
Book Reviews

 Book Review

Zoran Kurelić

Liberalizam sa skeptičnim licem
 (*Liberalism with a Skeptical Face*)

Barbat, Zagreb, 2002, 198 pages

The end of the 20th century was marked by a great victory of liberalism as a political ideal over what now appear as its obsolete rivals, communism and fascism. However, the spreading of liberal democratic institutions has been followed by a matching widespread doubt in the validity of their philosophical foundations. The book *Liberalism With a Skeptical Face* proves that the doubt is justified, but it opens politically frightening prospects.

The author, Zoran Kurelić has chosen to enter a debate with four philosophers – Karl Popper, Paul Feyerabend, Alasdair MacIntyre and Richard Rorty – who discuss the connections between philosophy of science, political theory and politics. As the subtitle of the book (*Incommensurability as a political concept*) indicates, the central problem of the book is the epistemological concept of incommensurability and its consequences for liberal democratic politics. The concept of incommensurability is well introduced at the beginning of the book. Incommensurability is originally a geometrical concept that was introduced in the philosophy of science by Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend. These philosophers have used incommensurability in their accounts of the possibilities for scientific progress. On those accounts, two scientific theories are incommensurable if they cannot be reduced to one another, nor is there a third “neutral” theory that could encompass them both. New theories bring in new concepts, new standards and goals – or in Thomas Kuhn’s words – they open entirely different worlds. In other words, incommensurability means that it cannot be proved by rational arguments which of the two

theories is “better”, nor can it be shown which of any two natural languages is better. Still, incommensurability does not imply incomparability because languages and theories could be compared if the second language or “the other” theory is “learned” without mediation from our own theory or language but directly as small children do when they learn a second language. Kuhn himself has compared the switch to another paradigm with religious conversion. In the rest of the book, Kurelić pursues his intention to create “an interplay of ideas that explain the political concept of incommensurability” (19).

Kurelić’s intention is also a good description of the book’s content since he offers a multitude of new and welcome ideas that not only exhibit the connection between liberalism and its pedigree in the rationalism of the Enlightenment. He is also concerned with the place and the role of philosophers in society as well as with the relationship between the Western science, as a dominant mode in which the humankind comprehends the world, and other, mainly non-Western, forms of knowledge. Still, the book’s most important contribution and a great deal of its originality lies in the idea to use the context of scientific progress, in which the incommensurability concept was mainly developed, as a new standpoint from which to ask questions about the foundations of liberal democratic institutions. The heroes of this book, as Kurelić calls the philosophers whose ideas he discusses, introduce the concept of incommensurability into the social world. For Feyerabend the analogon of a scientific paradigm in the social sphere is “culture”, for MacIntyre the analogon is “tradition”, while Rorty writes about “vocabularies”, but despite these differences all three agree that a rational decision can not be made when deciding among incommensurable “things”. Still, in liberal democracies, political decisions are made through procedures that are supposed to embody the ideal of rational argument. Therefore, liberal democracies are “guilty” of rationalistic decision-making about things “incommensurable” and their procedures are not neutral among different

“cultures”, “traditions”, etc. The faith in reason is a characteristic feature of the Enlightenment tradition and of the Western culture, and that faith is also present in the very foundations of the liberal democratic institutions. Since the Western culture is only one of many “cultures”, rationalism only one of many “traditions” and the Enlightenment only one – and according to Rorty exhausted – of many “vocabularies”, the institutions that are an “incarnation of the Enlightenment rationalism” could not be universally valid. This criticism does seem devastating, but Kurelić rightly notices that it is largely ineffective since it does not offer any institutional alternative. Imperfect as they are, liberal institutions are still the most adequate for the societies characterized by the incommensurability of cultures, traditions and vocabularies. However, regardless of the fact that for Feyerabend, MacIntyre and Rorty, “the concept of incommensurability (...) is in no way a cause of strife among cultures, but it creates a hunger for mutual understanding” (191), the author concludes that incommensurability is a concept ready to destroy a will for common life under liberal institutions.

