globalisation researcher in the world. As I have tried to show in this article, already the first systematic contributions in the ‘early’ phase of the debate put forward answers to those questions. The second phase brought forth theoretical contributions with pronounced specialisation and increased sensibility. For the most part, they offered systematic argumentation from specific standpoints of their respective authors. The globalisation problem is no longer approached with fatalism, as a sort of natural disaster; instead, one has accepted the idea that globalisation is not an untouchable structure. Indeed, the idea of post-globalisation is gradually introduced into the debate. It is an additional confirmation that we all decide, in some way, on the final outcome of social processes such as globalisation. This can only lead to further pluralisation of globalisation, which will undoubtedly have a beneficial influence on the development of the globalisation theory in Croatia.

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