

**THE EUROPEAN UNION
FROM THE POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE:
CAN THE PERIPHERY EVER APPROACH THE CENTER?**

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The article presents the works of a number of authors who have, in the last couple of years, been trying to critically analyze the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe or between Europe and the countries which have not yet become EU members, mostly relying on concepts borrowed from postcolonial theory. The starting premise of this article is that there is a rather firm social consensus in Croatia according to which entering the EU is a question of political priority, and the question raised is whether some existing theoretical concepts can help us explain this silent agreement regarding the 'return to Europe'.

Key words: *European Union, 'Eastern enlargement', postcolonialism, relationship between periphery and center*

INTRODUCTION

Since 2003, when the coalition government in Croatia was replaced by the reformed HDZ government (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*, Croatian Democratic Union), many centers of power in the state have strongly supported Croatia's entry into the EU. Governing and opposition parties alike, leading intellectuals, the heads of the largest Croatian companies, NGOs, as well as columnists from the most popular magazines.... there is a long list of people in Croatia who agree that EU membership is of primary state interest, the main goal of Croatia's foreign policy, but also the quickest way to catch up with the West: a developed market economy, rule of law and stable democracy.

However, this does not mean that there is no discussion on the EU. Croatian politicians have engaged in public debate on whether postponing the declaration of the protected ecological and fishing zone (ZERP) for EU-members is a justified concession to the country's 'European future'; trade unions are concerned about the non-existence of a strategy for restructuring the shipbuilding industry while the EU insists upon it; and occasionally, questions are raised by Croatian farmers on what awaits them – if anything – when Croatia enters the EU. To these many crucial questions about the EU, a section of the Croatian political and diplomatic elite that mediates between Zagreb and Brussels and is sometimes characterized by a peculiar double loyalty (towards the project of EU enlargement and towards their own country), has a set of standardized answers. These are governed by a matrix of neutral, administrative EU language that, on the one hand, consists of superior political ideas on the importance of cooperation and agreement, and on the other, offers specific and exhaustive data from highly specialized fields about which citizens usually do not possess the expert knowledge to be able to participate in debates on an equal footing.

Between these two extremes, many questions in the negotiation process for EU membership have suddenly become inappropriate and, therefore, remain unanswered. As if ten years had not passed since the statement by Lindstrom and Razsa (1999): "Today Croats proclaim that they belong to Europe, yet again there is little discussion of to what extent they might participate and on whose terms." So what, actually, is Croatia's role in the EU? What is Croatia's attitude towards the West and what does that attitude imply? Is the West still a flashy shop window into which Croats enviously stared during the communist era in the cities on the other side of the border, such as Trieste or Graz? Or is the Croatian perception of the West more influenced by the centuries preceding the formation of Yugoslavia: the semi-colonial history of Croatia's relationship with the Hapsburg Monarchy, the immediate vicinity and/or presence of the Ottoman Empire and the occasional territorial claims of neighboring Italy (earlier: Venice) over parts of the Croatian coast? Maybe we are, in the era of the capillary penetration of Anglo-American culture, under the stronger influence of values to which we are exposed in our everyday life through popular culture?

These questions address the issue of national identity which, on the European periphery and in the states that did not invent but rather copied

the concept of nation, is rather fragile. This is not only because some of them, including Croatia, acquired their independence only recently, but also because their civilizational uncertainty in relation to the Great Nations at the center of the political, economic and cultural power, is at the core of their identity. Postcolonial studies have already shown that a view from the periphery towards the centre is fertile ground for studying power relations. However, in spite of its complex relationship with the countries of the Center and the inspirational contradictions which otherwise characterize the so-called Second World countries, this region, as well as the whole of Eastern Europe did not produce a comparable, 'unifying' theory during the 1990s era of post-communist transition, which could today, for example, provide us with a useful model for the analysis of Croatia's bid to join the EU in the period following the 'Eastern enlargement'. The interest of the international scientific community, focused on this region because of the wars in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia, is slowly diminishing and the Balkans, together with South Eastern Europe, no longer head the list of most common topics at international conferences.

In the last few years, however, a number of interesting authors from the European periphery have been trying to analyze both historical and current political relations through the aspect of power imbalance between Eastern and Western Europe, a perspective which, apparently, evokes metaphors of (post)colonial relations. One of the more interesting ideas in these writings is the metaphor of 'self-colonizing cultures' coined by Bulgarian cultural historian Alexander Kiossev, who, of course, does not use the term 'colonization' to refer to the territorial conquests of overseas countries but in a more abstract sense, as a kind of 'colonization of consciousness' (cf. Melegh 2006). Among other matters, Kiossev questions the shifts that happened in cultures which, upon their very creation on the wings of late Romanticism and Nationalism, copied foreign, Western values and models considered necessary to become "civilized".

From the point of view of the modern globalization of the world, there are cultures which are not central enough, not timely and big enough in comparison to the "Great Nations". At the same time they are insufficiently alien, insufficiently distant and insufficiently backward, in contrast to the African tribes, for example. That's why, in their own troubled embryo, somewhere in the periphery of Civilization, they

arise in the space of a generative doubt: We are European, although perhaps not to a real extent. This is a precondition for a quite peculiar identity and a quite peculiar modernization. They arise through the constitutive trauma that: We are not Others (seeing in the Others the representatives of the Universal), and this trauma is also connected with the awareness that they have appeared too late and that their life is a reservoir of lacks of civilization (Kiossev 1999:3).

Kiossev suggests that these peripheral cultures should be called 'self-colonizing', since they not only import foreign values and civilizational models themselves, which would imply a certain level of pragmatism, but do it without any critical detachment or opposition and with true admiration.

And yet, how could we explain the fact that these peculiar cultures lack not only any resistance against colonization through Western symbolic patterns, any resistance to the symbol-invasion of the Alien (resistance so inevitable in every violent colonization - even the fatalistic North American Indians resisted the Spanish conquistadors to a certain extent), but they adopt the alien models with love, ardor and desire? How could we also explain the fact that they display a certain unaccountable naivety: they not only welcome the expanding universalistic ideology of the foreigners, which makes them marginal and undeveloped, but they fall in love with it as well? ... How is this unexplainable childish mistake possible - to confuse the West with God? (ibid. 2-3).

The answer to this question is, obviously, rather simple: peripheral cultures did not even exist prior to their moment of infatuation with the West. Actually, they existed without the consciousness of their own identity (or the lack of it) until, in the metaphorical sense, they saw themselves in the mirror of the West. Kiossev's messages could be relevant for the Eastern European countries in general: in the period of the Enlightenment, when Europe was divided into the "developed" West and the "undeveloped" East, these countries were marked as peripheral (cf. Wolff). Many of them have been left on the margin until today, in a kind of gap between the (divine) Universal, which they could not catch up with, and the Exotic (the East, the Balkans, the Orient) from which they wish to escape. In this gap they continue to suffer from an incurable lack of identity.