Kurelić is aware of the difference between the incommensurability of scientific paradigms and the incommensurability of “traditions”, “cultures” or “ways of life”, but he does not specifically explore this difference. Still, incommensurability as conceived in the philosophy of science is only analogous, and not identical with the concept of incommensurability used in political and social philosophy. Kuhn himself points out that the representatives of different paradigms are “similar to members of different cultural and linguistic communities” (15). Therefore, they are in a similar but not in an identical situation. Scientists, who work inside a paradigm, as Kuhn stresses, “spend their entire *careers* doing nothing more than amending the basic theory” (14). Members of different cultural and linguistic communities, however spend their entire *lives* mainly confirming their traditions, cultures and ways of life. Scientists do not *live* in their paradigms; they only work in them, while we, as ordinary humans (scientists included) *live out* our ways of life. Having this in mind, the following question arises: Can incommensurability operate in “real life” where

the members of incommensurable paradigms or traditions do not meet only at scientific conferences but in bedrooms, bars, schools, parliaments, clubs, wars and similar situations in which they are forced to find some common ground. The incommensurability theories immediately presuppose that any form of commonality must include either coercion or religious type of conversion from one paradigm to another because, if incommensurability operates in real life, then meaningful communication between paradigms would not be possible.

As already mentioned, this is the direction in which Feyerabend and MacIntyre develop their criticism of liberalism. Liberalism, according to them, can only be one among many traditions that – under the incommensurability presumption – oppresses all the other traditions. However, the fact that liberalism is “only” a tradition has for many philosophers been the strength and in no way the weakness of liberalism. John Rawls, for example, builds his arguments in *Political liberalism* on the fact that liberalism is at least the political way of life in one part of the world. Liberal institutions, as Kurelić himself stresses, have emerged precisely as a way to deal with incommensurable doctrines and ways of life. Religious tolerance, which is in the very foundation of liberal democratic regimes, is a historical rather than a theoretical achievement. Common life is thus possible, although mainly in those cultures that are already liberalized. However, after the incommensurability story, the old big problem appears even more intractable than before: Is it really possible to stand by our convictions after we have realized that their validity is only relative?

Ana Matan

 Book Review

Matko Meštrović (ed.)

Globalizacija i njezine refleksije na Hrvatsku
(*Globalisation and its Reflections in Croatia*)

Institute of Economics, Zagreb, 2001, 283 pages

It is hard to disprove that globalisation used to be a success story of a sort in social sciences of the 1990s. However, hardly anyone would dare to say that the same could apply to Croatia. In Croatia, globalisation has been rarely and unsystematically covered. Thus the appearance of the anthology *Globalisation and its reflections in Croatia*, edited by Matko Meštrović, a senior sociologist from Zagreb, is somewhat of a surprise. The anthology should be viewed as a continuation of a very interesting and stimulating project “Cultural capital and the development strategy of Croatia” conducted by Meštrović in the 1990s. Also, *Globalisation and its reflections in Croatia* is the result of the project “Historical space, social time and postmodern capitalization”. The anthology’s goal, stated in its Preface is “to identify the relative time of the reproduction of its social structures and the various influences of global processes”. This means that “the evaluation of the specific historical position of the Croatian society” calls for an interdisciplinary approach since “the historical space and the social times of different communities are in no way unique”.

In the opening essay “The contradictions of globalisation” its author, Željka Šporer, claims that “globalisation is nothing new” (3). Although the tendencies of globalisation were inherent to the processes of industrialization and modernization, they cannot be conceptually equated. Namely, according to Šporer, globalisation is “a process of industrialization and modernization spreading globally with an integrating function” (4). In the text “Formal economy and the real historical world” Matko Meštrović sees globalisation from a special

perspective. Namely, he reviews the post-Marxist literature that dealt with this issue in the 1990s.

The section entitled “Where are we in all this?” begins with Antun Šundalić’s essay “Value system at the time of the politics of oblivion”. Šundalić identifies the problems in the transition of the Croatian society and concludes that a sustainable society can be realized only if “culturally conditioned” (78). By this author means the so-called permanent social values i.e. the morality suppressed by the process of privatization. The impression is that the author idealizes the capacities of bourgeois democracy and civilian culture. However, it is not entirely clear how “the individual autonomy as a value of the new society” should transpire and at the same time serve as a confirmation of “the creation of the requirements necessary for the emergence of a new class not burdened with the errands of the everyday political servitude to the ruling structure” (79). In short, this essay is an example of the relatively pervasive bourgeois utopianism which offsets the “disagreeable” reality with a desired counter-image.

