

# Transformatory social policy?

PAUL STUBBS

Ekonomski institut Zagreb

doi: 10.3935/rsp.v16i2.865

Future generations may well look to the students' blockades in various faculties throughout Croatia in the spring of 2009 demanding free higher education for all as a turning point in social policy in this country. If the challenge to market fundamentalism, unfettered individualism, and clientelistic elitism was not enough, these survivors of a fact-ridden education system demonstrated a creativity, spontaneity, and tactical good sense which was as welcome as it was unexpected. This leaderless tribe of net warriors has transformed, for ever, the public sphere with two clear messages: that education and other services should not be commodities but should, rather, contribute to freedom and justice for all; and secondly, no less important, that nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of the right to dialogue, debate and discussion. The demand for free higher education for all is explicitly based on a view of education as a public good contributing to social solidarity. The

students' emphasis on transparency and on rational evidence-based policy making also offers an explicit challenge to 'business as usual' in Croatian politics. Perhaps more than anything else, the actions of the students in the Zagreb Philosophy Faculty provide the most hope. Their election of new leaders daily, the spirit of openness in plenary sessions, and the transparency in various blogs chronicling every move both carefully and consistently, offers a real alternative to political chicanery and media-led trivialisation. As others have written more eloquently than I can: (<http://www.vrijemeje.com/%C2%ABstudenti-hvala-vi-ste-nasa-nada%C2%BB>)

»Studenti, hvala, vi ste naša nada«.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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