Civil Society or *Ubleha*?: reflections on flexible concepts, meta-NGOs and new social energy in the post-Yugoslav space.

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Draft – please do not quote

"To speak for others is to first silence those in whose name we speak"[1]

MAGICAL PANACEA OR EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES?
Nowadays, in the post-Yugoslav space, it appears that we may finally be able to discuss the concept of 'civil society' in more critical terms, following over a decade of uncritical usage in which the term became synonymous with all things virtuous, progressive, democratic, and just. There are some specific, parochial reasons for this, notably the possibilities opened up by a post-war discursive problematic in which the 'magical' claims for civil society as a panacea have lost both their strategic importance and their ideological currency. In the global context, the rise of what, in shorthand terms, I will name the 'critical globalization movement' has, sometimes in some incarnations, laid claims to being the precursor of a meaningful 'global civil society', although more often it has dismissed the concept as insufficiently radical. Moreover, the movement has been explicitly sceptical of the tokenistic consultations with so-called 'civil society stakeholders' increasingly embraced by powerful supranational agencies such as the World Bank which appear, at best, to be half-hearted responses to the long-term legitimation crisis which they face.

For me, the concept of 'civil society' has always appeared most interesting, if also most problematic, at the interface or 'contact zone'[2] between the specific, in this case the post-Yugoslav, space, and the global. This contact zone is highly charged precisely because this was not a simple case of a concept being imported from the all-powerful West into an empty space even though, at times, it may have appeared as such. I well remember workshops in the late 1990s where some local NGO members revealed that they first encountered the concept in the languages and practices of one international aid agency or another. Rather, it is a classic case of a set of translation practices in which the term moves, often in complex, unexpected ways, across sites, spaces, scales and levels[3]. In this process, agents and agencies are of vital importance in the transformation of the 'raw' or 'bland' concept into a set of meaningful and more or less powerful policy prescriptions, project designs and technologies of implementation. Perhaps even more importantly, a new group of intermediaries, brokers or, beyond the literal meaning of the term, translators emerge, gaining power and influence from their abilities to work across and between languages, contexts, sites, levels and agencies.

Here, I want to address some of the complexity in the usage of the term 'civil society' in the post-Yugoslav space. In particular, I want to explore some of the ironies in the trans-national movement of the concept into and out of that space over time. I also want to touch on, and attempt to go beyond, the by now well-known problem of the reduction of civil society to Non-Governmental Organisations by exploring the role of some of the meta-NGOs which have arisen in the post-Yugoslav context. Finally, I want to outline some of the pre-conditions for a reinvigorated public sphere in terms of new forms of social energy.

WHY, WHEN AND WHERE, CIVIL SOCIETY?
One of the principal advocates of the importance of the term civil society, over a long period of time, has been the British political philosopher John Keane. He has recently suggested[4] that the resurgence of the concept of civil society from the late 1980s amongst public intellectuals stemmed from seven overlapping concerns, events or processes: the use of the term by dissidents in Eastern European communist societies in the aftermath of the crushing of the Prague Spring; increased awareness and use of computer-mediated communications within network-based movements and organisations; rising concern with the ecological consequences of unfettered growth; the fall of the Berlin wall and the new hope of a progressive post-communist political order; the rise of neo-liberal economics and concern with the problems of unfettered market capitalism; the disillusionment with post-colonial progress; and the emergence of collapsed states and new uncivil wars, not fought exclusively between armies for territory but involving civilians targeted for being the wrong 'ethnicity'.

Opponents of this position would focus, I think, less on the complexity of the inter-relationship between these seven strands but, rather, on the flexibility which the concept affords for those keen to hold onto power. In an influential essay, Aziz Choudry captures this when he points out that, in the context of the millions of words utilised on the concept by different theorists:

> "…other than general agreement that it spans all forms of organisations between the household and the state, the notion seems to mean all things to all people. I cannot see how uncritical adoption and use of this term advances peoples' struggles for basic rights, for self-determination, liberation, and decolonisation, and against imperialism and the neoliberal agenda in all their various guises[5]."

