

**REAS 2007**  
**ABSTRACTS**  
of papers presented

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# **Agent based modelling approach to unravelling the unsustainability spiral**

**Gertjan Beccx**

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Policy instruments aiming at socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are failing. Both agriculture and manufacturing are stagnating. There is no one single cause for the unsustainability spiral in Africa, but a mixture of interrelated causes on several scales. Therefore, an integrated research approach is suggested that consists of i) an empirical-inductive construction of social-environmental histories in a selection of case areas in Sub-Saharan Africa ii) explorative studies using scenario analysis and modelling of the socio-ecological dynamics of the unsustainability spiral and the effect of current and future policy instruments.

This will include studies evolution of farming systems, soil dynamics, farm / non-farm linkages, and socio-political factors. The project can build on the vast amount of experiences of Wageningen scientists with interdisciplinary studies in earlier research programmes. The historical scope of the analysis will be decades or even centuries rather than a few years. The spatial scale will be based on agricultural production systems.

Then an explorative study will be done making use of scenario analysis and modelling. In this study, we will include natural (soil) processes, but as well decision making at farm or village level. National and supranational institutions play an important role in the unsustainability spiral as well and will hence be incorporated in the analysis as well. Additionally, the interactions between the several levels of analysis will be taken into account. Socio-ecological phenomena playing on several time scales may well be studied by the agent based modelling technique. The model will provide an integrative setting for studying the dynamics behind poverty in SSA as well as for assessing the potential effect of alternative strategies.

There is a continuous feedback between the explorative and the empirical studies. Outcomes of the empirical study will be used to set the parameters of the model will as form the basis for designing alternative policy instruments and combinations of policy instruments. Analysis of the model outcomes and the literature will be used to get a better insight in the drivers and processes behind agricultural and wider socio-economic development of Africa below the Sahara. Moreover the model will be used to test and improve the designed policy instruments.

# Some consequences of multicultural policies

**Marta Berčić**

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In this article I will present and discuss Brian Barry's criticism of multiculturalism and its policies. The main topic is how and when multicultural policies are resulting with practices which would be positive and negative for human development. Barry's opinion is that multiculturalism is theoretically wrong and politically problematic and even unacceptable. He found several good arguments that came from liberal universalism and egalitarianism which are able to insure a fair position for all individuals came from very different cultural communities. The author will examine some strains of Affirmative Action and English-as-Second Language school policies as the result of multiculturalism which can seriously close cultural and ethnic societies and make differences deeper and therefore push human development on the way of stagnation. Such kind of relativism that Taylor and other multicultural authors use may bring us closer to a completely divided society. This is more convenient for the socio-cultural actors who want to make boundaries that would reduce the incoming of members from other cultural communities. Another consequence is the product of group rights on which is based the politics of recognition. It is not possible to apply group rights on every social interaction in which a member of a community can find himself in. Because of that Barry thinks that the theory of recognition is not a good start in making positive human development. Building one's identity, individual or communal, just does not work in such simple way: cultural communities are made of complex networks and interactions, members do not identify themselves as one-sided individuals only. Members of different cultural communities don't have firm and solid identities. They do not find themselves as completely the same as all the other members from the same community. They want to choose the best way of living and at the same time have a right to call themselves by the name of a specific cultural community. Multiculturalists promote universal rules which can shut the door to freedom of choice that Barry promotes.

# Conative sketch and attitude toward giftedness by Croatian competitors at mathematics and physics Olympic competition: Pilot study 1999

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**Aim:** To assess some basic conative features and attitude toward giftedness at excellent young mathematicians and physicists, in order to better understand their personality and achievement motivation.

**Methods:** The study involved 9 competitors (8 males) 17 to 19 years old, whereby 6 in the field of mathematics and 3 in the field of physics. It has been applied 5 paper and pencil questioners: personality (EPQ), self concept, attitude toward giftedness, learning habits, and the genuine questioner of personal development in the field of competition and of perceived social support. The testing of competitors has been mostly conducted collectively during the preparations for the Olympics (due to specific obligations some of the competitors were tested individually).