The third section of the anthology, “The right or the wrong steps?” includes the texts by the participants in a very topical debate about the economic policy in Croatia. Ivan Teodorović’s essay, “The transitional process in the global setting” is written in general and programmatic terms, but might be of some interest to the academic circles because the author refers to the study “Macroeconomic aspects and the vision of the development of economy” which includes the estimates for the economic growth in Croatia in the next 15 years. According to this study, a macroeconomic framework for the period 2001-2005 should be designed, the framework that would provide for a sustained economic growth. The key condition for this is the reduction of state expenditure and the introduction of a more restrictive fiscal policy. The effects of the mentioned period would be between 2005 and 2010 result in increased investments, and Croatia would be prepared for its membership in the EU and the EMU. In the third period, from 2010 to 2015, the economic policy would be coordinated with the EU. Parts of this study

are very dramatic since it is estimated that “among the unemployed, those middle-aged and with lower qualifications have no chance whatsoever of ever finding a job.” (145).

Boris Vujčić and Velimir Šonje co-wrote a neoliberally intoned essay “Liberalism in designing economic policy” in which they argue that a “process of the escalation of doubts about the idea of the free market” has begun (149). A weariness of a sort has set in so the authors wonder whether such state was brought on by the liberal economic policy or the failure in establishing the free market? They claim that the skepticism towards the free market is based on “erroneous assumptions” and is a “consequence of the botched attempt at introducing political democracy and the free market” (149).

Vujčić and Šonje, naturally, start from the assumption that “markets are superior and their flaws may be corrected” (162). They feel there is a certain tension between the idea and the reality. The problems can be cured by “introducing an efficient state administration” (163). After such an administration has been put into place “the market should be allowed to take its course, unconcerned with the consequences of the free market competition”. In that respect their conclusion is logical: the liberal program remains to be tested!

Evan Kraft in “Stabilization is not enough” tries to “look into the obstacles to Croatia’s stabilization” (165). The main obstacle he sees in the structural and institutional factors, and draws his conclusions from the state of affairs prior to the change of government of 3 January 2000. In line with Ivo Bičanić and Vojmir Franičević, Kraft argues that in the 1990s in Croatia there arose a special form of cronyism followed by a development of democracy fraught with problems. In such circumstances it turned out that the deflation and the creation of a stable macroeconomic environment would not suffice, but also that the situation would not be altered by means of “drastic exchange rate changes and a more lax monetary policy” (177). He sees the solution in institution-building, habit-changing and the rule of law.

Economist Zvonimir Baletić in his text “A mistaken concept of stabilization” emphati-

cally argues against these views. He tries to show that the application of the liberal doctrine in Croatia was misconceived and brought discredit upon the role of the state and politics in general. In that sense, the opening of Croatia to the world capital “was one-sided ... (since) ... it increasingly smothered and narrowed our own potential and the space for autonomous activity; at the same time nobody assumed any responsibility for our welfare and security” (192). This text is interesting because it is one among a handful in this anthology that deals with a political science topic. Namely, in the era of globalisation there are pressures to change the functions of the state so that it is “decreasingly able to represent the specific interests of its population” (199).

The fourth part of the anthology begins with Rade Kalanj’s informative essay “Three views of globalisation”. According to him, the debate on globalisation can be reduced to three typological views: neoliberal, reformist and radical. The neoliberal view is undoubtedly against the regulation, while the reformists accept globalisation within the framework of the social-democratic tradition as far as possible. The radicals, however, insist on deglobalisation. There are at least two kinds of radicals. The first are the traditionalists who start from a “better past” and evoke the “lost localness”. The others are the so-called global socialists who reject the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of the “universal global movement of workers, women, and other oppressed people as an appropriate path to the establishment of ... a post-capitalist world” (207). Kalanj thinks that they are marginal. In his article he offers a rather elegant review of the fundamental ideological positions at the time of globalisation and a principled account of the state of affairs in the transitional countries.

