

Summary

Independence and Space: Sociology of Croatian Space in the Perspective of the Third Modernisation

The book is a compendium of eleven articles analysing, at various levels, spatial changes from an interdisciplinary social science perspective, during Croatia's third modernisation. The foreword is intended to define the author's intellectual horizon, grounded in theories of modernization. It assesses, in sociological terms, the totality of spatial transformations in the period in which Croatia established independence and sovereignty while simultaneously undergoing full integration into the international legal and political order. Considering this period (and process) as completed, the author defines it in sociological terms as „the era of the third Croatian modernization”. Within this theoretical framework, the main trajectory of spatial change is analysed through the perspective of a collapse of the linear planning system and the development of paradoxical institutional substitutes for spatial policies, such as point(illistic) urbanism and peri-urban sprawl. The author argues that such institutional substitutes are structurally conditioned by the social context of transition. Transition is, in turn, defined as a hybrid social condition in which centrally planned social, economic, and spatial policies were gradually replaced by a servile navigation of spatial changes. The author also argues that, in Croatia, this process self-adapted to the development of (real estate) popular capitalism due to the path-dependent historical factors. As all the political options affirmed in the process of democratization of Croatian society endorsed this auto-adaptation, the author suggests that the process was structurally determined and historical. Thus, it represents the upper socio-cultural limit for the absorption of European spatial policies in the Croatian transitional context. Since the author considers the transitional era to be concluded, her specific analysis of the typology of spatial changes published in the first article of this book can be regarded as systematic. Likewise, the insight that interpretative space planning represents a regulatory departure from servile (transitional) spatial policies associated with point(illistic) urbanism and „rurban” sprawl (elaborated in the second article) opens a new spatial policy horizon for post-transitional development in Croatia.

The author's analytical articles discussing Makarska, Podgorje, and Međimurje, and especially those studying the case of the tourism development project Kupari near Dubrovnik, including the fate of the modernist heritage of tourism architecture in Kupari and Haludovo, demonstrate her conviction that the transitional substitutes for spatial policies have been exhausted. Thus, it is suggested that servile (transitional) space governance policies call into question not only cultural policies

and national security, but also the adequacy of the country's development horizon within the existing constitutional order and European democratic standards.

The necessity of turning towards new developmental priorities directs the author's focus towards the priority of building a modern railway network as the framework for a new public-sector mission. She argues that the construction of a new national railway system should serve as the key platform for the simultaneous metropolisation of Zagreb, a transformative process that was missed in the transition period. At the same time, the author advocates affirming the sociology of space as an authentic discipline within the social sciences, to ensure that future changes in Croatian space can be analysed and evaluated in a comprehensive and responsible manner on a scientific basis.

Although the author does not advocate explicit political preferences due to her commitment to factual analysis, her values can be discerned throughout the book. As she has built her professional and scientific expertise in spatial issues by studying tourism phenomena, she unequivocally argues that the protection of biodiversity and areas of pristine nature must be the anchor of the national tourism policy, regardless of external circumstances. At the same time, when the totality of Croatian space is at issue, the imperatives of cultural policies and national security must be prioritized over tourism policies, which were obviously favoured during the transition. In conclusion, the author suggests that the horizon of interpretative planning is the only way out of inadequate transitional spatial policies in Croatia and a productive platform for a fourth Croatian modernisation.

Key words: Croatia, space, sociology, third modernization, linear planning, interpretative planning