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Zlatko Skrbiš: Long distance nationalism, diasporas, homelands and identities. Aldershot, Brookfield USA, Singapore, Sydney: Ashgate Publishing, 1999.

The book market is richer by yet another book on nationalism. This book, among other things, also discloses interesting discoveries on the shaping of ethnic consciousness and identity of Slovene and Croatian Diasporas in Australia. Zlatko Skrbiš, the author, has tackled a difficult goal of disclosing a part of the ethno-nationalistic processes which are the substance of life and living of the Diasporas. Attaining the goal is no easy matter. To reach it, various spheres of Diaspora life have to be studied stretching from individual identities and histories, family environment, the organizational structure of Diasporas to the interactive processes between homelands and Diasporas (Skrbiš, 1999:183-84). Beside the presented factors that influence the forming of the Diaspora identity and trigger various ethno-nationalistic emotions and subsequent reactions, a minimal theoretic background has to be added which gives these factors and actions suitable significance and interpretation. Through analysis and comparison of the Slovene and the Croatian Diasporas in Australia, the book studies the process of long-distance nationalism and surmounts the reaches of an ethnographic research based on empirical data about the subjective comprehension of the role of the Diaspora, her identity and perceptions of her relations towards the homeland. The aim of the book is to confirm the thesis stating that long-distance nationalism is but one of the forms of nationalism that is being supplemented by processes of globalization.

The book is characterized by a successful combination of theoretical and empirical viewpoints of long-distance nationalism research. The author bases the theoretical foundations on Benedict Anderson, who is the founder of the concept of the mentioned nationalism that, according to him, is possible in the capitalistic system together with the existence of mass migrations and mass media. Through the book's seven chapters we follow the intertwining of theoretical concepts and empirical data. Namely, in the introduction of each chapter, the author presents the characteristic and most significant theoretical plans of the theme that is further presented in more detail. Since the book is one of the numerous works from the field of ethnic studies, the author was faced with certain specifics characteristic for these studies: the non-uniformity and diversity of fundamental concepts. All the same, it should be stated that by the presentation of various theoretical concepts, as well as by his critical distance, the author succeeded in bringing closer to the reader the essence of the individual ethnic phenomena studied in the book. He succeeded in this also due to the use of empirical data which presented a significant and major argumentative basis throughout the book. The compilation of theoretical and empirical parts leans in favor of the latter. The author probably had no intention of studying the theoretical concepts of long-distance nationalism in more detail, but intended, in greater part, to validate his thesis through empirical data.

As already said, he ensued from Anderson's concept of long-distance nationalism. The book was not meant as a novel theoretical contribution to the topic. The author based the theoretical component of his work on the presentation of basic concept definitions of those authors which are most eminent in the field of theoretical discourse on nationalism: Smith, Breuilly, Hobsbawm, Connor, Anderson. The empirical part of the book partly discloses that the author agrees on the generally accepted factors ensuing from ethnic researches on the formation of ethnic identity. The author's broad definition of nationalism confirms that his distinction between ethno-nationalism and ethnic identity is blurred. On the basis of the presented theoretical concepts, it could be stated that Skrbiš agrees to the instrumental concept of ethnicity, as does Anderson, but with Skrbiš we also detect a symbolic approach. This is not explicitly presented but can be

understood from his choice of factors and elements of nationalism, namely identity formation, to which he centers his attention in the book.

By detailed analysis of the role of historical memory, relations to homeland, myths of returning, he came close to the approach of A. Smith, who is an advocate of the symbolic perspective. The essence of the symbolic approach is in grasping the dynamic viewpoint concerning ethnic identity and ethnic group. According to Smith, it is the approach that takes into consideration the complexity of myths, symbols and values that represent the fundamental elements of an ethnic group. The author's understanding of nationalism shows, through this work, that he does not have much in common with the primordial concept (where we place Smith's concept). This also reflects in the fact that he does not lean on the thesis that ethnic sensations are natural and self-evident. It is also evident in the fact that the author does not mention Pierr van den Bergh, but this does not diminish the quality of his scientific work.

In the part of the book where Diasporas and ethnic groups are defined it might have been interesting if the author had tried to introduce Frideric Barth's contribution, especially in the part where he reflects on the defining of boundaries drawn between individual ethnic groups. The theoretical part of the book could define in more detail the phenomenon of nationalism. Since the author connects long distance nationalism with the globalization processes, it would be sound to give more stress to the presentation of the causes for the mutual complementation of the mentioned processes, but these are only mentioned in general.

How is the work empirically planned? The author chose the Slovene and the Croatian Diasporas living in Australia as the objects of empirical analysis. The differences in the process of long distance nationalism of the two Diasporas are compared and analyzed, the similarities and diversities studied. The author does not stop here, but also looks for the reasons that have lead to the diverse forms of ethno-nationalistic emotions in the two Diasporas. Skrbiš chose the interview as the basic method of empirical research. The respondent sample comprised Diasporas' members and most important representatives of different organizations of the Diasporas.