After this selective review (and since there is a good chance the project is to continue), a word of caution is in order: it is not always wise to include a big number of contributions, since it inevitably results in an anthology of works whose quality greatly varies. Although the articles are divided into sections with the editor’s catchy titles, it would be nice if the preface included an explanation of the link between the essays and the sections they have

been put into. Essentially, the publishing of the anthology *Globalisation and its reflections in Croatia* has its rationale since this topic has only been broached in our country. In the long-term, the problems of the state, sovereignty and political power in general should be more systematically covered, not only outlined.

In conclusion it should be said that this anthology ought to be placed in the context of the identity crisis that theory in Croatia has been going through. In that sense it is a welcome addition because it suggests interdisciplinary approach as a possible way out of the crisis. The future will show whether this is indeed the way out.

Tonči Kursar

Book Review

Nenad Zakošek

Politički sustav Hrvatske
(*Political System of Croatia*)

Fakultet političkih znanosti, Zagreb,
2002, 146 pages

This book by Nenad Zakošek, a political scientist and professor at the Faculty of Political Science, is appearing twelve years after the shaping of a democratic political system in Croatia commenced. Unlike old democracies and old nation-states, for countries like Croatia, there has to – understandably – elapse a certain period of time before a more systematic survey of the development of political institutions or a review of the essential features of political processes in such countries is attempted. Furthermore, the fact that Croatia's democracy was for a full decade evolving within the framework of an extraordinary combination of the war, the fight for independence and the institutionalization of a peculiar type of a regime that in the long run meant uncertainty and the risk of obstructing democratic development, is another reason that

only now there has emerged the need for a more systematic account of the development of individual institutional patterns, a survey that would more accurately pinpoint the sources of their formation and their outcomes. Zakošek's book is the first such attempt in Croatia.

The book is divided into 11 chapters. The first three include short essays outlining the author's approach to the study of politics, the central junctures in the structural transformation of Croatia's society and the key features of Croatia's transition from socialism, while the other chapters analyse the development of the institutions that are traditionally the pillars of the political system of any democratic country (elections, party system, parliament, executive power institutions, judiciary, constitutional revision institutions, interest organizations, the media). And although such a format as well as the very title of the book suggest a textbook, this is not an actual textbook. True, the chapters basically cover all the fundamental institutions of the political system, and some display all the attributes of a textbook approach to their topics, but a lack of an apparent concept of presentation, a varied chapter size, and a diversity of the levels and the methodology of presentation from chapter to chapter do not conform to the textbook standards. On the other hand, this is not your typical author's book, in the sense in which all the chapters stem from an integral and entirely novel interpretation of the political development of a democratic Croatia with the purpose of instigating a debate and controversy in the scientific community (although one of the chapters may have such traits).

Political System of Croatia is something between and in fact very near to what the author maintains in the preface to the book – an attempt at a systematic review of the main hypotheses, the results of the relevant research and, based on them, the interpretation of the political processes that have dominated the shaping of the described institutions in the last decade. The empirical basis of the book are the results of a decade of research into the behaviour of Croatian voters conducted within a project of a group of researchers from the Faculty of Political Science (including the author),

as well as the formal rules of the day in the Croatian Constitution and certain parts of the legislature as the legal foundation and framework of the activities of political actors. However, since his account offers a clearly outlined approach to politics, occasional historical excursions, a deliberate introduction to certain theoretical models as well as the author's theoretical interventions, inspiring interpretations and an unorthodox evaluation of the quality of the operation and the development of the democratic institutions in Croatia, it would be most accurate to call Zakošek's book a compendium of Croatia's political institutions of a kind that, especially in the first part, offers some original, well corroborated and theoretically well grounded explanations of the functioning of individual institutional patterns.

