

Review

Ivan Šiber (ed.)

**Hrvatska i Europa: strahovi i nade
(Croatia and Europe: Fears and Hopes)**Faculty of Political Sciences, Zagreb, 2011,
253 pp.

Shortly prior to the referendum on the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, several books on the EU and Croatia's accession process were presented to our professional and wider public. Among them, standing out for its quality is *Croatia and Europe: Fears and Hopes*, a compendium of articles edited by Ivan Šiber. Comprised of eight articles by several authors, the book analyses key negotiation factors and processes in Croatia in view of the media and political elites and their treatment of that process. All articles are written with an investigative edge offering a rich complement to understanding Croatian public media discourse on Europe.

The first article *Euroskepticizam u Hrvatskoj (Euro-scepticism in Croatia)* by Nebojša Blanuša (pp. 11-46) differentiates in the theoretical introduction between the *soft* Euro-sceptics (those who exhibit certain fears, are critical, reserved and opposed to some trends or specific solutions for integration) and the *hard* ones (those who generally reject the entire European Union project) (11). It goes on to present a two-dimensional model with the Europhobes and the Europhiles as the opposing poles.

In the support-to-the-EU dimension are the *Euro-optimists* and the *Euro-pessimists*. By intersecting these differentiations, the author construes four ideal type categories: *Euro-enthusiasts*, *Euro-sceptics*, *Euro-pragmatics* and *Euro-opponents* (13). Opinion polls on EU accession conducted among Croatian citizens between 2006 and 2010 show apparent oscillations closely related to events taking place in the political arena which caused delays in negotiations or imposed additional conditions required to meet EU criteria. Unlike the pro-European political elites, a significant portion of citizens are Eurosceptic. This is mostly due to the fear of losing national values, traditions and riches (real estate and land) and the fear of economic subordination, lack of competitiveness in domestic production and increase in prices. However, significant domestic scandals (corruption, political and criminal proceedings) have resulted in an expected increase in positive expectations regarding EU accession during certain periods. Such expectations primarily concerned the establishment of the rule of law and general suppression of corruption, but they also involved an economic perspective – hopes of financial aid, access to larger markets and advantages such access would bring. Political elites see Croatia's accession to the EU much more affirmatively than the citizens, primarily in terms of economic progress, acceptance of the Union's values and the necessary structural reforms of the Croatian society. This research has therefore shed light on the discrepancy between the perception of the public on the one hand and the political elites on the other regarding the advantages and disadvantages of Croatia's EU accession. The author points out that an adequate governmental communication strategy for

Croatia's accession to the Union, aimed at educating social groups, is practically non-existent, whereby Euro-scepticism is not perceived as political reality requiring an appropriate approach (44).

In the second article, *Pet uvjerenja i 29 razloga protiv (Five Beliefs and 29 Reasons Against)* by Božo Skoko and Dragan Bagić (pp. 47-85), the *focus group* method is used to determine the opinion of four heterogeneous groups on EU accession. As a starting point, the authors use the utilitarian approach, i.e. economic arguments. The first aspect of that approach is the objective economic interest of certain groups, while the second is the economic interest of the individual (also known as the subjective variant of the utilitarian explanation). Criticism of the utilitarian model of explaining public support to European integration focuses on national identity, national exclusivity and openness to other cultures (49). In Croatia, the utilitarian explanation is one of the predominant ways of interpreting Croatia's EU accession, but some research has shown that attitudes about EU accession are formed on an emotional and superficial basis without adequate awareness of facts. Formation of opinions on the EU is a complex process intertwined with political, socioeconomic and other aspects of an individual's or a group's life. This survey, conducted in mid-2009, focused on four different population groups: *Croatian war veterans* (middle-aged/senior, right-wing political views), *farmers* (significant portion of income generated from farming), *"transition winners"* (young and middle-aged, with university degrees, urban, with above average income, left-wing and centre) and *"transition losers"* (middle-aged/senior, unemployed or retired, of lower

education levels and with below average income). Overall, 29 different reasons were given on why Croatia should not join the EU. Let me point to a few of the most frequently cited ones: unfair treatment of Croatia in the accession process; Croatia can make progress on its own; negative impact on agriculture and rural areas; fear that Croatian production capacities will be destroyed; negative economic trends in the Union; negative impact on the standard of living (58). Based on the arguments collected, the authors identified five beliefs: the European Union is a union of the unequal and its politics is dominated by the interests of its largest members, and not by common interests; the European Union and its most important Member States have treated Croatia unfairly; free trade and competition are doing Croatia harm; Croatia is economically and politically weak; with respect to its natural resources, Croatia is a "heaven on Earth" (83). Although that was not the intention of this research, positive expectations arose in terms of corruption suppression, the rule of law, social policy, protection of human rights, and benefit for the youth. Research has shown that there are two kinds of Euro-sceptics – the *hard* and the *soft*; however, both are opposed to the way in which Croatia is joining the EU. The article ends with the conclusion that viewpoints are a product of perception and perception is liable to change.