**Results:** According to basic personality dimensions (EPQ) young Olympic competitors are not significantly different from the general population (low psychoticism and neuroticism with average extroversion), but appear visible differences in the self concept reflecting rather complex structure. On the one side, the Olympic competitors show lower fear of negative evaluation, higher competence and more often assign their life success to their own abilities and work than normal population. On the other side, they show lower self-esteem and activity perseverance than the general population, but still at the average level of the scale. This picture of the personality is in line with young competitors' personal development, for they started to develop mathematics and physics competences mostly in the pre-pubertal period (10-12 years) by their own work, but with great support from their parents and enthusiastic teachers. This support, together with the sense of fun and challenge is declared as the main reason for their engagement in mathematics and physics. Motivation for learning is high (although not the highest), as is their attitude toward giftedness. However, in this respect they do not differ significantly from normal high school population.

# **A new aspect of the geographical determination in history**

**Victor Eszterhai**

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Geographical determination is one of the key elements of the classical historical thinking, which is most and foremost represented by the centre-periphery models. However, the practical analysis of these models reveal some weaknesses, i.e. the characteristics of certain peripheries do not meet the requirements and in several cases these peripheries play the role of the centre. The aim of my work is to provide a definition of these special peripheries and to draw up their importance in other scientific fields.

# **Is it Possible to Achieve Cultural Tolerance and Homogeneity through Education? Some Positive and Negative Aspects of Intercultural Education**

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The paper aims to clarify the possible influences of intercultural education in different communities through school programmes and curricula. The definitions of intercultural education, its positive and negative sides and effects, as well as some possibilities for its implementation in educational institutions are discussed. The first part considers the common definitions of terms such as interculturalism, multiculturalism, education and intercultural education. Due to a common mistake of confusing the concepts of interculturalism and multiculturalism, the differences between the two concepts are also stressed. Further on, the authors consider the role of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) of the Council of Europe in defining and proposing modes of implementation of intercultural education in different communities.

The next part discusses the positive aspects of intercultural education. This especially considers the question how can education help in the task of developing cohesive civil societies by turning notions of singular identities into those of multiple ones, and by developing a shared and common value system and public culture. Intercultural education is often assumed as the leader to more tolerance towards other cultures. Schools and educational systems have an important role in creating the stability in socially diverse communities (Gundara).

The third part consists of possible negative aspects of intercultural education and their interpretation. The following main dilemma is discussed: whether intercultural education is primarily a form of moral instructions, a body of techniques and skills, an administrative stratagem, an ethical base for curriculum building or a tactic designed to enhance the "emotional and intellectual growth" of the child (Hager). This dilemma fully describes the confusion about intercultural education, as well as the fact that there is a need for more systematic research of this field.

In the final part some possible mechanisms of implementation of intercultural educations in school systems prescribed from CDCC, which are applicable to various communities in USA and Europe, are discussed. Finally, some examples of implementation of intercultural educations in schools systems such as "The European School System" are also given.

# Student Assessment in Croatia

**Natalija Grgić**

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The process of implementing external evaluation of education is currently ongoing in Croatian education system. In the framework of this process national exams were conducted on the 2nd grade gymnasium program students. With the exam students were handed out questioners questioning their stands and opinions on a particular subject and the exam taken. Data collected on 7340 students who attended the exams in Mathematics (N = 2663), Croatian (N = 2490) and English language (N = 2187) verified that success on the exam is highly correlated with students' own estimate of his/her knowledge and competences needed in particular subjects. This shows that sixteen-year olds have well-developed meta-cognitive knowledge, and that their estimate of their own competences is adjusted with criteria set in Croatian schools.

The fact that potters us is how success on national exams correlates lowly or moderately with the grades students have in these subjects. Final grades in most subjects have a negative skewness, while distribution of success on these exams is in most cases approximately normal. We can conclude that final grades frequently reflect partial judgment, and therefore shouldn't be considered as a valid measurement of knowledge and competences. That is why external evaluation of education is necessary for standardization of grading criteria and discrimination between students according to the level of knowledge gained.