The author's general methodological-theoretical approach is a sort of the sociologically-inspired contemporary institutionalism within which researchers try to identify the dominant patterns of political behaviour at the collective level, describe their emergence and evolution, and explain their operation by means of an interaction of the inherited structural restrictions, formal rules and procedures and the activities of various actors, primarily political elites. To a large extent this also covers and explains the political dynamics in the mentioned period. Although the author in principle attaches equal importance to all the three elements in the processes of the institutionalization of new political patterns, and focuses on different types of explanation in different chapters, the impression is that the structural factors nevertheless play the central role in Zakošek's interpretations. In this, he explicitly rejects the claim about the "pre-political" character of the conflicts, and looks into the social conditioning of political processes as a whole, avoiding evaluating political development solely as a mechanical extension of socio-economic relations into the political sphere. This is a radical departure from the dominant traditional scientific-normative paradigm, characteristic not only for social sciences in Croatia but also in other East-European countries.

In the introductory chapters, besides outlining his approach, Zakošek gives a brief account of the emergence and the evolution of

the political system of Croatia. The alteration of the national structure of the Croatian society, a sudden drop in economic production, an increase in socio-economic disparities and the legitimizing problems of most social and political institutions are the major aspects of the transformation of the Croatian society in the 1990s. This transformation is partly due to the more profound socio-economic structural developments at work in other transitional societies, and partly a consequence of a specific type of the democratic transition in Croatia and the circumstances in which it took place. Nevertheless, since the book primarily deals with the analysis and the evaluation of institutional development, frequently emphasizing its formal aspect, the outlined theory of transition serves only as a framework for understanding the context of political processes and not as an analytical tool.

The major portion of the book – almost two thirds – is devoted to an analysis of the electoral and party system and their interaction. This is the best part of the book, though those two chapters are based on different analytical and expository procedures. The chapter on the electoral system offers a comprehensive overview of the evolution of the Croatian electoral legislation since 1990, a precise survey of electoral outcomes and points to the key democratic deficits both of the electoral legislation and the electoral practice. Also, by supplementing the activities of the formal factors by the structural activities, Zakošek explains the key effects of the elections on the character of political processes in Croatia. He highlights the significant role that the electoral policy has played both in the rise of the HDZ and its ten-year domination, and in the political changes at the start of the new millennium, concluding that in both cases the formal rules would not have achieved the same results had the conditions not been ripe – some structurally given, some created by means of the party leaders, media or coalition policy.

Unlike this "textbook" chapter, the chapter on the party system contains Zakošek's viewpoints. Using the original cleavage theory of Lipset and Rokkan, the author points to the significance that the model has in explaining the development of party relations in the post-

socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. By critically investigating some other ways of the application of the cleavage theory to new cases, the author tampers with the original model in order to adapt it to the social and historical context of the new democracies and thus to make plausible the theoretical basis for interpreting the structure and the evolution of the party system and the political system on the whole. The author goes on to sum up the results of his research of the Croatian party system from the perspective of the cleavage theory and concludes that, regardless of the typological changes that the Croatian party system has gone through in the last dozen years, the one-dimensional competitive pattern has remained its fixture. That pattern is the result of the overlapping impact of two historic cleavages in the Croatian society – territorial-cultural and ideological-cultural, and is manifested in the relatively stable value and ideological orientations of Croatia's electorate. The party elites from the very start of the democratic development mobilized the traditional cleavages as the basis of political competition; however, today they are not capable of significantly modifying the existing nature of political competition. This can be clearly seen from the fact that the third, socio-economic cleavage, regardless of its increasing significance in the party politics, easily fits into the existing structure of the political space without altering its fundamental feature – onedimensionality. Thus the author postulates one of the most intriguing and rounded-up recent hypotheses in social sciences in Croatia.

The rest of the book is devoted to an overview of the development of the institutions of governance (parliament, president, government and the judiciary) and the state of affairs in the sphere of the interest and the media mediation of political processes. Unlike the first part of the book, here the author focuses more on showing the changes in the formal structure of the surveyed institutions and the comments of the basic statistical parameters with the aim of providing a comprehensive picture of the state of affairs in individual spheres and only occasionally (the chapter on President of the state) he introduces the political science analysis. The outcome is the domination of the pure

constitutional-legal and/or sociological, mostly descriptive, analysis.