In accordance with the changed perspective in which the West, but also the EU are perceived, Merje Kuus, an Estonian political geographer working and living in Canada, has appealed for the study of current Western policies towards Eastern and Central Europe through the postcolonial perspective. Kuus (2004) noted that the scientific community has by all means been ready to proclaim the period of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe as colonialism, while, surprisingly, it has lacked the critical enthusiasm to similarly analyze the current political situation between Eastern and Western Europe. Moreover, according to Kuus, the simple division into “developed” West and “undeveloped” East is no longer valid in the current context. Rather there now exists a more subtle “gradation of Europeanness” (2004:476), which in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration is used as a kind of postcolonial mechanism.

If we follow this line of thought and refuse to observe Croatia’s admission to the EU in the light of conditions which the candidate country is succeeding or failing to meet – being nothing less than the perspective of an ‘exclusive club’ to which one has to earn admission – the basic question is: what is left? Can the interpretation and adoption of postcolonial theory provide us with a new position that will enable us to redirect our analytical focus to our own wide open eyes which are, with so much attention and many expectations, fixed upon what the whole negotiation process has been reduced to – the date of Croatia’s admission to the EU?

CURRENT PROBLEMS: HOW COLONIAL IS THE EU?

Many studies have been written on the EU questioning the various aspects of its identity and centering on the relationship between national and EU identity (Burgess 2002; Carey 2002; Delanty and Jones 2002; Orchard 2002). The prevailing image of Europe is that of the EU (Passi 2001; Pieterse 1999; Shore 1994) or, more precisely, of its northwestern part which, given its cultural and political influence, some describe as the “center of gravitation” (Pieterse 1999) and others as “the center” compared to which the rest of Europe is just a semi-periphery or periphery (Janos 2000). Interest in wider cultural patterns is, unfortunately, spreading towards the East only in parallel to the expansion of the borders of this elite club, so that the ‘Eastern enlargement’ in 2004 and 2007 intensified the interest of scientists in the analysis of the

imbalance of power between Eastern and Western Europe in the context of the European Union.

At the turn of the millennium, a number of authors appeared, mostly originating from the countries once belonging to the so-called Eastern block, who were less interested in the bureaucratic and administrative apparatus of the EU and more in its social and cultural influence on other parts of Europe. This wave of new interest in the EU can also be seen as an echo of the criticism of Eurocentrism that reached Europe a few decades ago from the so-called Third World countries. The most evident proof of this new trend, which focuses on the adoption and adjustment of the concepts of postcolonial studies for the analysis of the contemporary European political scene, is a Hungarian collection of papers whose title - *Empire's New Clothes. Unveiling EU Enlargement* – clearly expresses the dominant attitude and topic of the contributions. One of the authors, sociologist József Böröcz (who also edited the volume), starts with a well-known fact about the colonial history of the most influential EU countries in order to examine whether the project of 'Eastern enlargement' may be observed as a continuation of the imperialism of Western Europe, carried out only through different means.

Reminding us that less than one hundred years ago, nine of the fifteen countries of the EU (before Enlargement) controlled almost half of the planet's surface (without Europe and the Antarctic), Böröcz claims that colonialism had an important role in the later development of the national histories of the EU countries. Or, as he says, "Coloniality made the home states of the colonial empires different, even in their dealings that were strictly internal to their European constituencies in Europe, let alone their relationship to the world outside of Western Europe" (2001:13). Therefore, the author states, any analyst of the relationship of the European Union towards the surrounding world should bear in mind that the old imperial and colonial centers are placed in some of its most influential members. The very formation of the EU might in fact "represent a global imperial strategy of sorts" (ibid. 14), while the "deeply coded and set patterns of inequality, hierarchy, exclusion and power" (ibid.) are reflected on the patterns of governmentality of the European Union.

Eastern enlargement – i.e., the (geo)political process wherein the European Union explicitly and repeatedly rethinks the question of its borders and constantly refashions its relations to its immediate

hinterland by a multidimensional system of dependence – should be an ideal test case for examining the extent to which empire and coloniality continue to hold sway or even emerge in new ways (2001:15).

One of Böröcz's (2001) connections between the colonial era and the current situation, which some call supranational, is difficult to repudiate: the very combination of wealth, power, centrality and privilege, which owes its existence to the colonial past of the EU countries, constitutes the iron core of magnetism for the Eastern countries to even consider joining this elite club. Böröcz sees additional proof of the colonial background of 'Eastern enlargement' in very firm mechanisms which the candidate countries adopt almost without exception: privatization of the assets of the post-state-socialist economies, introduction of tax preferences for foreign direct investment, or the fact that "EU-based corporations constitute by far the largest investor group in Central and Eastern Europe" (ibid. 18).

This last argument gives the work of Böröcz an anti-globalistic outlook, as is otherwise common in scholarly work inspired by similar ideas. So, for example, Daskalovski (2000) thinks that the resources of Eastern Europe have been easy prey for rich and well-connected transnational companies based in Western Europe. A common thesis among authors following the original Marxist criticism of capitalism is that the role of Eastern Europe inside the EU is to export cheap labor and supply raw materials. These authors, unfortunately, often overlook the consequences of the communist period and their effect on the developmental capacities of the Eastern European states. This, in turn, is one of the consequences of the already mentioned fact that the fall of the Berlin wall did not inspire an intensive theoretical debate on post-communism.

In his work, Böröcz (2001) emphasizes that the countries of Eastern Europe, unlike many Western European countries, have never had the experience of colonial rule, but they, on the other hand, have a long history of being parts of the so-called contiguous empires, such was, for example, the Habsburg Monarchy. The experience of complex imperial relations for most Eastern European countries continued in the 20th century with Soviet dominance, which was by its very nature, according to the author, also a type of imperialism. According to Böröcz's interpretation, the legacies of the

so-called contiguous empires in Europe were never articulated and thought through as happened after the abolition of colonies, since the western part of the continent simply transferred its imperial legacy onto the project of the creation of national states. These are still guilty of a number of old prejudices against Eastern Europeans, while in the eastern part of the continent a number of countries remained with unresolved imperial legacies and which are now, again, in an inferior position of candidate knocking on the doors of a prestigious political club.

Unlike the process of decolonization where Western Europe at least partly assumed political guilt, in the case of Eastern Europe Böröcz concludes that:

...precious little such moral reflection can be observed in the societies of the EU-member states regarding imperial practices of the contiguous type, especially with respect to their immediate neighbors (and often former imperial subjects) to the east. The range of moral positions regarding their poor European counterparts is much narrower, with moral remorse almost entirely absent. There exists relatively little by way of cultural checks in Western Europe regarding those cognitive schemas which owe their existence, historically, to inferiorization of the contiguous-imperial kind. Meanwhile, cultural prejudices regarding 'East Europeans' abound, and they meet with precious little resistance, in Western Europe today (2001:34).