# **World Wide Web – Window of opportunity for small hotels**

**Božidar Jaković**

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Small hotels were in the traditional tourism market entitled to find guests either through tourist agencies either by themselves. Today, World Wide Web gives them a chance to enhance their opportunities for finding their visitors to the much broader market. Characteristics of the small hotels and large hotels websites are examined and compared.

# Globalisation and ethic responsibility

**Nevena Jerak and Boris Omazić**

We can observe globalisation as intensifying of social relations in the whole world, at the field of economy, culture, ecology, information and politics, which connects territorial distant places in a way that the local occurrences are formed by events incurred at the global level and reversely. These events implicates opposite tendencies, too.

Scientists and theoreticians polarize opinions about globalisation, especially because of their different moral values and beliefs.

Ascending a phenomenon of globalisation from practical process of globalisation, it becomes a universally accepted opinion. It means: growing institutionalisation and organisation, economic, political and cultural linking and interconnecting, and finally the growth of welfare. But, complexity of globalisation process generates negativities, too.

This paper discuss one negative effect of globalisation process – deprivation sense of responsibility. The society is massed, homogenisation and universalisation are omnipresent, human under mask of „freedom“ choose not to do anything for himself or for the world. Diffusion responsibility – it is an appearance which is visible in all social pores. Awaking awareness responsibility becomes a necessity. These problems can be avoided if human being co-responsible treats it's own environment, and not thinking that only visible exists, because there are processes occurring on various spatial and temporal scales and originating in widely dispersed places, on which human can directly and indirectly affect. Developing ethic responsibility become essential. It means that society in the completeness is responsible for it's own future.

# Projects and priorities of rural development

**Kristina Svržnjak, Sandra Kantar and Dejan Marenčić**

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College of agriculture at Križevci conducted a survey within *Interreg* project Croatian–Hungarian Cross-Border Regional Features, to identify possibilities, projects and institutional preconditions required for realization of programs for rural development promotion in regional level, namely in region of three county: Koprivničko-križevačka, Međimurska and Virovitičko-podravaska county. Research includes the profit and non-profit organisations, whose activities influence on rural development of local self-government.

First part of this paper gives the overview toward actual problems of organisation in survey research, and emphasis the most important changes required for theirs future development. After that, suggestions and goals of the project connected with rural development have been analyzed. These suggestions and goals will be initiated by the organizations on local level. Relating to project ideas, the paper offers the review of total financial resources required for their realization, and also the proportion of own and other investments. Considering that questions of project ideas as open question in survey, we got “the whole panoply” of direct and indirect answers about possibilities in rural development. Therefore, in last part of paper, answers about the most important priorities and preconditions for rural development promotion on regional level (closed type of question) have been analyzed, too.

# **Measuring the stream of consciousness – Vallacher and Nowak's Mouse Paradigm tool**

**Karolina Lisiecka, Michal Ziembowicz and Rafal Styla**

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Traditional approaches in social psychology attribute attitude change to external factors disregarding the intrinsic dynamics of information processing in the brain. Vallacher and Nowak proposed a method for measuring momentary changes in the stream of thought, the Mouse Paradigm. In this approach, momentary state of one's feelings about an object corresponds to the perceived distance from this object. By tracking the computer mouse movements produced by subjects thinking about the object, it is possible to find temporal patterns of attitude change. In the presentation we will show that the Mouse Paradigm can be a valuable tool for measuring social judgment and self-esteem.

# External Evaluation in Croatian Educational System – Conceptualization and Implementation

Filip Miličević

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One of the most efficient mechanisms for ensuring educational quality is external evaluation. The implementation of such a system requires deep insight into possible consequences and a clear cost-benefit analysis.