Zakošek's systematic account of the evolution of Croatia's political system is at the same time a description of the condition and the degree of the development of the contemporary Croatian political science research. The different number of pages devoted to individual chapters is indicative of the uneven level of development of political science research of individual topics and elements of the political system. While the elections and the party system are thoroughly researched, the functioning and the relationship between the representative and the executive power are only partially covered, and the political science research into the interest organization, the media scene and the role of constitutional revision in the political process are nonexistent. According to the author, the situation with the legal, sociological and communicological research of these institutions is not much different. Hence some shortcomings of Zakošek's book are largely a consequence of the weaknesses of the research potential of the Croatian social science, particularly political science. The question is whether this weakness stems from a lack of an analytical and empirical orientation of the Croatian political science (or even from neglecting that approach) or from the weaknesses of the proponents of that approach. The fact that the first political science book whose objective is a systematic, textbook coverage of the basic elements of the political system of our country is published in the year that marks the 40th anniversary of the only faculty of political science in Croatia is quite telling. Together with the intriguing and original assumptions on the structuring of the party system, this is the strength of this book from the scientific perspective of the discipline. On the other hand, an abundance of well-systematized and precise data and information about Croatia's institutional political development since 1990, including the recent political developments of 2002, makes this book a valuable guide and a quick and simple introduction to the fundamental characteristics of Croatia's political system, a welcome reference-book for political science students or students of other social disciplines, and all those who for any reason want to obtain the most essential in-

formation about Croatian politics and its institutions since 1990.

Goran Ćular

Book Review

Conference 'John Rawls: Liberalism, Justice and Value Pluralism'

Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb, 7-8 March 2003

On the occasion of John Rawls' recent demise, the conference "John Rawls: liberalism, justice and value pluralism" took place at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb on 7th and 8th March 2003. This was this institution's homage to arguably the most prominent contemporary political theorist. The participants at the Conference included theoreticians from different generations of the FPS and, as a guest, Elvio Baccharini from the University of Rijeka. The welcoming address was delivered by Zvonko Posavec, Dean of the Faculty of Political Science; the keynote address was given by Ana Matan, the organiser of the conference.

Kant was invoked by almost all the participants; however, Rawls' Kantianism was challenged by the first speaker, Davor Rodin. His paper, entitled "Why Rawls was not a Kantian?", offered ample scope for a discussion about the meaning of such a qualification. According to Rodin, Rawls could not have been a Kantian even at the beginning since he – unlike Kant, who dealt with the estate society, and tried to level the differences among individuals with his universal transcendental reason – had to deal not only with the specific multiculturalism of the American society and the problem of the position of different cultural groups in the political community, but even more with the insurmountable fact of the pluralism of contemporary innovative society in which individuals are differentiated not solely on the basis of traditions, but also on the basis of "innovations as the essential resource

of government and welfare" as "existential winners and losers". Since differences among citizens as creative individuals emerge based on the *unpredictable* individual activity of each person regardless of their origin or status, these differences, Rodin points out, cannot be annulled by any law that is legitimised in either an apriori or democratic/majoritarian manner, which would be obligatory for all citizens as "equal" rational beings and which would lead to the unjust equality of all before the law. According to Rawls, this fact of pluralism, precisely because it is originally insurmountable and unpredictable, can politically be regulated only a posteriori, so that it is "permanently cultivated to the level of a political, moral and legal system acceptable to citizens which legitimises inequalities among citizens and thus makes these inequalities acceptable and understandable to them". In other words, such creative individuals can be linked into a political community only by means of justice understood as *fairness*, where citizens allow for inequalities brought about by their own actions; however, they are not forced to that by any apriori community of known interests or good, but by the uncertain or vague state of affairs that is, in Rodin's opinion, a given human condition in an innovative society "in which no one knows what kind of advantages or losses an individual or a communicative community are going to generate with their actions". That situation "lies beyond the *code knowledge-ignorance, just-unjust, good-evil*", so that we cannot a priori "know what is going to be good, just and true either for us or for others". In such a state of vagueness, Rodin concluded, fairness is an "ability to cope with an unfamiliar injustice, i.e. a form of correcting routine repressions – either the democratic repressions via the *majority*, or the republican repressions via the *common good* that, *ex post* and *pro futuro* know what is right and what is wrong, as if the common good itself is not a fluid value".