In his conclusion, Böröcz (2001) suggests that the EU is not necessarily an 'evil enterprise', but we should not overlook the colonial aspect in the Enlargement process. In her analysis of the discursive strategies used in EU reports on the candidate countries, Melinda Kovács (2001) concludes that the EU uses discourse towards the Eastern European applicants very much like the discourse of "colonial encounters and perceptions" and that this discursive matrix "foreshadows the inclusion of Eastern applicants into a structure where the *raison d'être* of some is to serve others" (2001:230). The authors in the collection *Empire's New Clothes*, which is quite radical in its interpretation of 'Eastern enlargement', commonly emphasize that even though Eastern enlargement is undoubtedly an imperial enterprise, it is at the same time rather unique in that the applicants willingly accept their own dependence. Or, in the words of the authors:

... the illusion of self-determination by the applicants allows them to make application their own decision, since there is no coercion or military aggression (Kovács and Kabachnik 2000:171).

The Eastern enlargement project has inspired a Polish political scientist, Jan Zielonka (2006), to suggest that, in contrast to the prevailing state-centric paradigm, the European Union should be perceived as a structure that most resembles the Medieval empires. In a number of arguments that the author lays out in order to support this thesis, we will focus on those referring to the Enlargement process. European Union viewed as an "empire", suggests Zielonka, has royal manners, but even though the EU plays a political power game in the applicant countries, it is, at the same time, a 'benign empire', which does not conquer its territory by wars but by conditioned privileges and benefits.

Zielonka shows that EU enlargement has followed an imperial pattern through the following elements: (1) The applicant countries are expected to successfully adopt over 20,000 new acts, laws and regulations which form the *acquis communautaire*. (2) EU politics are quite intrusive: it is no longer enough for countries to fulfill all criteria, the EU also sends representatives to the applicant countries to personally supervise the reforms and make sure that changes are being made as prescribed by the 'twinning programs'¹. (3) In his chapter on the imperial power of the EU, Zielonka emphasizes that during the application process the EU wields normative power through its "fundamental norms of democracy, market economy, human rights and social justice seen as an example to be followed by all the applicant states" (ibid. 56).

However, it is hard to resist the impression that the type of this governance was indeed imperial. The EU was providing decisions and expected compliance and obedience from the applicant states. The Union was providing models and the applicant states were supposed

¹ *Twinning* programme – "An instrument developed by the European Commission whereby Member States' Public administrations develop partnership with counterpart public administrations in applicant or partner countries. Under a twinning project, Member States' civil servants are seconded to serve as advisers in the counterpart administration of the partner country." (Definition taken from the Glossary of Croatian Central Finance and Contracting Agency, available at: <http://www.safu.hr/hr/rjecnik/pregled/689/twinning?lang=en>)

to copy or imitate them. It was offering teaching and training, and the applicant states were supposed to socialize and learn. (...) The applicant states' compliance was voluntary only in theory. In practice, these states could not afford to turn their backs to the EU's demands and expectations (ibid. 56-57).

In spite of that, concludes Zielonka (2006), there are many reasons why we should after all perceive the EU as a basically benign empire, among others, because (1) the countries which join the EU get a place in the club of the 'chosen few', and (2) because conditions in the fields such as 'administration' or 'social policy' leave the candidate countries the option of choosing between a number of models, which they may best adapt to their own, existing solutions. (3) In addition, the monitoring and so-called *screening* process (analysis of the current state of affairs) is, for purely practical reasons, somewhat superficial and inconsistent. After all, as emphasized by Zielonka, (4) because of the lack of clear strategy towards the Enlargement, it was generally difficult for the Union in the accession process to "select its main objectives and match them with adequate instruments" (ibid. 59). The fact that the process of joining the EU is rather unclear, i.e. that it consists in satisfying a list of rather abstract criteria such as 'the rule of law' or 'the existence of a market economy', has been emphasized by some other authors as a cover-up for maintaining a hierarchical (not partner) relationship between the EU and the applicant countries, and also between the applicant countries themselves (Melegh 2006).

A related contribution by Merje Kuus offers an analysis of the framing of 'Eastern enlargement' by the EU and NATO (2004). Kuus reveals that the starting point of both political processes was completely apolitical: the applicant countries had yet to become fully European. Enlargement projects were, according to the author, underpinned by an orientalist discourse that represents the difference from Western Europe as a lack of real, essential 'Europeanness'. In her research on the categories framing the process of Euro-Atlantic integration, Kuus illustrates how steadfast the several centuries-old perception of Eastern Europe as periphery is. Among other issues, she simply decides upon quoting scientific articles that observe the European East solely from the perspective of power centers, such are Brussels and Washington.

Kuus concludes in her article that since the process of enlargement of the EU is presented as a kind of competition in levels of ‘Europeanness’ among the applicant countries, postcolonialism is potentially a fertile ground for the analysis of that process, regardless of the fact that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have never formally been colonies of the West.

It is this double conception of East-Central Europe – at once both steeped in history and also a blank sheet unto which Europeanness can be inscribed – that makes the discourse of Eastern Europe similar to orientalism. Thus, approaching EU enlargement through the lenses of postcolonial theory would not deny the achievements of the accession countries or uncritically collapse East-Central Europe into a generalized non-West. Instead, it would highlight the dichotomy of Europe and the East that underpins the discourse of EU enlargement (2004:483).

The quote on how Russia, during the period of Enlightenment, was perceived in the eyes of Western intellectuals as “a gigantic specimen to which the most advanced legal and administrative ideas could be applied with a completeness impossible in Western Europe” (Anderson 1958: 50 in Neumann 1999:78) now again seems to be useful for the analysis of strategies of accession to the EU and NATO. These are based on teaching and learning values and norms, which only after they have been adopted fully and in the right way, promise future members the status of ‘genuine Europeans’. In order for this system of power distribution to be sustained, constant divisions are necessary and for this reason the countries of Central Europe, with “strong historical connections” and “geographical vicinity” to Western Europe, try to separate themselves from the undeveloped East. Candidate countries remain “in a liminal space, neither developed nor underdeveloped, neither learned nor wholly ignorant, in the process of becoming mature Europeans” (Kuus 2004:476).

Finally, it can be assumed that, parallel to the process of enlargement of the EU, the power of negative stereotypes of Eastern Europe will slowly fade away and new divisions between winners and losers will be established among the new members. Bulgarian historian Marija Todorova, famous for her work analyzing Western perceptions of the Balkans, points out that

Eastern Europe will probably completely disappear as a (historical and political) category. However, she also warns that, “attitudes about it, in the region itself and outside of it, will not be erased that easily” (2005:93).