The majority of developed countries already have such systems, and I will mention some of them; the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, France, etc. A lot of the countries of the New Europe implement external evaluation into their secondary schools through social and economic transition. Good examples are Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Croatia made the first step in 2003 by analyzing the opinions of secondary school teachers and university professors about the implementation of the national level graduation from high school (*matura*). These analyses were encouraging and in 2004 the Ministry approved a new project titled 'Implementation of the national *matura* in secondary schools' proposed by the Institute for Social Research. In 2005, the Croatian parliament voted for changes into the law on secondary education and thus made a legal framework for the first national exams which were administered in May 2006.

There are two main aspects of external evaluation in Croatia. The first one consists of a system of national exams. These exams develop a new testing culture in schools, give evidence for the quality and accountability of schools and set standards that will be used for the national *matura*. The Generation that was the first to take the national exams in 2006 will be the first generation that will take the school leaving exam, national *matura*, in 2009. It will first be administered in gymnasiums only because vocational schools have to wait for a system reform.

National exams that took place in 2006 tested the knowledge of mathematics, Croatian language, foreign languages (English, German, French) and Italian as a mother tongue. They were based on Bloom's taxonomy for defining the cognitive levels. The idea was to introduce a different approach which takes into consideration more demanding levels of knowledge and skills such as analysis, evaluation and creation. This shift was hard to achieve because the exams had to be based on official curriculums which don't follow new approaches in education; they are outdated and represent a burden for the implementation of new ideas and concepts.

In 2007, the national exams were taken by the first and second grade of secondary school students. The list of subjects was expanded (Latin, Greek, Italian as a foreign language, Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Informatics/ICT were added). In 2008 that list will probably include even more subjects. In that way the preparation for the national matura will be completed.

The issue that remains unresolved is – How will this testing system affect our schools? The Example of the UK provides an insight into a highly developed testing system. Although the main certification for secondary schools is A levels, there are numerous other certifications, especially vocational. The UK testing system functions as a very sophisticated market where private awarding bodies provide exams and prepare materials but the standards are set by the government-run Qualification and Curriculum Authority. In Croatia, the government-run National Centre for External Evaluation in Education is supposed to take on both roles, i.e. to determine standards and to develop exams. However, the problem remains because the standards are still not defined and the only role fulfilled is mere logistics.

# Sensitivity of Social Systems: a model-to-model analysis

**Martin Neumann**

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This paper describes a model-to-model analysis (Hales et al., 2003) which relates an agent-based model of ethnic mobilisation (Srblijinovic et al., 2003) with an equation-based model of hierarchy decline (Mueller, 1991). Even though the two models are not concerned with the same or at least a similar target, they are related by empirical findings: in particular, the decline of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was predominantly driven by processes of ethnic mobilisation.

This appears to be a more general pattern, not restricted to this specific case. It is a phenomenon of modern European societies that in the so-called Eastern-European (Schieder, 1992) or, more specifically, nation-to-state (Smith, 1986) mode of state formation, national movements emerge from larger political entities. Hence, both models can be regarded as describing two related aspects of one and the same social process. In fact, several explanations for the events in former Yugoslavia have been developed so far, but what is missing is an integrative approach. A conceptual integration of the two models can be a step towards this direction.

A close examination of the models will show that they can be regarded as complementary. However, both models do not describe a concrete target system, but rely on the notion of stylised facts. Thus, the models cannot be directly compared with reference to an empirical relative. To develop a rule for a comparison a theoretical framework will be elaborated in this paper. It thus becomes possible to identify the extent to which the models' behaviour factually intersects. This will be done in three steps: Firstly, a differentiation between mass-phenomena and decision centres will be introduced (Mueller, 1985). While ethnic mobilisation is of social relevance only insofar as it appears as a mass phenomenon, the process of hierarchy decline concerns social decision centres. This is a formal distinction of how data is generated. In a second step these two modes of operations of social systems will be related to fundamental categories of sociological theory: namely, institutions as preconditions for social orientation of individual actors and positions in formal organisations. While mass-phenomena gain their effectiveness by enforcing social institutions, a precondition for the operations of decision centres is the establishment of positions in organisations. Finally, this differentiation enables an identification of the intersection of the behaviour of the two models: it will be argued that the relation between these two models can be described by the analogy of a lock and key. On the

one hand, organisations possess the organisational ability for the enforcement of social institutions. On the other hand, the mobilisation of social institutions bears the potential to generate conflicts between organisations on the level of social decision centres.