The flexibility of the term is, perhaps, the most interesting part of the story. The term floats rather easily between different levels and scales and, perhaps even more importantly, between ideological and political positions. A neo-marxist frame strongly influenced by Gramsci has little in common, of course, with a neo-liberal frame influenced by de Tocqueville, Adam Smith or Hayek. And yet, both would ascribe an important role to the concept of 'civil society'. Perhaps even more importantly, the nuances of neither position really impacts on the use of the term in 'aid-speak' which "builds on a combination of normative theory and positivism … according to which technical solutions to problems identified are available or will have to be invented if missing…"[6]

Elsewhere, I have traced the usage of the concept in the former Yugoslav space and, in particular, in the language and rhetorics of the social movements in 1980s Slovenia[7]. In that text I sought to argue that the concept was absent in other former-Yugoslav Republics and, indeed, played a somewhat diminished role in the context of new nationalisms even within Slovenia itself. In retrospect, this understated the spreading of the concept within the Yugoslav space, at least to emerging young urban elites in Zagreb, Belgrade and, later, in Sarajevo, during the late 1980s or very early, pre-war, 1990s[8]. Hence, a 'new wave' of groupings and movements organising, however informally and spontaneously, around issues such as women's rights; ecology; peace and anti-militarism; as well as student movements and sub-cultural artistic forms had encountered the concept of civil society and, albeit unevenly, embraced it as a key concept in parts of the former-Yugoslav space *before* the wars which began in 1991 and

1992 and before it was imported from Western Europe and the United States by representatives of the new humanitarian order.

The complexities of translation are, perhaps, best illustrated by the distinction in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian languages between the term 'civilno društvo' (which for me comes closest to the English notion of 'civil society') and the increasingly utilised, concept of 'građansko društvo' (literally, 'citizens' society'). The complexities of adherence to one or other, and the degree of radical differentiation which authors make between the two, in the former- and post-Yugoslav space, is beyond the scope of this text although none of the arguments for or against either term, or for maintaining them as very different or essentially the same make sense outside of complex historical contextualisations and explicit translations from, at least, English and German languages[9]. For John Keane, interestingly, the term embraces both dimensions, referring both to the 'pluralisation of power' (and hence the fullest possible expression of citizenship) and the promotion of peaceful strategies or, at the very least, the problematisation of violence (hence, in opposition to 'uncivil wars' which are, sometimes at least, 'civil wars' as they involve citizen populations actively)[10].

In the 'contact zone' of course, encounters are rarely, or rarely *only*, about words and their meaning but are, almost always, more or less explicitly, about claims-making, opportunities, strategic choices and goals, interests, and resource maximisation. In the 'contact zones', all kinds of complex negotiated interactions occur, on multiple stages, as well as off-stage, in which, in fact, multiple belongings and flexible identities are, in and of themselves, extremely useful devices. The philosophical question about whether the actor or activist in civil society who has become skilled in presenting different faces to different audiences is, somehow, less *authentic* or *honest* than the activist who remains consistent to a single idea or ideal is, in my view, less important sociologically than to root both of these strategies in their social context. Marx's point that people make history but not always in contexts of their choosing is, perhaps, the best statement of the problem of civil society activism in the context of the wars and their aftermath in the post-Yugoslav space. This is not to deny the 'post-colonial' character, or power dimension of 'contact zones' but, rather, to quote again Mary Louise Pratt who first introduced the concept, it is to foreground "the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination"[11].

NGO-IZATION AND THE RISE OF THE META-NGO
When there is a slippage from 'civil society' to 'NGO' (Non-Governmental Organisation), the process of which has been described by using the concept of *NGO-ization*, the nature of the encounter changes dramatically, in ways which certainly appear to limit the possibilities of meaningful challenges to dominant power relations. The concept of NGO-ization was probably first used by Sabine Lang in her work on women's organising in Western Europe[12] although it has also been used by activists and researchers in Croatia including Aida Bagić, Vesna Janković, and myself for a number of years. Aida Bagić, perhaps closest to Lang's original usage, uses the concept to refer to the shift from 'social movements' to 'organizations' as the dominant form of collective action, pointing to the increasing importance of 'modern' NGOs which emphasise "issue-specific interventions and pragmatic strategies with a strong employment focus, rather than the establishment of a new democratic counter-culture"[13].