CONCLUSION

The analytical models and metaphors discussed here open various interpretations and can serve as an alternative to the dominant approach, which sees Croatia’s accession to the EU as a process that is presumed as a self-evident and unquestioned political goal on one hand, and on the other, entails a never-ending list of bureaucratic conditions which the candidate country must meet before joining. Like many of the authors quoted in this article, I think that some elements of postcolonial theory may be useful in interpreting the existing social consensus, which protects Croatians from asking critical questions about the accession process. Exactly because the debate on joining the EU is not heated and because pro-European options dominate our society, it seems useful to ask again what lurks behind the phrases ‘national interest’ and the long-awaited ‘return to Europe’. If we follow Kiossev, who described in detail the problem of cultures created through voluntary mimicry of the models and matrices of the Great Nations of Europe, we should ask whether it would be useful to research, in a similar way, political processes such as Croatia’s joining the EU that imply adjustment to Western criteria. In this process Croatia’s position has been subordinate and this is not a case of achieving agreement or even of negotiations but, very simply, of the systematic imposition of conditions set by the more powerful side. Sheer recognition of the fact could open up a space for public debate on issues which, even though they remain unspoken, burden the accession process. For example: in what way is the colonial past of the major EU countries reflected in the process of ‘Eastern enlargement’? Or: is the EU really perceived by the periphery as a ‘benign empire’ and in what way is this related to the collective memory of the experience of existing inside the “civilizational orbits of the Great Empires” (Kiossev 2003) such as, for example, the Hapsburg Monarchy? Or: where, in the process of accession, does Croatia place itself on the imaginary scale of ‘Europeanness’ in respect to the EU countries, and equally important, in respect to the other countries of the region?

Governed by these and similar questions, future research on the relationship between Croatia and the EU will probably be more successful in answering the question as to why the discussion of this – by definition political – process is so carefully stripped of any content? Or, why is the EU in Croatia still protected to such a large extent from any kind of criticism or questioning?

**EUROPSKA UNIJA PROMOTRENA
IZ POSTKOLONIJALNE PERSPEKTIVE:
MOŽE LI PERIFERIJA IKADA PRISTUPITI SREDIŠTU?
(Prijevod članka)**

U članku se predstavljaju radovi niza autora koji posljednjih godina, uglavnom oslanjajući se na koncepte preuzete i prilagođene iz postkolonijalne teorije, pokušavaju kritički promotriti odnos Istoka i Zapada Europe ili, u drugim slučajevima, odnos Europske unije prema zemljama koje još uvijek nisu njezine članice. Polazna točka rada je tvrdnja kako u Hrvatskoj postoji prilično čvrst društveni konsenzus koji ulazak u Europsku uniju smatra neupitnim političkim prioritetom, a pitanje koje se postavlja jest mogu li neki od postojećih teorijskih koncepata pomoći u tumačenju tog prešutnog sporazuma o "povratku Europi".

Ključne riječi: *Europska unija, "istočno proširenje", postkolonijalizam, odnos "periferije" i "centra"*

UVOD

Otkako je 2003. godine koalicijsku vlast u Hrvatskoj smijenila reformirana HDZ-ova vlada, mnoge se važne poluge moći u državi zalažu za ulazak Hrvatske u Europsku uniju. Vladajuće i opozicijske parlamentarne stranke, istaknuti intelektualci, čelnici moćnih domaćih kompanija, nevladine udruge, baš kao i kolumnisti u najtiražnijim glasilima... Dug je popis onih koji se u Hrvatskoj slažu da je ulazak u Europsku uniju državni interes, glavni vanjskopolitički cilj, ali i najbrži put za sustizanje Zapada: razvijene tržišne ekonomije, vladavine prava i stabilne demokracije.

To ne znači da nikakve rasprave o Europskoj uniji nema. Hrvatski političari vode javne debate o tome je li odgoda primjene Zaštićenoga ekološko-ribolovnog pojasa (ZERP) za zemlje članice EU-a opravdan zalog za "europsku budućnost" zemlje, sindikalci zabrinuto upozoravaju da ne postoji strategija za restrukturiranje brodogradnje, na čemu inzistira

EU, a povremeno se čuju i pitanja hrvatskih seljaka o tome kakva je – ako ikakva – njihova budućnost unutar Europske unije. Na mnoga suštinska pitanja o Europskoj uniji dio hrvatske političke i diplomatske elite koja posreduje između Zagreba i Bruxellesa i koju ponekad obilježava neobična dvostruka lojalnost – prema projektu proširenja EU-a i prema vlastitoj državi – ima komplet standardiziranih odgovora, koji se ravnaju ustaljenom matricom bezobličnog, administrativnog jezika Europske unije u kojem su na jednoj razini uzvišene političke ideje o vrijednosti suradnje i postizanja dogovora, a na drugoj tehnički i iscrpljujući podaci iz usko specijaliziranih područja, o kojima građani, uglavnom, nemaju dovoljno stručnog znanja za ravnopravnu raspravu.

Između tih dviju razina mnoga pitanja u pregovaračkom procesu pristupanja Europskoj uniji postaju neprikladna i, u skladu s tim, ostaju neodgovorena. Kao da i nije prošlo gotovo deset godina od primjedbe N. Lindstrom i M. Razse (1999) kako "...Hrvati danas izjavljuju da pripadaju Europi, ali, ipak, malo se raspravlja o tome u kojem bi razmjeru oni u njoj mogli sudjelovati i po čijim uvjetima." Zaista: kakva je uloga Hrvatske u Europskoj uniji? Kakav je njezin odnos prema Zapadu, i što taj pojam danas uopće podrazumijeva? Je li Zapad i dalje bogat izlog u koji se u doba komunizma sa zavišću zurilo u gradovima uz granicu, poput Trsta i Graza? Ili na hrvatsku percepciju Zapada više utjecaja imaju stoljeća koja su prethodila uspostavi Jugoslavije: polukolonijalna povijest odnosa s Habsburškom Monarhijom, neposredna blizina i/ili prisutnost Otomanskog Carstva i povremeni pohodi susjedne Italije (još ranije: Mletaka) na hrvatsku obalu? Možda smo, u eri kapilarnog prodora angloameričke kulture, pod većim utjecajem vrijednosti kojima smo u svakodnevnom životu izloženi kroz popularnu kulturu?