The third article entitled *Nade i strah mladih prema Europskoj uniji (The Hopes and Fear of Youth regarding the European Union)* by Nebojša Blanuša and Ivan Šiber (pp. 87-119), deals with the attitude of youth toward the European Union. It provides an analysis of secondary school theme essays written in Croatian language

lessons, with *Croatia and Europe – Fears and Hopes* as the theme. The analysis is based on several factors: youth has always been considered a sort of mirror of social relations and of the overall situation in society. Their answers are straightforward, they look to the future, and in times of social turmoil and changes they take on the function of re-socialising their own parents. The young are a special target group and require a special, modified communication strategy. Consequently, this research focused on getting to know them, their problems and ways of thinking (87). Research has shown that students mention on average 4.5 fears or hopes about Croatia's accession to the EU. However, a large standard deviation in evaluation complexity has been recorded among certain students (92). The recorded fears are correlated with the data obtained in the previously shown research. Those that stand out are: fear that domestic products and agriculture will be destroyed, fear of resource exploitation and general sell-out, fear of losing sovereignty, fear of losing culture and identity, fear that the standard of living will drop and general fear of uncertainty, as well as fear that the Homeland War will be criminalised and that lawlessness will increase (94-95). Their hopes concern: chances for mobility, "Croatia as Europe" (in the sense that desirable standards and values will be realised only once Croatia has joined the EU), expectations of economic benefits, the rule of law, improved international status for Croatia, and enhanced environmental protection (98-99). Data has shown that respondents with a negative attitude have a higher rate of fears, while hope is more common in respondents with a positive attitude. After identifying the hopes and

the fears, researchers tested the six previously set hypotheses. The conclusion sets out two fears (fear of political change and of economic colonisation) and three hopes (hope of economic growth, of establishing responsible management and of attaining European values and standards). Substantially, both factors contain the utilitarian and the political dimension as well as values (117). This study has contributed to the modification of the communication strategy, but has also indicated that youth reproduces the attitudes of their immediate environment (most often family, school) and that they are not properly informed.

Marijana Grbeša is the author of the fourth article, *Europska Unija u hrvatskom tisku od 2007. do 2011.* (*The European Union in Croatian Press, 2007-2011*, pp. 120-137). This article looks at the way the EU and EU-related topics are presented, in what type of articles, and from what viewpoint; it looks at the main stakeholders involved in European topics, identifies the key framework for reporting on the EU, and determines their presence in the Croatian press (120). The research focuses on four daily and two weekly newspapers, based on their circulation figures. The results of this research show that the number of positively inclined articles on the EU has risen in the last two years analysed. The highest portion of analysed articles deals with negotiations, the enlargement process, relations with neighbouring countries and EU programmes and funds. A significant number of articles also deals with or mentions high-ranking EU officials. It is quite telling that European topics do not cover the front pages (as these are, obviously, unattractive). Quite a few of the articles on the European Union are

very extensive, but very few deal with issues crucial for Croatia, such as concrete EU public policies. This research is all the more useful for showing the content of press articles dealing with Croatia's pre-accession negotiations, which allows for the analysis of media influence on public opinion making.

The fifth article by Ivan Šiber and Nebojša Blanuša, *Stvaratelji javnog mnijenja u Hrvatskoj (Public Opinion Makers in Croatia)*, pp. 138-163), deals with political elites. The theoretical basis for this article is the *two-step flow communication* model, according to which a small number of opinion makers act as intermediaries between the mass media and the society. What is specific about Croatia is that, as a country in transition, it still lacks new and stable political elite, since the old political elite lost its power and influence some twenty years ago. The new elite were formed in the turbulent times of the Homeland War. The authors start with the World War II-related split that divided the people of Croatia and determined the political views of generations to come, formed through the prism of two political parties (HDZ, the Croatian Democratic Union, and SDP, the Social Democratic Party). For that reason, the authors' starting assumption is that Croatian political elite is structured in two recognisable and diverse political elites with differing political values and views towards the past, but also with different projections of the future (145). This research was conducted in late 2009 and combined three methods: position, reputation and sociometric status. Furthermore, the snowball method was applied, where the initial group was formed of individuals considered influential in Croatian poli-