A rich array of academic and activist writing has charted the negative effects of NGOization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo/a and elsewhere[14]. Some aspects of this have been extensively addressed and hardly bear repeating here, including: the influence of donors' agendas on topics covered and on type of organisational structures preferred; the rise of short-term 'project cultures' or *projectisation*; the emphasis on professionalisation and technical skills at the expense of broader social goals; the empowerment of a young, urban, highly educated English speaking elite; the need to focus on project 'success' in very narrow terms; and the increasing distancing of elite NGOs from grassroots activism. In addition, of course, in the context of war and complex emergencies, a new division arose between the much maligned (mere) 'service providing' NGO sector and the supposedly superior 'conscience- or advocacy-oriented NGOs' focusing on human rights, women's rights, and so on. The ability, willingness, and incentives for the latter to network with counterparts across the region and, indeed, the globe also mitigated against new domestic alliances or the development of deep participatory democracy.

The impacts of high levels of external assistance on the internal economy, in terms of the artificial rise in GDP in urban centres, the large gap between the salaries of international and local staff of international NGOs, and between these local staff, local NGO activists and public servants, and the physical impact of road signs advertising donors, the offices of large INGOs, and the ubiquitous white jeep, are less often discussed outside of out-of-office jokes. The marginalising of trades unions and other kinds of interest groups, or their channelling into the notion of NGO, is also less often addressed.

The extant literature has not, always, been particularly nuanced, either in terms of the differences in the development of the NGO sector in each country at different times nor, more importantly, on some of the more positive aspects of external support framed in terms of NGO development. Without wishing to overstate the case, there was evidence of a more sophisticated relationship between key NGOs, new coalition groupings, opposition politicians, and some external donors, at the time both of the defeat of the ruling HDZ in Croatia in elections in January 2000 and in the ousting of the Milošević regime in Serbia in October 2000, notwithstanding the subsequent trajectories of the key groupings, namely the student organisation *Otpor* and the neo-liberal G-17 think-tank[15]. Indeed, the space opened up for intellectuals, particularly in Serbia, but to an extent elsewhere, who would have been unable to survive inside the country without external support which was channelled through NGOs, cannot be denied.

More sociologically, the negative picture is in danger of treating local actors as mere 'puppets' or 'cultural dopes' under the domination of all-powerful external international actors. In reality, of course, whilst room for manoeuvre was limited, and some inevitable compromises were made, the trajectories of diverse activists in NGOs cannot be reduced to notions of *selling out* or being rendered *ineffective*. Indeed, the templates, processes and skills learnt or developed in NGOs may well have a longer-term relevance both in terms of individual career paths but also in terms of overall social development.

The crucial point is that, like Rome, 'civil society' cannot be built in a day. Of course, much of my work in the last twelve years has been critical of the notion that 'post-communist countries in transition' (the phrase itself, of course, already smells of neo-colonialist patronising) have no 'civil society' and, therefore, need 'capacity building', presumably from the Western countries who possess such a civil society in abundance. Whilst there are, surely, things that one society can learn from another, short-cuts to a democratic culture, and crude

transplantations from elsewhere, are rarely effective in the way intended, and often have unintended negative consequences. Steven Sampson's point that you can transfer organisational forms but not values, really strikes home in this context[16]. This is certainly the case when the building of, often elite, and sometimes single- or two-person NGOs (as when a leading academic states "Of course, I also have *my own* NGO"), becomes a false proxy for a deep democratic culture which takes a half a century or more to build or, in the aftermath of the 'survivalisms' of various kinds of authoritarian regimes, and of war, surely needs a couple of decades to rebuild. One could still argue that the Yugoslav exceptionalism was a promoter of a kind of civil society, and did have much to teach others (indeed, the forgotten history of the non-aligned movement as an alternative international development apparatus is in urgent need of remembering and critical appraisal[17]), without going so far as to argue that it was the last word in deep democracy. Times have changed and, whilst remembering is highly important politically, all but the most ironic nostalgia is rarely so[18].