Ta se pitanja dotiču nacionalnog identiteta koji je na periferiji Europe, u državama koje koncept nacije nisu izmislile, nego preslikale, prilično fragilan. I to ne samo stoga što su neke od njih, poput Hrvatske, državnu nezavisnost stekle tek nedavno, nego i zato što je u srži njihova identiteta civilizacijska nesigurnost u odnosu na Velike Nacije u središtu političke, ekonomske i kulturne moći. Postkolonijalni studiji već su pokazali da je pogled s periferije na centar plodno tlo za proučavanje odnosa moći. No, unatoč kompleksnom odnosu sa zemljama Središta i inspirativnim proturječnostima koje i inače obilježavaju zemlje tzv. Drugog svijeta, ova regija, baš kao i cijela istočna Europa, nije tijekom devedesetih godina prošlog stoljeća, nakon što je

nastupilo razdoblje postkomunističke tranzicije, proizvela neku usporedivu, "objedinjujuću" teoriju koja bi danas, na primjer, mogla ponuditi koristan model za analizu hrvatskog pristupanja EU-u u razdoblju nakon "istočnog proširenja". I interes međunarodne znanstvene zajednice, koji su na ovaj prostor donijeli ratovi u zemljama bivše Jugoslavije, posljednjih je godina jenjao i Balkan, zajedno s jugoistočnom Europom, polako nestaje s popisa tema međunarodnih konferencija.

Posljednjih se nekoliko godina ipak javlja niz zanimljivih autora s europske periferije koji neke povijesne, ali i suvremene političke odnose nastoje promotriti kroz prizmu nerazmjera moći između Istoka i Zapada Europe, što je perspektiva koja u pravilu, čini se, priziva metafore o (post) kolonijalnim odnosima. Jedna od zanimljivijih ideja u tom je skupu radova metafora o "samo-kolonizirajućim kulturama" bugarskog povjesničara kulture Aleksandra Kjoseva, pri čemu pojam kolonizacije koji on rabi, dakako, ne može biti shvaćen u smislu osvajanja prekomorskih teritorija, nego u mnogo apstraktnijem značenju, kao svojevrsna "kolonizacija svijesti" (usp. Melegh 2006). Kjosev, među ostalim, ispituje poremećaje u kulturama koje su već u samom nastajanju, na krilima zakašnjelog romantizma i nacionalizma, preslikavale tuđe, zapadne vrijednosti i modele uz pomoć kojih se postaje civiliziranim.

S gledišta moderne globalizacije svijeta, postoje kulture koje nisu dovoljno centralne, nisu dovoljno pravodobne i velike u usporedbi s "Velikim Nacijama." Istodobno, nisu dovoljno strane, dovoljno udaljene i dovoljno nazadne, za razliku od, primjerice, afričkih plemena. Zato one, u njihovu poremećenu embriju, negdje na periferiji Civilizacije, nastaju u prostoru plodnosne sumnje: Mi jesmo europske, premda možda ne u potpunosti. To je preduvjet za prilično čudnovat identitet i prilično čudnovatu modernizaciju. One nastaju kroz konstitutivnu traumu: Mi nismo Drugi (a u Drugima vide predstavnike Univerzalnog), a ta je trauma također povezana sa sviješću da su se pojavile prekasno i da je njihov život spremište nedostataka civilizacije (Kiossev 1999:3).

Kjosev predlaže da se takve, periferne kulture nazove "samo-kolonizirajućima" jer one nisu samo uvoznice stranih vrijednosti i civilizacijskih modela, što bi podrazumijevalo određen stupanj pragme, nego to čine bez kritičkog odmaka i otpora, s istinskim divljenjem.

A ipak, kako bismo mogli objasniti činjenicu da tim čudnovatim kulturama ne samo da manjka ikakav otpor prema kolonizaciji putem zapadnih simboličkih uzoraka, bilo kakav otpor spram invazije simbola Stranoga (otpor koji je tako neizbježan u svakoj nasilnoj kolonizaciji – čak su se i fatalistički sjevernoamerički Indijanci donekle odupirali španjolskim konkvistadorima), nego one strane modele posvajaju s ljubavlju, gorljivošću i žudnjom? Kako bismo, također, mogli objasniti činjenicu da one pokazuju neku neobjašnjivu naivnost: one ne samo da iskazuju dobrodošlicu rastućoj univerzalističkoj ideologiji stranaca koja ih čini marginalnima i nerazvijenima, nego se, također, u nju zaljubljuju? (...) Kako je ova neobjašnjiva, djetinjasta pogreška moguća – da se Zapad pobrka s Bogom? (ibid. 2–3).

Odgovor na to pitanje je, dakako, razmjerno jednostavan: perifernih kultura prije trenutka "zaljublivanja" u Zapad nije ni bilo. Odnosno, postojale su bez svijesti o vlastitu identitetu (ili njegovu manjku), sve dok, u metaforičkom smislu, u sebe nisu pogledale u ogledalu Zapada. Kjosevljeve poruke mogle bi biti relevantne za zemlje istočne Europe općenito: one su još u razdoblju prosvjetiteljstva, kada se Europa dijelila na "razvijeni" Zapad i "nerazvijeni" Istok, označene kao periferija (usp. Wolff), a mnoge su se od njih do danas zadržale na rubu zbivanja, u svojevrsnom raskoraku između (božanskog) Univerzalnog koji ne mogu sustići i Egzotičnog (Istoka, Balkana, Orijenta), od kojega se žele udaljiti. I u tom raskoraku pate od nezalječivog manjka identiteta.

U prilog promjeni perspektive gledanja na Zapad, ali i na Europsku uniju ide i poziv Merje Kuus, estonske političke geografkinje koja živi i radi u Kanadi, za istraživanjima suvremene politike Zapada prema istočnoj i srednjoj Europi kroz postkolonijalnu prizmu. Kuus (2004), naime, uočava da u znanosti ne nedostaje spremnosti da se, na primjer, razdoblje sovjetskog utjecaja u istočnoj Europi prikaže kao neku vrstu kolonijalizma, ali sličnog kritičkog žara, začudo, manjka u promatranju sadašnjih političkih odnosa između Istoka i Zapada Europe. Pritom, ističe M. Kuus, u suvremenom kontekstu više nije na djelu jednostavna podjela na razvijeni Zapad i nerazvijeni Istok, nego suptilnija "gradacija europejstva" (ibid. 476), koja se i u procesu euroatlantskih integracija koristi kao vrsta postkolonijalnog mehanizma.

Ako doista krenemo tim tragom i nakratko odbijemo pristupanje Hrvatske Europskoj uniji promatrati iz perspektive uvjeta koje ispunjava ili

propušta ispuniti "zemlja kandidatkinja", a to nije ništa drugo nego perspektiva "ekskluzivnog kluba" kojem se pristupa, osnovno je pitanje: što ostaje? Nudi li nam tumačenje i prilagođavanje postkolonijalne teorije neku novu poziciju iz koje je moguće analitički fokus preusmjeriti na vlastite širom otvorene oči koje, s toliko pažnje i očekivanja, fiksiraju ono na što se dosadašnji tijek pregovora svodi – datum pristupanja EU-u.