tics. The group was comprised of an equal number of left-wing and right-wing political elite members. A rank list of the most influential individuals was formed from within the political elite, from which list the top five were: Vesna Pusić, Vladimir Šeks, Zoran Milanović, Ivo Josipović, and Stjepan Mesić. Research has shown that members of the elite are mostly identified along the lines of party membership. The problem of this research is that a part of the initially formed group from the right-wing political elite did not accept participation in the research, i.e. was made unavailable to the researchers. Therefore, the final results are in favour of the left-wing political elite even though their starting position was the same. We learn how members of the perceived political elite see each other, which can be an indicator for political actions in accordance with how the actions of an individual deemed to be an authority or power holder are perceived.

In his article *Internetske stranice političkih stranaka u Hrvatskoj i Europska Unija (Political Parties' Websites in Croatia and the EU)*, pp. 164-188), Domagoj Bebić analyses how and to what extent political parties have been using the internet to inform the public or their target groups about the EU. In 2006, the Croatian Parliament adopted the *Communication Strategy Aimed at Informing the Croatian Public about the European Union*, in which political parties are identified as one of the stakeholders in informing the public. One of the methods employed is – political parties' websites. The research focused on the websites of relevant political parties in Croatia as well as Slovenia and Serbia as comparative countries, and is quite interesting since it deals with the

internet as a relatively new form of communication, different from the standard information-sharing methods. Primarily, the process of information-sharing can be a two-way one, i.e. interactive. The internet as a new communication channel offers a different paradigm for mass communication and a possible way out for the political communication faltering in the context of the crisis of representative democracy (167). The research conducted has shown that over 50% of the population over the age of 16 have access to broadband internet connection. Research conducted in November 2010 showed that 50% of the population would turn out for the referendum on Croatia's accession to the European Union, 64% of whom would vote "for", 29% would vote "against", and 7% would be undecided. It turned out that the hardest Eurosceptics are among the younger population (173).¹ According to research results, political parties in Croatia barely use their websites to inform the general population about the European Union, its institutions or policies. However, most websites do contain a piece of news on the EU. When comparing those with the websites of political parties in Slovenia and Serbia, it was recorded that, of all three observed countries, political parties in Serbia use the internet the most. The author concludes that political parties in Croatia failed to use the potential offered by the

internet to inform their voters on the European Union or to get them involved in the discussion about EU accession (181).

Komunikacijska strategija Hrvatske za ulazak u Europsku uniju (Communication Strategy for Croatia on its Way to the European Union) is the title of the seventh article, by Zoran Tomić and Damir Jugo (pp. 189-208). Back in October 2001, the Croatian government adopted the *Communication Strategy Aimed at Informing the Croatian Public about the European Integration Process of the Republic of Croatia*. In 2006, the Croatian Parliament adopted the second *Communication Strategy Aimed at Informing the Croatian Public about the European Union and Preparations for EU Membership 2003-2007*. This article analyses the *Communication Strategy* and its elements, and compares them with similar strategies of other countries. Communication goals and target audience are to be determined as soon as a problem is identified. If the target audience is not identified, the entire communication strategy could be in vain. The communication strategy for Croatia takes the entire population as the target audience. The aim of the communication strategy is to inform the Croatian public about the advantages of EU membership and the necessary reforms, the consequences of not joining the EU, and the rights, benefits and obligations of such membership. At the same time, the strategy aims to facilitate as wide and as engaged active participation of citizens as possible in the discussion about EU membership. Therefore, the authors conclude that the aim of Government communication about the EU is: to provide available and understandable information, to inform the public about the progress of negotiations, to

¹ Based on this research, all *ad hoc* internet polls conducted just before the 22 January 2012 referendum are made more understandable, since all internet polls indicated that Eurosceptic voters were predominant. However, 66.27% of voters who turned out on the referendum voted "for" Croatia's accession to the European Union.

remove unfounded and faulty stereotypes about the European Union, to highlight the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and to deal with unrealistic expectations (192-193). The first Communication Strategy was markedly one-way, unlike the second one, which is two-way and involves feedback. The authors conclude that the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration failed to implement the strategy in its entirety, and that they still have an intense strategy implementation to deal with, as well as more concrete communication with the defined target audience (207).