The next speaker was Elvio Baccharini. His speech focused on a concrete and live issue: "Rawls, a Kantian Interpretation and Euthanasia". Baccharini looked into two Kantian approaches to this problem: on the one hand, Rawls' view according to which euthanasia should be allowed as a right to make decisions

in accordance with the conception of the good the individual formulates as a rational being, and the opposite view that is based on a certain interpretation of the means/end formulation of Kant's categorical imperative as an argument against suicide. Baccarini tried to show that euthanasia need not challenge the status of individuals as rational beings and that there is no reason whatsoever to put a ban on it, although in reality the consequences of accepting euthanasia would first have to be balanced against the consequences of its rejection and only then the final decision brought.

“Political Education and Rawls' Concept of the Individual and Social Cooperation” was the title of Vladimir Vujčić's paper. His aim was primarily to point to the major role that Rawls attaches to education regarding developing citizens' reasonableness and rationality. Unlike the liberalism of Mill's or Kant's type, Rawls' political liberalism implies that all the identified goals of education should be put into practice by the society “from the political standpoint”. Hence education is an issue that has been (and rightly so) an area of interest to political philosophers. This enormous significance of education stems from the fact that citizens are taught to accept the consequences of the burdens of judgement, the main source of reasonable disagreements among reasonable individuals in a society, because judging one's own and other people's demands and wishes is subject to the limitations of human mind. This also makes it the source of those virtues that are conducive to social cooperation on the basis of mutual respect – tolerance, give-and-take, willingness to help others, reasonableness and appreciation of fairness – that must constantly be renewed through political socialisation and education of citizens. “This may be an incentive”, Vujčić concluded, “to uphold cultural diversity, reasonable doctrines, and modifications and innovations in the forms of a good life”.

In such a pluralism of the conflicting ethical, religious, and philosophical doctrines, is it possible at all to create a political unity necessary for normal functioning of a political community? In his paper, Zvonko Posavec gave a critical outline of Rawls' answer to that question in four stages. First he commented on

the shift of Rawls' original conception of justice as fairness after *The Theory of Justice* towards making a clear distinction between comprehensive philosophical and moral doctrines on the one hand, and the political conception of justice, on the other. Then he outlined the criticisms levelled at Rawls' liberalism by communitarians that prompted him to modify his original theory. He went on to list the starting points of Rawls' interpretation of the problems of pluralism, and concluded by explaining in what sense political justice based on the overlapping consensus of that variety of ethical, religious and philosophical doctrines can, according to Rawls, provide for the integration and legitimation of a political community.

Ana Matan gave a more detailed account of Rawls' conception of political legitimacy by showing the link between his understanding of legitimacy as reciprocity – requiring from each and every citizen to be reasonable in the sense of being ready to offer such conditions of social cooperation for which they can reasonably believe that the others may reasonably accept provided the others are willing to reciprocate by offering such conditions – and his understanding of political obligation according to which it depends on whether a social system is just. In her analysis of the problem of legitimacy based on the conditions everybody may find reasonable, she used the example of constitution-writing and asked how it is possible at all to draw a distinction between legitimacy and justice and also whether political legitimacy can be reduced to justice.

The question that Zoran Kurelić asked in his paper was: “Does Rawls' Theory of the Overlapping Consensus Presuppose Individual Schizophrenia?” He tried to explain in which way Rawls may avoid an affirmative answer. Kurelić focused on two critics of Rawls' concept of the overlapping consensus – Brian Barry and John Gray. Barry finds it improbable that citizens would strongly adhere to a comprehensive doctrine while at the same time they publicly accept the principles of political liberalism and that when they have to choose between their own conception of the good and justice required by political liberalism, they opt for the latter. In Gray's opinion, the over-

lapping consensus is unrealistic even in the US because of the emergence of the “moral majority” and the fact that a huge portion of the population practices rather orthodox variants of Christianity, so he advocated a *modus vivendi*. These criticisms, Kurelić argues, could not be refuted had Rawls believed in a possibility of an impending realization of an overlapping consensus; however, he only tried to show that such a consensus is viable, believing that just institutions encourage the sense of justice, which means that the individuals who embrace the consensus would not have to be schizophrenic after all.