SUVREMENI PROBLEM: KOLIKO JE EUROPSKA UNIJA KOLONIJALNA?

Napisano je mnogo studija koje propituju razne aspekte identiteta Europske unije, pri čemu je u središtu interesa odnos nacionalnoga i identiteta EU-a (Burgess 2002; Carey 2002; Delanty i Jones 2002; Orchard 2002). Prevladavajuća slika cijele Europe danas je Europska unija (Paasi 2001; Pieterse 1999; Shore 1994) ili, još preciznije, njezin sjeverozapadni dio, koji, u smislu kulturnoga i političkog utjecaja, jedni opisuju i kao "centar gravitacije" (Pieterse 1999), a drugi kao središte u odnosu na koje je ostatak Europe tek poluperiferija i periferija (Janos 2000). Interes za šire kulturne obrasce se, na žalost, širi prema istoku tek s pomicanjem granica ovoga elitnog kluba, pa su, tako, valovi "istočnog proširenja" 2004. i 2007. pojačali zanimanje znanstvenika za analizu nerazmjera moći između istočne i zapadne Europe u kontekstu Europske unije.

Na prijelazu tisućljeća pojavio se niz autora, mahom iz zemalja koje su nekada pripadale tzv. Istočnom bloku, koje od strukture birokratskog i administrativnog aparata EU-a više zanima njezin društveni i kulturni utjecaj na ostatak Europe. Taj se val novog interesa za EU može promatrati i kao eho kritike eurocentrizma koji je iz zemalja tzv. Trećeg svijeta do Europe dospio nekoliko desetljeća ranije. Najjasniji odraz tog trenda, koji se sastoji u posvajanju i prilagođavanju koncepata postkolonijalnih studija radi analize suvremene europske političke scene, predstavlja mađarski zbornik čiji naslov – "Novo ruho Carstva: otkrivanje proširenja EU-a" – jasno određuje osnovni ton i temu radova. Jedan od autora, ujedno i urednik zbornika, sociolog József Böröcz, kreće od sasvim konkretne činjenice – kolonijalne prošlosti najutjecajnijih zemalja Europske unije – kako bi ispitaio može li se projekt "istočnog proširenja" EU-a promatrati i kao nastavak imperijalne dominacije Zapada Europe drugim sredstvima.

Podsjećajući da je prije manje od stotinu godina devet od petnaest zemalja članica tada još neproširene EU kontroliralo gotovo polovicu površine zemaljske kugle (bez Europe i Antarktika), Böröcz tvrdi da je upravo to kolonijalno iskustvo imalo važnu ulogu u kasnijim nacionalnim povijestima zemalja Europske unije. Odnosno, kako piše, "kolonijalno je iskustvo države koje su bile domovine kolonijalnih carstava učinilo drukčijima, čak i u njihovu postupanju prema vlastitim europskim sastavnim dijelovima, a kamoli u njihovu odnosu prema svijetu izvan zapadne Europe" (Böröcz 2001:13). Stoga i svaka analiza odnosa Europske unije prema svijetu koji je okružuje, smatra autor, ne smije gubiti iz vida da se u njezinim najutjecajnijim članicama nalaze stari imperijalni i kolonijalni centri: samo stvaranje EU-a moglo bi biti "neka vrsta globalne imperijalne strategije" (ibid. 14), a "duboko kodirani i uspostavljeni uzorci nejednakosti, hijerarhije, isključivanja i moći" (ibid.) odražavaju se na oblike vladavine Europske unije.

"Istočno proširenje" – odnosno, (geo)politički proces u kojem Europska unija izričito i stalno iznova promišlja pitanje svojih granica i neprestano prepravlja odnose sa svojim neposrednim zaledem multidimenzionalnim sistemom zavisnosti – trebalo bi biti idealan slučaj za iskušavanje razmjera u kojima carstvo i kolonijalizam i dalje vladaju, ili se čak pojavljuju na druge načine (2001:15).

Jednu je Böröczevu (2001) poveznicu između kolonijalnog i sadašnjeg razdoblja, koje neki nazivaju i nadnacionalnim, teško osporiti: upravo su ona svojstva koja su zemlje EU-a stekle kroz kolonijalno razdoblje, poput bogatstva, moći i središnjeg položaja, ono što danas gotovo magnetski privlači istočne zemlje da se uopće kandidiraju za pristupanje tom elitnom klubu. Dodatni argument za kolonijalni karakter proširenja Böröcz vidi i u vrlo konkretnim mehanizmima na koje zemlje pristupnice, gotovo bez izuzetka, pristaju: od privatizacije dobara postsocijalističkih gospodarstava, preko uvođenja poreznih olakšica za izravna strana ulaganja, sve do činjenice da "korporacije osnovane u EU-u sada sačinjavaju najveću skupinu ulagača u srednju i istočnu Europu" (Böröcz 2001:18).

Taj posljednji argument Böröczevu radu daje antiglobalistički ton, koji se i inače provlači literaturom inspiriranom sličnom perspektivom. Tako, na primjer, Daskalovski (2000) smatra da su resursi istočne Europe poput lakog

plijena pali u ruke bogatih i dobro povezanih transnacionalnih kompanija, sa sjedištima u zapadnom svijetu. Jedna od uobičajenih teza autora koji slijede izvornu marksističku kritiku kapitalizma jest i to da je uloga istočne Europe u Europskoj uniji izvoz jeftine radne snage i opskrba neobrađenim materijalima. Ti autori, na žalost, često preskaču i zanemaruju utjecaj komunističkog razdoblja na razvojne kapacitete istočnih europskih država, što je, ponovno, jedna od posljedica već spomenute činjenice da pad Berlinskog zida nije potaknuo intenzivnu teorijsku raspravu o postkomunizmu.

U svom radu Böröcz (2001) naglašava kako zemlje istočne Europe, za razliku od mnogih zapadnoeuropskih zemalja, nemaju iskustvo vladanja kolonijama, ali zato imaju dugu povijest bivanja u tzv. graničnim carstvima, kakvo je, primjerice, bilo i ono Habsburško. Iskustvo zamršenih imperijalnih odnosa za veliku se većinu zemalja istočne Europe u 20. stoljeću nastavilo razdobljem dominacije SSSR-a koja je po svojoj strukturi, smatra autor, također bila vid imperijalizma. Prema Böröczevu tumačenju, naslijeđa tzv. graničnih carstava u Europi nikada nisu artikulirana i promišljena na način kako se to dogodilo nakon dokidanja kolonija. Zapadni je dio kontinenta svoje imperijalno iskustvo jednostavno prenio u projekt stvaranja nacionalnih država, u kojima i dalje obitava niz starih predrasuda prema istočnim Europljanima, dok je na istoku kontinenta, pak, ostao niz zemalja s nerazriješenim imperijalnim naslijeđem, koje se sada, još jednom, nalaze u podređenom položaju kandidata koji kuca na vrata prestižnoga političkog kluba.