This theoretical framework enables conclusions with regard to both social theory and empirical explanations. In particular, it enables a conceptual integration of those explanations of the events in former Yugoslavia which stress the internal mechanisms of the conflict escalation.

# **CONTRIBUTING TO LOCAL COMMUNITY: OUR P.O.I.N.T. OF VIEW**

**Sandro Novosel, Sergej Novosel and Hrvoje Belani**

P.O.I.N.T. Association  
Križevci, Croatia

This paper discusses some interdisciplinary approaches to actions taken by activist group in the local community, in a period of three years, for enhancing human development in areas of communication, culture, education and technology. Project-based approach and volunteer efforts in solving detected societal challenges and needs are elaborated. These projects involved: setting up, running and maintaining independent city news-portal; enforcing international humanitarian actions for local children with special needs; establishing cultural and educational festival with fresh thematic and presentation approaches for citizens; and introducing study opportunities to the high school students through Study Fair. Lessons learned are presented with impressions, empirical results and advices for enhancing quality of life in local community. Real life limitations and challenges for sustainability are also discussed.

# Problem of race in scientific researches

**Nikola Petrović**

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This paper questions the role of scientific researches that use race as a variable giving examples in medical and sport research (mostly from the USA). Overtly racist researches which tried to hierarchise race are long abandoned. But there are number of researches, particularly those sponsored by the pharmacological industry, that are criticized because it seems they imply races are genetically discrete groups. Medical experts argue that they use race to group individuals into clusters with medical relevance and in this way benefit patients.

On the other hand some researches with an antiracist starting point are criticized for creating racial divisions. This exemplifies a recent study of the racial composition of basketball officiating teams and how that affected their calls, whose authors were accused of an insufficient understanding of basketball rules and the lack of conditions of classifying individuals in race groups.

Such disputes show the need for more communication between scientific disciplines which deal with the concept of race thus making these researches truly interdisciplinary. Also it shows a need for conditioning such surveys with a proper definition of race, whether they define them as a social construct or as a biological fact and thus avoid misunderstanding or even a misuse of results.

# Use of National Exams Results in School

**Maja Reberšak**

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First National Exams were conducted in May 2006 in 1st grade gymnasium program schools, in subjects: Croatian language, Mathematics and first foreign language (English, German, French and Italian language). Schools received feedback in a form of analysis presenting examination results for each grade within the school, and for each student in every subject (including points gained in every subtest). Additionally, results on state level and program level (general program, language program and mathematic and natural science program) were also provided, thus enabling comparison of results between schools.

This paper describes how schools used previously mentioned results in the process of filling out self-evaluation questionnaire containing analysis of school's results. Questionnaire also contains general estimate of the way school functions, SWOT analysis, and development plan for the school in question.

# **The image of sociology in the eyes of employers in nonacademic positions in Croatia**

**Nives Savić**

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What does sociology have to offer? Highly developed countries and their economies recognised the need to be able to respond to global changes in trade, labour and knowledge market by recruiting the experts from field of social science, and among them sociologists. Changes in society now mean that a larger proportion of organizations are coping with challenges in the global market by having researchers who aren't focused on core business. Their main task is to develop the most efficient strategies regarding human capital, considered that some of the primary elements of successful business are improvement of working conditions and maximal usage of human labour potential. Unfortunately, in developing countries, as Croatia, sociology skills haven't been recognized as valuable in many areas of work. The inexplicit image of sociology in the eyes of private employers as well as poorly developed concept of occupation and abstract idea that general public has of what sociology is, are the main reasons of high unemployment of sociologists in nonacademic professions. As long as sociologists resolve problems only in academic circles instead of promoting them in public, nothing will be changed regarding our employment prospects or our image held in public.