In the contemporary post-Yugoslav space, the only entities worse than newly composed NGOs are, perhaps, the emerging meta-NGOs. I take the term meta-NGOs from Jonathon Bach and David Stark who use it to refer to "organizations (whose) primary purpose is to provide information and assistance to other NGOs"[19]. My usage is somewhat broader than theirs, although on the same lines, since they trace the rise of usually only one NGO in each post-communist country (their examples come from Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) whose role and resource legitimacy derives primarily, if not exclusively, from their on-line tutoring of other NGOs. Whilst they chart some of the dilemmas and tensions this produces, I would take the argument much further. I do so based on an understanding of the complexities of contemporary modes of governance and the existence of a meta- governance, or the 'governance of governance', in which new forms of political authority seek to steer through new partnerships which "provide the ground rules for governance" and which "act as a 'court of appeal' for disputes arising within and over governance"[20]. Somewhat unexpectedly and ironically, leading roles in meta-governance in some of the post-Yugoslav countries are being played by meta-NGOs who claim, and are sometimes invested with, authority over not only other NGOs but over the disciplinary arts of governance and governing themselves.

Consider how quickly and effectively, having learnt that they had not been successful in obtaining one of the grants for 'institutional support' provided by the Croatian quasi-governmental agency the National Foundation for Civil Society Development, a small number of 'leading Croatian NGOs' (the concept is, of course, both meaningless and replete with meaning) monopolised the public sphere to protest at their exclusion. On prime time television they complained that they had been overlooked, "in favour of groups in remote parts of Croatia which we have never even heard of". Not one of their charismatic, for which read demagogic, leaders seemed to pause long enough to consider the irony of their Janus-faced position regarding the state ('you are authoritarian and against us; but you should have funded us'), much less to acknowledge the - all-too-real it seems - possibility that, having been the recipients for so long of support from international donors, tied less and less to any meaningful conditions, they had lost the ability, the will, or the humility to feel the need to write a half-decent programme proposal[21].

Of course, this kind of meta-governance requires more complex strategic positioning than simply complaining on television. It requires a kind of *talking up* or amplification of the real problems of state power in society; a *talking across* the real issues of ordinary citizens (such organisations long ago closed down their legal help lines and made their offices largely

invisible if not impenetrable to the casual passer-by); a *talking down* from a position of patronising superiority to all but their core of insider members, friends and supporters; and a new hierarchy or chain of links to intermediary and grassroots organisations and individuals who exist in a classic role as peripheral to the new power centre.

CONCLUSION: IN SEARCH OF SOCIAL ENERGY AND UBLEHA
In a recent text charting the history of *Zamir* from a transnational social movement and Bulletin Board system to a nationally-based NGO and internet service sub-provider[22], I sought to contrast three generations of activists in and around this seemingly 'virtual civil society': the techno-hippie, the techno-technocrat, and the new hacktivist generation. The text was based on interviews with, and was, in my view, a pretty accurate ideal typification, of the first two categories. However, it was clear that my lack of knowledge of the third group, framed as it was by my limited understanding of the critical globalization movement, meant that the political implications of hacktivism were not addressed. I still need to catch up, or maybe I am just too old and respectable. However, it is, perhaps, worthy of note that radicalism and revolutionary militantism is, once again a saleable commodity, at least in Croatia, as part of the new literary elite buys translations of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*[23], eagerly consumes McKenzie Wark's 'Hacker Manifesto' either in English[24] or Croatian, and queues patiently outside net club MaMa (aka the Soros-funded multi media Institute) for the latest event, or else consults its web pages which combine Open Source skills-building with the writings of theoretical superstars such as Slavoj Žižek, Judith Butler, Hardt and Negri, Terry Eagleton, Noam Chomsky and, of course, George Soros. This movement does need addressing, and I need to learn more, but this dilettantist pseudo-radical lifestyle consumerism (as opposed to a reactionary consumerist lifestyle I suppose) does not give me much hope. It starts to look like the bastard child of 'civil society' and 1968-avant garde intellectual militantism.