Za razliku od procesa dekolonizacije, u kojem je zapadna Europa bar donekle preuzela političku krivnju, zaključuje Böröcz:

... jako malo takvog moralnog preispitivanja može se u društvima zemalja članica EU-a primijetiti o imperijalnim praksama graničnog tipa, posebno u odnosu na njihove neposredne susjede (a često i bivše imperijalne podanike) na istoku. Raspon moralnih stavova prema njihovim siromašnim europskim kolegama je mnogo uži, s time da je moralno kajanje gotovo potpuno izostalo. U zapadnoj Europi postoji relativno malo kulturnih ispravaka po pitanju kognitivnih shema koje, povijesno, postoje zbog podčinjavanja granično-imperijalnog tipa. U međuvremenu, kulturnih predrasuda prema "istočnim Europljanima" ima mnogo, i one danas nailaze na jako malo otpora u zapadnoj Europi (Böröcz 2001:34).

U zaključku, Böröcz (2001) sugerira da EU nije nužno "zao podvig", ali i da u procesu proširenja nipošto ne treba gubiti iz vida kolonijalni aspekt. U analizi diskurzivnih strategija u izvještajima Europske unije o državama koje su u procesu pristupanja, Melinda Kovács (2001) zaključuje da EU spram istočnih pristupnih zemalja upotrebljava diskurs nalik onome u "kolonijalnim susretima i doživljajima" (Kovács 2001:230), a ta diskurzivna matrica prethodi uključenju istočnih pristupnica u strukturu u kojoj je "*raison d'être* jednih služenje drugima" (ibid.). Autori u zborniku "Novo ruho Carstva", koji je prilično radikalno u tumačenju proširenja EU-a na istok, ne propuštaju istaknuti da je "istočno proširenje", premda nesumnjivo imperijalan projekt, ujedno i prilično jedinstveno po tomu što zemlje pristupnice na ovisnost pristaju samovoljno. Odnosno,

... iluzija samo-određenja pristupnica dopušta im da kandidaturu predstave kao vlastitu odluku, budući da nema izravne prisile ili vojne agresije (Kovács i Kabachnik 2000:171).

Projekt "istočnog proširenja" naveo je, pak, poljskog politologa Jana Zielonku (2006) da predloži da se Europsku uniju, nasuprot prevladavajućoj paradigmi koja je "državocentrična", počne promatrati kao strukturu koja najviše nalikuje srednjovjekovnim carstvima, a u nizu argumenata koje autor iznosi u prilog toj tezi, usredotočit ćemo se na one koji se odnose na sam proces proširenja. Europska unija promotrena kao "carstvo", smatra Zielonka, ima kraljevske manire, ali premda je istina da u zemljama-pristupnicama ona igra na kartu "politike moći", ona je, jednako tako, "benigno carstvo" koje svoj teritorij ne osvaja ratovima, nego uvjetovanim privilegijama i povlasticama.

Evo u kojim elementima procesa proširenja Zielonka (2006) pronalazi dokaze da je riječ o imperijalnom obrascu. (1) Od zemalja se, među ostalim, očekuje da uspješno primijene oko 20 tisuća zakona, odluka i regulativa koje sačinjavaju *acquis communautaire*. (2) Ovoga je puta politika EU-a bila i prilično nametljiva: više nije bilo dovoljno da zemlje ispune uvjete, nego su u države kandidatkinje slani i predstavnici EU-a koji su, kroz razne "twinning programe"¹ osobno nadgledali reforme i osiguravali da se one

¹ *Twinning* program – "Instrument koji je razvila Europska komisija putem kojeg državne uprave zemalja članica razvijaju partnerstvo s državnim upravama u zemljama kandidatkinjama ili partnerima. Unutar twinning projekta, državni službenici zemalja članica

odvijaju po planu. (3) Zielonka u poglavlju o imperijalnoj moći EU-a ne zaboravlja istaknuti da Unija u procesu pristupanja ima normativnu moć, njezine "temeljne norme demokracije, tržišne ekonomije, ljudskih prava i socijalne pravde doživljene su kao primjer koji sve države kandidatkinje trebaju slijediti" (Zielonka 2006:56).

Ipak, teško se oteti dojmu da je taj tip vladavine uistinu bio imperijalan. EU je davala odluke i od zemalja kandidatkinja je očekivala pristajanje i poslušnost. Unija je davala modele, a zemlje kandidatkinje su ih trebale preslikati ili ih imitirati. Nudila je poučavanje i obrazovanje, a od zemalja kandidatkinja se očekivalo da se socijaliziraju i da uče. (...) Pristajanje zemalja kandidatkinja bilo je dobrovoljno samo u teoriji. U praksi, te si države nisu mogle priuštiti da okrenu leđa zahtjevima i očekivanjima EU-a (Zielonka 2006:56-57).

Unatoč tome, zaključuje Zielonka (2006), još je uvijek mnogo razloga za to da se EU svejedno promatra kao u osnovi dobrohotno carstvo, među inima i stoga što (1) zemlje koje mu pristupaju nakon pregovora dobivaju mjesto u klubu odabranih i (2) zato što je uvjetovanost u područjima kao što su "administracija" ili "socijalna politika" tijekom pregovora ipak ostavljala dovoljno mjesta kandidatkinjama da biraju iz niza ponuđenih modela, odnosno da ih prilagođavaju vlastitim, postojećim rješenjima. (3) I nadgledanje i proces takozvanog *screeninga* (odnosno, analize zatečenog stanja) moralo je, iz posve praktičnih razloga, donekle biti i površno i nedosljedno. Napokon, ističe Zielonka (ibid.), (4) zbog manjka jasne strategije prema proširenju, Uniji je u procesu pristupanja općenito bilo teško "izabrati glavne ciljeve i spariti ih s primjerenim instrumentima" (ibid. 59). Činjenicu da je proces pristupanja Europskoj uniji razmjerno nejasan, odnosno, da se sastoji i u ispunjavanju prilično apstraktnih kriterija, kao što su "vladavina prava" ili "postojanje tržišne ekonomije" neki drugi su autori istaknuli kao prikriveno osiguravanje manevarskog prostora za zadržavanje hijerarhijskog (a ne partnerskog) odnosa između Europske unije i zemalja pristupnica, ali i među samim zemljama pristupnicama (Melegh 2006).