As an introduction, the author formulated a definition of long distance nationalism that is in accordance with Anderson's concept. According to Skrbiš, this type of nationalism is "a type of nationalism which crosses neighboring states and/or continents"(ibid:6). This definition is extremely broadly put and can therefore easily confirm the thesis stating that long distance nationalism is distinctly adjusted to modern globalization processes.

Long distance nationalism is one of the forms of ethno-nationalism which is, according to Skrbiš "an ascribable affiliation, which may be associated with phenomena such as patriotism, chauvinism, ethno-centrism, linguistic nationalism, religious nationalism and xenophobia"(ibid:26). It should be stressed that Srbiš defines nationalism as "a group based phenomenon which pervades both public and private spheres of life"(ibid:10).

In accordance with the understanding that long distance nationalism is a collective phenomenon, the second chapter presents the migration processes of Slovene and Croatian political an economic Diasporas after the end of World War 2. On this basis the author confirms the thesis that these processes had a major role in the formation of the ethno-nationalistic identities of the Diasporas. Further on, the fundamental differences between the two Diasporas are disclosed, causes for the different levels of ethno-nationalistic emotions of the Diasporas are also presented (the Slovene Diaspora was less numerous and did not nurse a historical memory about an independent state, the Slovene political migrants did not form an organization that would ideologically master the complete Diaspora, the Slovene Diaspora did not reach a high level of ideological cohesion in the sense of radical anti-communism, all of which was, in greater part, characteristic of the Croatian Diaspora). In the presentation of perceptions and in the design of ethno-nationalistic identities, the author takes up those elements from ethnic researches that are almost generally accepted: perception of homeland, historical myth, return to homeland, and the "us-them" perception. Since he advocates the thesis that long distance nationalism does not exist

only individually but is a group (mass) phenomenon, attention is focused on the presentation of the role of the Diaspora and her organizational structures. According to this viewpoint the Diaspora, as a collective phenomenon with her organizations, has a significant influence on the formation of an individual's ethno-national identity and through this, on the ethno-nationalistic emotions and reactions of individuals.

The third chapter of the book presents the Diaspora cohesiveness levels and tries to determine the influence of Diaspora organizations on the formation of ethnic identities of her members of the so called second generation. This chapter reconfirmed that historical factors (presented in the 2nd chapter) in major part determine the nature of ethno-nationalistic emotions. Accordingly, the Croatian Diaspora shows a higher degree of ethno-nationalistic loyalty, while the Slovene representatives of the second generation Diaspora show a lower level. This chapter also shows that Diasporas are an uncritical place for the development and fortification of strong nationalistic emotions, stereotypes, myths and other constructs that can also be stimulated by the homeland. This implicates the significance of the relationship between the homeland and the Diaspora and is presented in the next chapter. The author starts by the presentation of the mediation of information between the Diaspora and the homeland and introduces the concept of "view from afar". The view from afar (without the participation of the homeland) means that the Diaspora has a relatively static view of the home country. Events in the homeland are often attributed greater importance or are minimized, therefore Diasporas tend to be more susceptible to a radical interpretation of history.

The nationalistic discourse of the Diaspora contains ethno-nationalistic myths, reinterpretation of historical facts and self-glorification. The book gradually shifts from the debate on collective perception towards the individual perception level. The chapter before last still deals with the uncovering of the formation of collective perception of the relation "us-them", i.e. collective formation of the "Other" construct. Here Skrbiš poses some questions. What are the foundations for the development of such a construct? Is the construct based on prejudice, discourse on exclusivity, history? Do the members of the Diaspora identify themselves positively or negatively? Interviews and survey responses have shown two fundamental assessments. In the Slovene Diaspora there exists a high level of an uniform perception of "Other", (meaning Southerner), while the Croatian Diaspora speaks of "Other" meaning Yugoslav, Serb or Muslim. For the Slovene Diaspora it is characteristic that the "Other" construct is not strongly evident either in the collective or in the individual imagination, but this cannot be said for the Croatian Diaspora.

The above finds are also confirmed in the last chapter, where the author shifts from the public/collective to the private/individual sphere. The before last chapter focuses on the "public manifestation of ethno-nationalism" (ibid: 152), the last on the functioning of this phenomenon on the level of "privacy and intimacy" (ibid: 154). Respondents' answers on the questions of the choice of potential spouses (the majority chose their partner from their own people/nationality) show that a strict separation of the public and the private spheres of ethno-nationalism is impossible and that the two mutually intertwine.

But on page 201 the book discloses more than the revelation of interaction and complexity of the long distance nationalism phenomenon. Through a series of questions put before us throughout the book, the author points to the broad range this type of nationalism reaches. The basic message of the book is in stressing and exposing the relevancy of the Diasporas in regard to the present political activities in the homeland. The Diaspora is presented to the reader in her role of the object and subject of long distance nationalism. On one hand, the Diasporas are the place where non-critical nationalistic stereotypes are being accepted, on the other they could also represent their source, therefore it is often the case that "the homeland political establishments use them as players in their political games" (ibid: 7).

The author presented the Slovene and Croatian Diasporas in Australia, and it would also be sensible if the Slovene Diaspora in Argentina would be researched by the same methodology. Possibly, the high scientific level of the book as well as the original methodological approach of Skrbiš might contribute to this idea.