I do not want to end on a cynical or negative note. I do think there are other concepts and theorisations which take us further than the somewhat tainted concept of civil society. One such possibility is Alfred Hirschman's notion of 'social energy'[25] which he uses to help explain how, when and why materially disadvantaged groups organise collectively and 'get things done'. He suggests that the three key components of social energy are 'friendship', 'ideals' and 'ideas'. In my view, the concept helps in understanding the shift in social energy in the post-Yugoslav space away from 'grassroots nationalists' and the smaller group of 'elitist anti-nationalists' towards a renewed grassroots community development and mobilisation which brings together smaller informal groups, some older representational/identity organisations, and informal community leaders. Crucially, the elitist claimants to 'genuine' civil society, whilst no longer a source of positive social energy, continue to prevail in the public sphere.

Elsewhere, a group of action researchers, including myself, have sought to trace something of this shift in terms of the concept of community development and mobilisation, the conceptualisation of which borrows from Saul Alinsky and, even more so, from the inspirational writings and work of Paulo Freire[26]. A somewhat rationalistic strand of the current re-emphasis on community development derives from Jurgen Habermas' notion of the importance of a genuine participatory 'public sphere'[27], notably in Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright's conceptualisation and charting of 'empowered participatory governance'[28], whose three central principles are: (1) a focus on specific, tangible problems; (2) the involvement of ordinary people affected by these problems and people close to them; and (3) the deliberative development of solutions to these problems.

Finally, in all of this, lest we end with idealistic rationalism, there is a need for irony and mimicry[29]. The whole 'civil society' business needs to be deconstructed with something of a comic tone. Nowhere is this better done, in my view, than in the text 'Ubleha za idiote'[30], described by its authors as "an absolutely unnecessary guide to civil society building and leading projects for local and internationals in BH and wider". Here is the ultimate ironic definition of 'civil society':

> **Civilno društvo** Nije samo suprotno vojnom društvu, mada to mnogi misle. Nije, dakle, ni politika, ni socijala, ni ekonomija, a nije ni samo urbano; šta je - niko ne zna ali dobro zvuči; također jedna od RVR (v.).
>
> **RVR** Riječ višeg registra. Kraj i početak za svaku RVR jest sama Ubleha (v.).
>
> **Ubleha** Autoreferencijalna, najviša kategorija civilnog društva (v.) i suvremene političke filozofije. … Ubleha nije glupost, ona je ne-misao, ne-misliva[31].

NOTES

[1] Callon, M. (1986) 'Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation' in Law, J. (ed) *Power, Action and Belief: anew sociology of knowledge.* London: Routledge, p. 216.

[2] 'Contact zones' involve „the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect", Pratt, M. L. (1992) *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* London: Routledge, p 6.

[3] I am using the concept of 'translation' here based on work by Noemi Lendvai, cf. Lendvai, N. Lendvai, N. (2005) 'Remaking European Governance: transition, accession and integration.' In Newman, J. (ed.) (2005) *Remaking Governance: Peoples. politics and the public sphere*. Bristol, The Policy Press, and as developed by John Clarke, cf. Clarke, J. (2005) 'What's culture got to do with it?', Paper presented to seminar 'Anthropological approaches to studying welfare', Aarhus, Denmark, November.

[4] Keane, J. (2003) *Global Civil Society?* Cambridge: University Press.

[5] Choudry, A. (2002) 'All this 'Civil Society' talk takes us nowhere". ZNet Daily Commentaries, 9 January web: http://www.zmag.org/Sustainers/content/2002-01/09choudry.cfm (accessed 5 May 2006).