Tonči Kursar added to this topic in his paper “Neutralisation of the Political: A Weberian Critique of Rawls”. Rawls’ conception of the overlapping consensus does not apply to the value pluralism in general which allows for all sorts of doctrines including the irrational and antiliberal ones, but only to the so-called reasonable pluralism. Kursar began with the criticisms of Rawls’ neutralisation of the political expressed by John Gray and Chantal Mouffe, arguing that neither critique was entirely valid. A Weberian critique, on the other hand, would not have their shortcomings. Kursar tried to show that Weber’s liberalism is based on value pluralism where the key provision is that no political concept may completely escape the fundamental features of political activity – the spoils system or the system of the division of political spoils and the world’s ethical irrationality. In this there is no hierarchy of values. The underpinnings of Weber’s liberalism can be found in his maxim “become what you are capable of being!” and in the “political characters” that belong to the world of classical liberalism. A political leader is a creator of institutions and the liberal community itself, with which Weber eschews the traditional liberal foundationalism based on natural rights and utilitarianism. Hence his liberalism is the least doctrinaire one because moral issues are left to the political conflict.

In his paper “Ratzinger v. Rawls: the Collapse of the Overlapping Consensus” Enes Kulenović gave an outline of Rawls’ understanding of the reasonable citizen, and compared that concept with the instructions about the participation of Catholics in political life,

published in January of 2003 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under the chairmanship of Cardinal Ratzinger. Kulenović claimed that Catholics find unpalatable both the idea that there might be other equally valid and reasonable moral doctrines and that there is a distinction between one’s own comprehensive concept of the good and the political concept of justice, from which he concluded that Rawls’ overlapping consensus – together with racists, nationalists or sexists, who do not accept even the most basic ideas of freedom and the equality of all citizens – excludes Catholics as well.

And finally, Hrvoje Cvijanović spoke about “Rawls’ Liberal Utopia”. The central assumption of his paper was Rawls’ argument that justice is the primary moral virtue of social institutions. He gave an account of the criticisms levelled against Rawls’ deontological liberalism by John Gray and Michael Sandel. In Cvijanović’s opinion, Gray’s critique is especially devastating since he criticises Rawls’ concept of the individual by which subjects are uprooted from their cultural/ historical identities and turned into mere rights-bearing ciphers, a reflection of the Enlightenment objective to establish the rational morality as the foundation for a universal civilisation. Gray, on the other hand, champions value pluralism no longer based on the individualistic ethics. Furthermore, Gray finds fault with Rawls as a liberal legalist because Rawls thinks that the right is prior to the good. Gray argues that a strict political liberalism, independent of any conception of the good, is utopian since the right without the content provided by a concept of the good is “empty”. And finally, Gray thinks that deontological liberalism means replacing the political by law and that consequently Rawls’ political liberalism is antipolitical. Cvijanović is of the opinion that such criticisms are sound and that they do challenge Rawls’ claim about the priority of justice over the conceptions of the good.

There is, however, no denying the fact that Rawls’ contribution to the contemporary political philosophy is enormous, and that his role in the revival of interest in the key problems of political philosophy in the 20th century was pivotal. His *Theory of Justice* – as Zvonko

Posavec pointed out – “has been instrumental in bringing about the change of paradigm in political philosophy comparable to that of Hobbes’ *Leviathan* or Rousseau’s *Social Contract*”. The primary purpose of this conference was the desire of the Faculty of Political Science to show appreciation of Rawls’ contribution to political philosophy, but it was also organised as one in a series of conferences at the

FPS on liberalism, and Rawls is one of its major contemporary representatives. After all, it was at one of these conferences – “Liberalism in Croatia and the World”, almost ten years ago (in 1994) – that Rawls’ book *Political Liberalism* was presented in our country for the first time.

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