The book ends with Zlatan Krajina's article entitled *Hrvatska kao Balkan i Turska kao Orijent: Analiza BBC-evih reportaža (Croatia as the Balkans and Turkey as the Orient: an Analysis of BBC Reports*, pp. 209-253). The article analyses BBC reports on Croatia and Turkey shown in late 2005 and early 2006, when the two countries were awarded EU membership candidate status. This type of analysis can be very useful in understanding other reports on Croatia from the perspective of the so-called old EU Member States. The author aims to identify the Anglo-Saxon stereotypes of balkanism and orientalism as a pattern applied in media discourse in relation to relevant societies. When sequencing reports, the author uses narrative analysis. He explains the term "the West" as seen from the observer's position and the parameters taken into account when defining that concept. The term "others" is always defined as eastern to the observer's position – Croatia is east of Britain, Turkey is east of Croatia, Central Asia is east of Turkey, etc. At the same time, he identifies the ambivalence of European integra-

tion in terms of excluding those "others" who do not belong to the same cultural and mental mind frame of the already united Member States, according to the perception of the latter. The term "cultural codes" is applied to media analysis; according to that term, the news, i.e. the transfer of information is a manifestation of the perception and stereotypes of the final observer (spectator watching the news), and not a description of the outside world. Narrative analysis looks at how in video editing some parts are used at a particular moment or with particular frequency in order to create a narrative. The author follows Said's interpretation of orientalism and Marija Todorova's interpretation of balkanism. The areas of orientalism and balkanism are defined by Western stereotypical discourse and its perception of them as "different" and "other": the Orient as a pure antipode of the West, and the Balkans as a "transitional" and "inconstant" fluid space with continuous tendencies of instability eruption. The West with its categorical discourse creates the East, and the East in interaction with the West uses that same categorical apparatus (e.g. a language of the West or a pattern of the Western system) with which it was construed, thereby only (paradoxically) "confirming" the Western idea of the East as "different". Therefore the author concludes: from a comparative perspective, one can claim that Croatia, a "former Habsburg country", was occasionally a European "less other" country than Turkey which, finally, was "other" even to Croatia (242). These are only the outlines of the numerous arguments this text offers, brilliantly dissecting and demystifying the perception of that artificially produced mysticism of the Balkans, i.e. the Orient through TV reports interpretation.

In spite of that, this text shows the meaning of Croatia's accession to the EU at least through the perspective that the way we are perceived can be changed to a point where that perception becomes partly acceptable, or at least more than it would be if we were outside the EU.

This compendium is undoubtedly a contribution to our knowledge of the fundamental concerns and doubts of the Croatian public in the final years of Croatia's EU accession negotiations. I would particularly like to point to the diversity of research conducted, and its complementarity in obtaining a full understanding of the issues surrounding Croatia's EU accession. It has identified the citizens' perception, their fears and hopes, but it has also depicted and critically evaluated the elites' communication strategies in informing the citizens about the opportunities that EU accession brings. All articles it contains are valuable both individually for the insights they offer and jointly for the comprehensive picture they paint of the analysed Croatia's EU accession process and elements comprised in that process. Standing out is the final chapter of this book, which has a fantastic way of demystifying and stripping bare the Western, primarily British, (distorted) perception of the Balkans and the Orient as rudimentary and post-feudal areas, fraught with danger rather than seen as places of possibilities or opportunities. The book as a whole is a valuable historical overview of Croatian public opinion faced with the challenge of EU membership, and of the media approach to Croatia's accession to the European community of peoples.

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(translated into English
by Elvira Mulić)

Review

Zrinjka Peruško, Tena Perišin,
Martina Topić, Gordana Vilović,
Nada Zgrabljic Rotar
**Hrvatski medijski sustav prema
UNESCO-ovim indikatorima
medijskog razvoja (Croatian Media
System according to the UNESCO
Media Development Indicators)**

Fakultet političkih znanosti Sveučilišta
u Zagrebu, Zagreb, 2011, 191 pp.

The book *Croatian Media System according to the UNESCO Media Development Indicators* presents the results of a two-year (2008-2009) research project and efforts to explain, analyze and assess media development in Croatia based on UNESCO media development indicators as methodological tools. The Croatian project was one of the first independent implementations of UNESCO media development indicators (which were adopted by the UNESCO International Program for Development of Communication in 2008). Research and evaluation were conducted as part of the project *Monitoring media development – implementing UNESCO media development indicators* at the Centre for Media and Communication Research (Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb). The project was led by Zrinjka Peruško, chair of the Centre, and conducted in cooperation with the Communication Development Division of UNESCO. This was the first extensive scientific team ef-