[6] Secher Marcussen, H. and Bergendorff, S. (2004) 'Catchwords, Empty Phrases and Tautological Reasoning: Democracy and Civil Society in Danish Aid', in Gould, J. and Secher Marcussen, H. (eds.) *Ethnographies of Aid – exploring development texts and encounters*. Roskilde International Development Studies, Occasional Paper 24; pp.95-6.

[7] Stubbs, P. (1996) 'Nationalisms, Globalization and Civil Society in Croatia and Slovenia', in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change* 19; 1-26. Web: http://www.gaspp.org/people/pstubbs/paper%205.doc (accessed 8 May 2006).

[8] Stubbs, P. (2001) 'Politička ekonomija civilnog društva' in Mestrović, M. (ed.) *Globalizacija i njene refleksije u Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb: Ekonomski institut; 95-110. A revised version was published in English as Stubbs, P. (2001) 'New Times?: towards a political economy of 'civil society' in contemporary Croatia', in *Narodna Umjetnost (Croatian J of Ethnology and Folklore Research)*, 38 (1); 89-103. Web: http://www.stakes.fi/gaspp/people/pstubbs/paper%209.doc (accessed 8 May 2006).

[9] I am grateful to Aida Bagić for alerting me to this point and to key texts. Some of the literature in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language(s) which is relevant to this point includes: Pokrovac, Z. (ed.) *Građansko društvo i država: povijest razlike i nove rasprave*, Zagreb: Naprijed; Pavlović, V. (2004) *Civilno društvo i demokratija* Belgrade: Politeia, cf. p. 15; and Maldini, P. (2002) ' Građansko društvo i demokracija u tranzicijskim društvima' in *Politički misao* 29 (4); 129-145.

[10] Op cit, p. 8.

[11] Op. cit, pp. 6-7.

[12] Lang, S. (1997) 'The NGOization of Feminism'. In Kaplan, C. and Wallach, J. (eds.) *Transitions, Environments, Translations: feminisms in international politics.* London: Routledge; 101-120.

[13] Bagić, A. (2004) 'Talking About Donors'. In Gould, J. and Secher Marcussen, H. (eds.) 'Ethnographies of Aid – exploring development texts and encounters'. Roskilde University Occasional Paper in International Development Studies, 24; p. 222.

[14] Amongst others cf. Sali-Terzić, S. (2001) 'Civil Society' in Papić, Ž. (ed.) *International Support Policies to South-Eastern Europe: lessons (not) learnt in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: Muller; 175-194. Gordy, E. (no date) 'CRDA and Civil Society in Serbia'. Paper for Muabet Project, Brown University. Web: http://www.watsoninsitute.org/muabet/new_site/gordyWatsonreport1.pdf (accessed 8 May 2006). Dević, A. (2004) Faces, Phases and Places of Humanitarian Aid: Kosovo four years after. In GFC Quarterly 11. Stubbs, P. (1997) 'Croatia: NGO Development, Globalism and Conflict', in Bennett, J. (ed.) NGOs and Governments, pp. 77-87. INTRAC/ICVA.

[15] Solioz, C. (2006) 'Strengths and Weaknesses of Civil Society in the Balkans'. Paper presented to World Movement for Democracy Assembly, April. Web: http://www.ceis-eu.org/Events/Istanbul_5_Apr_06/doc/Istanbul_2006_Apr.pdf (Accessed 8 May 2006)

[16] Sampson, S. (2005) 'Some things cannot be handed over: Western democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina', Paper for panel 'Beyond lessons learnt' at the Conference for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Association Bosnia 2005, Geneva. Web: http://www.bosnia2005.org/conference/doc/beyondlessons.pdf

[17] Cf. Gupta, A. (19992) 'The Song of the Nonaligned World: transnational identities and the reinscription of space in late capitalism' in Cultural Anthropology 7 (1); 63-79. Web: http://www.stanford.edu/dept/anthroCASA/pdf/Gupta/gupta_song_nonaligned.pdf

[18] Cf. Boym, S. (1994) *Common Places: mythologies of everyday life in Russia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, in which she distinguishes between *ironic nostalgia* which is 'inconclusive and fragmentary' and the more common *utopian nostalgia* which is 'reconstructive and totalizing'. In Boym, S. (2001) *The Future of Nostalgia* New York: Basic Books she reframes these, somewhat, as 'reflexive' and 'restorative' nostalgia.