šalju se kao savjetnici u državnu upravu zemlje partnera." (Definicija preuzeta iz "Rječnika pojmova" Središnje agencije za financiranje i ugovaranje, dostupno na: <http://www.safu.hr/hr/rjecnik/pregled/689/twinning?lang=en>)

U srodnu skupinu radova ulazi i analiza uokvirivanja (*framing*) "istočnog proširenja" Europske unije i NATO-a Merje Kuus (2004), koja otkriva kako je početna pretpostavka obaju političkih procesa bila posve nepolitička: da zemlje pristupnice tek trebaju postati u punoj mjeri europske. Projekte proširenja je, smatra autorica, podupirao orijentalistički diskurs koji različitost od zapadne Europe prikazuje kao manjak pravog, esencijalnog "europeljstva". U istraživanju kojim je kategorijama uokviren proces euroatlantskih integracija Kuus (ibid.) želi ilustrirati koliko je višestoljetni obrazac promatranja istočne Europe kao periferije postojan, pa se, među ostalim, odlučuje na jednostavno citiranje znanstvenih članaka koje europski Istok promatraju isključivo iz perspektive centara moći, kao što su Bruxelles i Washington.

Kuus (ibid.) u svom radu dolazi do zaključka kako je, upravo zato što se proces proširenja EU-a predstavlja kao svojevrsno natjecanje u "europeljstvu" pristupnih zemalja, postkolonijalizam potencijalno plodna teorija za analiziranje tog procesa bez obzira na to što zemlje istočne i srednje Europe formalno nikada nisu bile kolonije Zapada.

Ta dvostruka koncepcija istočne-srednje Europe – istodobno uronjena u povijest, ali i prazan list u koji se može upisati 'europeljstvo' – čini diskurs o istočnoj Europi sličnim orijentalizmu. Zato pristupanje proširenju EU-a kroz leće postkolonijalne teorije ne bi zaniijekalo postignuća zemalja pristupnica ili nekritički utopilo istočnu-srednju Europu u poopćeni ne-Zapad. Mjesto toga, ono bi istaknulo dihotomiju Europe i Istoka, koja podupire diskurs proširenja EU-a (ibid. 483).

Citat o tome kako je Rusija u doba prosvjetiteljstva u očima zapadnjačkih intelektualaca bila doživljavana kao golemi primjerak „na kojem su se najnaprednije pravne i administrativne ideje mogle primjenjivati u cijelosti koja ne bi bila moguća u zapadnoj Europi“ (Anderson 1958:50, citiran u Neumann 1999:78), ponovno se pokazuje korisnim u analizi pretpristupnih strategija za Europsku uniju i NATO, koje se zasnivaju na podučavanju i učenju vrijednosti i normi koje tek kad se usvoje potpuno i na pravi način budućim članicama obećavaju status „potpunih Europljana.“ Da bi se takav sustav raspodjele moći mogao perpetuirati, potrebne su stalne podjele pa se, na primjer, zemlje Srednje Europe, koje imaju "jake povijesne veze" i "zemljopisnu bliskost" sa zapadnom Europom, nastoje odvojiti od nerazvijenijeg Istoka. A zemlje kandidatkinje ostaju "u graničnom području,

niti razvijene, niti nerazvijene, niti učene, niti posve neuke u procesu postajanja zrelih Europljanima" (Kuus 2004:476).

Napokon, može se pretpostaviti da će, usporedo s procesom širenja EU-a, snaga negativnih predodžbi o istočnoj Europi polako blijedjeti, i da će među novim članicama nastajati nove podjele na dobitnike i gubitnike. Bugarska povjesničarka Marija Todorova, koja je poznata po preispitivanju zapadnjačkih predodžbi o Balkanu, smatra da će istočna Europa kao (povijesna i politička) kategorija vjerojatno posve iščeznuti. Ali, također, upozorava i da se "stavovi vezani uz nju, stavovi unutar same regije koliko i izvan nje, neće (...) tako lako izbrisati" (Todorova 2005:93).

ZAKLJUČAK

Ponudeni analitički modeli i metafore otvorene raznovrsnim interpretacijama mogu ponuditi izlaz iz postojeće dominantne perspektive iz koje se na približavanje Hrvatske Europskoj uniji gleda kao na proces koji je, s jedne strane, samorazumljiv i neupitan politički cilj, a, s druge strane, nepregledan niz birokratski detaljno opisanih uvjeta koje zemlja kandidatkinja treba ispuniti prije pristupanja. Kao i niz autora citiranih u ovom članku, smatram da neki elementi postkolonijalne teorije mogu biti korisni u tumačenju postojećeg društvenog konsenzusa koji proces hrvatskog pristupanja EU-u štiti od postavljanja kritičkih pitanja.

Baš zato što rasprava o pristupanju EU-u nije burna i što su na društvenoj sceni prevladale "proeuropske" opcije, korisno je ponovno postaviti pitanje što se skriva iza egida o "nacionalnom interesu" i dugo iščekivanom "povratku Europi". Krenemo li tragom Kjoseva, koji pomno opisuje problem kultura koje su nastale dobrovoljnim oponašanjem modela i matrica Velikih Nacija Europe, treba se zapitati bi li vrijedilo na sličan način istražiti i politički proces poput pristupanja Hrvatske Europskoj uniji, koji podrazumijeva prilagodbu zapadnim kriterijima. Samo prihvaćanje da je u procesu pristupanja Europskoj uniji pozicija Hrvatske unaprijed podređena, da tu nije riječ o dogovoru, pa čak ni o pregovoru, nego, vrlo jednostavno, o sustavnoj primjeni uvjeta koje je postavila moćnija strana, moglo bi otvoriti prostor za javnu raspravu o pitanjima u koja je, premda ostaju neizrečena, proces pristupanja ionako uronjen. Na primjer: na koje se načine kolonijalna prošlost središnjih zemalja EU-a odražava na proces "istočnog proširenja"? Ili: da li se Europsku uniju

na periferiji doista doživljava kao "benigno carstvo" i u kakvom je to odnosu s kolektivnim sjećanjem na iskustvo bivanja u "civilizacijskim orbitama Velikih Carstava" (Kiossev 2003) poput Habsburške monarhije? Ili: gdje, u procesu pridruživanja, Hrvatska samu sebe smješta na imaginarnoj ljestvici "europeljstva" u odnosu na članice Europske unije i, ne manje važno, u odnosu na ostale zemlje u regiji?

Vodeći se tim i sličnim pitanjima, neko buduće istraživanje odnosa Hrvatske prema Europskoj uniji vjerojatno će biti uspješnije u odgovaranju na pitanje zašto je rasprava o tom, po definiciji političkom, procesu u tolikoj mjeri pomno očišćena od sadržaja. Odnosno, zašto u Hrvatskoj Europska unija uspijeva u tolikoj mjeri ostati zaštićena i od kakvog, a ne samo kritičkog promišljanja.

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