# Measuring socio-economic impacts of culture in local development

**Željka Tonković**

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Cultural activities have several roles in local development. Culture plays a positive role in the organisation of social relations and the reintegration of marginalised groups. The economic impacts of cultural activities are both direct and indirect, including the employment and cultural tourism. Socio-economic impact of culture on local development is not easy to quantify and there has been much debate in conducting such studies. In this presentation different methodological approaches are discussed and compared, with special attention to applications onto Croatian society.

# The transformation of Eastern Croatia's rural parts

Sandra Veinberger

Eastern Croatia was once a rich region, today it is a synonym for underdevelopment and poverty. The living conditions in this region are getting worse day by day within the unequal development of regions in Croatia. The rural areas are those who struggle with the highest rate of poverty in Croatia. It was a region, which was colonized by people who were searching for the chance for a better life. This region was colonized by people from other regions.

It was a time when the rural estate, food and work were a guarantee for life, source of beneficitation and fortune, according to Šundalić. The rural population was responsible for the development of the region and the community was very important. But nowadays the villages are influenced by the cities and the community is replaced by individualism. While there is a trend of urban exodus in the rest of the world, there is the trend of rural exodus in this part of Croatia. The villages are populated by the older inhabitants, who are more and more socially dependent, while the young ones are leaving this region, because there are no prospects. Agriculture was once the prior activity, but nowadays it becomes the second choice.

Despite the fact, the rural areas are still populated by people, whose main activity is agriculture. However there is a new commercial market, which demands a new identity of the region, other than agriculture. But the region will always be recognized as an agricultural region by its population. Other activities could not succeed in replacing the importance of agriculture in this region. The past has limited the future development of agricultural production through agrarian reforms in this region (especially the Reform in 1953 that limited the rural estate to 10 ha). The result was a lot of small rural estates that make a big agricultural expansion impossible (It is estimated that in Croatia only 15-16 % of estates could guarantee high quality agricultural production). Nevertheless, there are some initiatives concerning ecological agricultural production. Some think that this could motivate the farmers. In the Osijek-Baranja county 200 000 ha of the land are seeded land only 1000 ha are ecological land. This is nit enough, concerning the fact that this area could provide high quality and ecological clean food for more than 20 million people.

And while there is a high demand for ecological products, the slavonsien farmer is struggling with poverty. Is there an objective reason or is this about the inadequate care of the government for the undeveloped regions and purposely (or not)

negligence for the future of those regions. Taking all this into consideration, there is a lot of work to be done in order to improve the situation of this region. The transformation of the rural parts of Eastern Croatia could end with a stable period that would bring a new image- an image that is dominated by ecological agricultural production that would stimulate one part of the world market and bring the money to the slavonien farmer.

# **Tourism industry – achieving competitiveness**

**Jovana Zoroja**

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Tourism is the most growing industry of the world. Basic objective of hotel companies is to achieve the competitive edge and they are doing their best to keep a market position and make a competitive market product. In past competitiveness was achieved by material, financial and human resources. In 21st century the key of competitiveness are innovation, knowledge of employees and information technology.

# Public role of religion and civil society development in Croatia

Mateo Žanić

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In this article argues Jose Casanova's theses expressed in his book "Public Religion in the Modern World" related to current trends of religion deprivatization and the process of secularization as a main theme through classical social theory of religion. Namely, recent developments at the end of 20th century put in question whether secularization process undergoing in the entire world is actually a European phenomenon and is it correctly interpreted. Therefore, this article discusses deprivatization thesis in Croatia, and especially its relationship and position towards Catholic Church. Further on, the main thesis of this work relate to deprivatization of religion in Croatia conditioned with few specific characteristics:

- transitional position of Croatia as a post-socialist country,
- civil society development issues in relation to religion organizations
- civil society and political spheres of action division in Croatia as an issue resulting from lack of civil society tradition.

Therefore, the conclusion will entail proposed explanations of beforehand stated issues related to deprivatization as a trend in the society and the state in Croatia.