[19] Bach, J. and Stark, D. (2003) 'Technology and Transformation: facilitating knowledge networks in Eastern Europe', UNRISD Technology, Business and Society Programme Paper 10, web: http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/httpNetITFramePDF?ReadForm&parentunid=35352D4B078518C0C1256BDF0049556C&parentdoctype=paper&netitpath=80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpAuxPages)/35352D4B078518C0C1256BDF0049556C/$file/bach.pdf

[20] Jessop, B. (1997) 'Capitalism and its Future: remarks on regulation, government and governance' in *Review of International Political Economy* 4; 561-581; p. 575.

[21] Kašić, B. (2005) Ćokolade sa logum i okus moći', in Zamirzine 27 January, web: http://www.zamirzine.net/article.php3?id_article=1702 is a prime exampe of the meta-NGO thinking. My own, rather unfortunate, intervention on this issue can also be found in the Zamirzine archive!

[22] Stubbs, P. (2005) 'The *ZaMir* (for peace)Network: from transnational social movement to Croatian NGO', in Brooksbank Jones, A. and Cross, M. (eds) *Internet Identities in Europe*, Sheffield: ESCUS, conference papers. Web: http://www.shef.ac.uk/escus/papers/conferences/internetids.html

[23] The English text is Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) *Empire* Cambridge: Harvard University press. The Croatian translation is Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2003) *Imperij* Zagreb: Multimedijalni Institut, Arkzin.

[24] McKenzie Wark (no date) A Hacker Manifesto version 4.0, web: http://subsol.c3.hu/subsol_2/contributors0/warktext.html

[25] Hirschmann, A. (1984) *Getting Ahead Collectively: grassroots experiences in Latin America* New York: Pergamon Press.

[26] Stubbs, P. (2006) 'Conceptualising Community Development and Mobilisation', in MAP (eds) *Community Development and Mobilisation in Croatia*, forthcoming. An earlier version of this text, in English and Croatian can be found on web: www.map.hr. Paulo Freire's classic text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has been translated into Croatian, Freire, P. (2002) *Pedagogija obespravljenih* Zagreb: Odraz.

[27] For Habermas, the public sphere is "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state" Habermas, J. (1989, first German edition 1962) *The Structural transformation of the Public Sphere* Cambridge: Polity press.

[28] cf. Fung A. and Olin Wright, E. (eds.) (2003) *Deepening Democracy: institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance* London: Verso.

[29] The notion of 'mimicry' here is derived from Homi Bhabha's post-colonial theory, hence "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. ....Mimicry is thus the sign of a *double articulation*; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also *the sign of the inappropriate*, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers. Bhabha, H. (1994) *The Location of Culture* London: Routledge. I am grateful to Mariella Pandolfi for alerting me to this concept recently.

[30] Šaviha-Valha, N. and Milanović-Blank R. (no date) *Ubleha za idiote* in Album web: http://www.album.co.ba/autori/zajednicki/nsv_i_rmb.htm. I am grateful to Elissa Helms for sending me the text.

[31] The concept of '*Ubleha*' is, appropriately not translatable. As for the rest:

Civil society Not only the opposite of military society, although many think it is. It is no, either, politics, the social, the economy, neither is it only urban; what it is – nobody knows but it sounds good; it is also one of the RVRs

RVR A word on a higher register. The beginning and the end of all RVRs is simply *ubleha*

Ubleha Auto referential, the highest category of civil society and of contemporary political philosophy. …
Ubleha is not stupidity, it is unthought out, and unthought through. (my translation).