



SUMMARY

We decided to write a book under this heading because in our analyses that ranges from planetary development in the spirit of (un)sustainable globalisation and the (un)sustainable development process in Croatia over last twenty years (from 1991 to 2011), we found that the definition of Croatian national interests in a sociological way has not yet been undertaken. Before the onslaught of globalisational developmental intelligibility/ understanding, there is a lack of conceptual and content clarity related to issues of national interests of Croatian development today.

In a sociological consideration that is theoretically inspired by the affirmation of human life national interest is not only the state interest, some people are superior over-interest. The meaning of this concept in this perspective is extended to the whole society, all citizens of that society, in a territory bounded by national borders.

In the modern situation when globalisation processes undoubtedly threaten many (less developed) countries and the quality of life in them, examining the meaning of “national interest” as an interest like “the vital interests of people” has a new meaning for us. Thus, it can be said that *national interests are perceived as vital, vital interests of people, the people who inhabit a territory within a state*

as the basic institutional forms of organisation of social life in this sociological discourse.

“The national interests (development) of a country” and the concept of “sustainable development” are brought into a direct conceptual relationship. Why? Theoretically, the logic of sustainability and sustainable development and the logic of national interest as well as the interests of a country’s inhabitants, in our opinion, overlap. Moreover, one could say that among them there are no significant contradictions. However, in practice, it is evident that the government, state administration and the people themselves act in ways that often lead to unsustainable situations and results, to a level that threatens national, public interest. Theoretically, the systematic re-production of sustainability should be the basic and firm method of achieving national interests.

Our proposed list of national interests of Croatian development through the prism concept of sustainable development advocates seven elementary, fundamental national goals without which there will be no survival, no safety or sustainability of Croatia as a society and state in the years and decades to come. These are:

1. Protect natural resources and the sustainable, for the benefit of citizens, inhabitants of regions and local communities in Croatia; manage these in a sustainable and efficient manner.
2. Manage the production of food to increase the overall long-term sustainability of Croatia.
3. Manage the production and consumption of energy to increase the total energy for long-term sustainability of Croatia.
4. Strengthen the regional capacity of social development and to take advantage of special features and the diversity of Croatian regions.
5. Strengthen social justice and reduce the growing socio-economic differences among the population that is destroying society.
6. Strengthen the domestic production of goods and services as a precondition for improving the quality of life as well as export and exchange with the environment.
7. Direct the culture of spending on forms of sustainable consumption and bring in total that which is produced and consumed structurally and in the long-term into balance.

How can the level of development and production be increased in Croatia? How can this be done without more knowledge, without tapping into new, better knowledge?

When compared to countries like Scandinavia and similar developed countries (e.g., The Netherlands) with a similar number of inhabitants it undoubtedly seems that an increase in knowledge and skills is the right development path for Croatia. Hence an eighth priority can be added to the list of seven national interests - "to develop the processes of growth as well as the modernisation of knowledge and skills." This process essentially includes the need for a strong and networked computerisation of all activities in society.

Our reading of the national interests of Croatia and a sustainable future for the country is concentrated in: A. the preservation and sustainable use of natural resources of Croatia, B. the production of sufficient quantities of energy and food, C. the achievement of a regional and socio-layered balance, that is to stop the increase of (followed by the decrease of) existing socio-disintegrating regional and socio-economic layered differences, D. to firmly and urgently achieve sustainable production and consumption, that is reaching a state in which consumption equals production, and E. the developmental processes of growth as well as modernisation of knowledge and skills. Our list of national interests has not been developed in a broad direction since scope and meaning have been kept at an essential level. In other words, that which is most important for the survival, security and improving the quality of life of people living in Croatia.

Who is the fundamental social actor in the affirmation of national development interests? Globalisation and the actors of globalisation "naturally" are not concerned about the national interests of individual countries, especially not small ones, those that are not powerful and influential international "geopolitical players", such as Croatia. Globalisation and national development interests are not even remotely in compatible relations. Who then should take care of the overall interests of inhabitants who live in the territory of some state? It is the state itself as an "general actor" and not actors that characterise particular interests (profits, individual status, special interests, etc.). The state is the ultimate vertical and institutional, historically old but still current method of integration and organisation of life of a society and territory. More specifically, the government that governs and the supporting state administration, which among other things legitimises through work the organisation of survival of people.

Internally formed identity is the foundation for the affirmation of freedom and prosperity of every country,

including Croatia. When that systematic and continuous process of determining identity internally is neglected, ignored, not grown - the country and society developmentally stagnates. The identity characteristics of the country and the people in such conditions also stagnate. This basic criterion should therefore be the backbone which determines Croatian developmental, national and sustainable practical actions. Social actors, from state administrators and wider (civil society, citizens, entrepreneurship) who do not understand this are not able to affirm Croatian national interests through their actions. People from the managerial elite often can not or do not know how to do this as is evident in the last twenty years of Croatian development. Turning one's back on the process of an internally formed identity or actions against it (under any economic or some other reason) is the obliteration of identity, committing them to betrayal. A society without a preserved identity becomes a colony, an instrument of external forces, economy, military circles, politics, and the state.

Globalisation, economic development as well as neo-liberal capitalism as the organisation of production of social life and the tendentially reductive project of commercialisation of all social relations are indifferent to an internally shaped Croatian identity. This is our job to the extent to which we ourselves care about this. It is our job to the extent that we are aware that there is no one mind and heart that will prepare our measure of a better life than us. This book is, among other things, a contribution to this work.

Translated by: Lyn Šikić Mićanović