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## National Interest

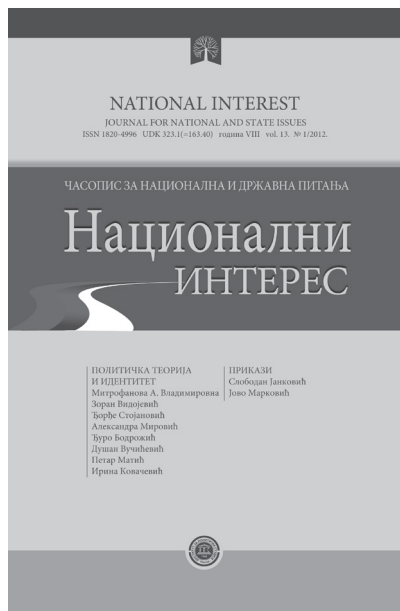
Petar Matić

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Scientific journal “National Interest”, published three times a year by the Institute for Political Studies, was launched in 2004 in Belgrade. One of the main symbolical reasons for starting the journal was to

mark the bicentennial of Serbian revolution –start of First Serbian Uprising in 1804 and consecutive liberation after the centuries-long Ottoman rule, followed by restoration of statehood and creation of modern Serbia. This symbolism is thematically embodied in the topics covered by the journal, which is mostly oriented on dealing with national and state issues, that is, with issues of so-called “high politics”.

First edition for the year 2012 is, like most of the other issues of “National Interest”, dedicated to the exploration of one specific theme. For the mentioned edition, the selected topic is “Political theory and Identity”. The theme is not often analyzed and dealt with in Serbian scientific circles, making this issue of the journal more significant.



Opening article, titled “The Crisis of the National State in the Age of Globalization”, is authored by Anastasia Vladimirovna Mitrofanova, Head of the Centre for Euroatlantic Research on the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation and professor at the Russian State University for Humanities (RGGU). The author explores connections between political disintegration and economic integration, with special reference to the period following the end of the Cold war. Article starts with intriguing discussion on the genesis of globalization process, and continues with an overview of mechanisms of disintegration models visible in certain national states. Mitrofanova specifies two different models of disintegration: the first being contained in economic integration, which leads to the impoverishment of unprepared nations. Subsequently, the situation of economic despair creates a fertile ground for resurfacing of ethnic and religious differences and conflicts. The second model consists of pure political integration of smaller (poorer) states in supranational or transnational formations, where the decision making process is simply transferred to higher, non-national instances, in that way weakening the national state by cancelling its sovereignty.

Author examines both models on the examples of historical and current processes visible in eastern parts of the European continent: especially on the examples of creation and dissolution of multinational federations like Socialist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. In the engaged attempt to preclude the “apocalyptic” consequences of seemingly unstoppable globalization process, Mitrofanova presents several alternative solutions. Starting with the claim that ethnic and religious conflicts, especially in Eurasian political space, cannot be completely explained by Huntingtonian model of inherited civilization clashes, she finds the key reasons for these conflicts to be economic in their causes, with cultural component being only a secondary cause, merely a byproduct of economic developments. Therefore, it is necessary to find more humane alternatives to globalization, in order to correct these byproducts. These corrections, according to Mitrofanova, must be shaped in a model which would include all those who feel excluded in the global processes, taking their specific needs in consideration. One of the possible solutions is so called new regionalism, i.e. evolution of a number of regional organizations, as a way of avoiding the global domination currently imposed by the

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globalization from one political center, which she finds extremely harmful.

The article authored by the Institute for Political Studies' Đorđe Stojanović deals with different conceptual approaches to the phenomenon of patriotism. The author analyzes key elements and extreme positions of patriotism, with special regard to the relation between particularism and universalism in the practical manifestations of patriotism. Extremely significant for researches, this article provides a detailed overview of authors and theories concerning patriotism. Moreover, the author claims that, among other things, patriotism is not inevitably concerned with history, thus addressing only the past, but can also be a force for the future, especially when containing the part of liberal core values. This is peculiarly true in the context of republican patriotism and republican morale of loyalty, where patriotism is considered as a voluntary commitment to the nation of citizens. This cosmopolitan patriotism, or even liberal nationalism, implying the respect of every particularity and avoiding ideological one-sidedness, stands out from ethnical components of patriotism in the strict sense. Author concludes the article with an interesting debate on the possible positions of patriotism in today's

world, finding that place in the conflict between "blind" and constructive versions of patriotism, and placing it in the function of establishing the democratic self-government.

"Significance and Sustainability of National Identity within Modern Globalization and Integration processes" is a title of article written by Aleksandra Mirović. It provides significant definitions of globalization, partially defined in the context of denationalization and deethnification of modern societies, which is especially visible in the process of transnational or supranational integrations, one of them being the European Union. In this regard, the author examines the possibilities for creation of common European identity, correlating it with the universal values and inclusive nature of western democracies. Furthermore, the author emphasizes bitter lessons drawn from the former Yugoslav area and the supposed creation of Yugoslav identity, regarding in particular to the modern divisions in Serbian society. Namely, she identifies the inherited social cleavage between conservatives and nationalists on one side, and liberal and civil-oriented on the other. Analysis of this cleavage conveniently introduces the text coauthored by Dušan Vuicević and Petar Matić, dealing with

the nature of social cleavages in Serbia, with special regard to the traditionalism-modernism axis. The authors are defining the main lines of conflict between social groups and are finding the lack of consensus, even the bitter confrontation, when it comes to the questions of modernization and social transformation in Serbia. They find the cleavage is also a significant obstacle to the process of democratic consolidation of Serbia. This paper holds the claim that Serbian society, mostly due to historical circumstances, holds permanent cleavages when it comes to the basic issues of one state. Political parties are crucial for resolving of this conflict situation. Their responsibility is to mobilize the citizens and to direct their sentiments, in order to remove the pressure away from the fragile political system. It would be extremely interesting to examine these claims on today's situation in Serbian political system, where it seems that, for the first time in twenty years, most of the political parties surpassed their differences when it comes to the strategic direction of the country. This is especially true in regard to the most important cleavages in Serbian society – modernism and traditionalism, symbolically embodied within the “Kosovo or EU” dilemma, which seems to be

resolved by most of the political parties in Serbia.

Among other articles present in this issue, it is worth to mention “Neoliberalism, rationality and imperialism”, authored by Zoran Vidojević from the Institute of Social Sciences, but also the text authored by Đuro Bodrožić, dealing with the earliest historical foundations and sources of Serbian national identity, as well as the article by Irina Kovačević, engaged in examining the sources of ecological crisis in the context of modern relations between human civilization and environment. Finally, the issue ends with two reviews, presenting the books “Corporative Nostalgia” by Aleksandar Gajić and “Diplomacy and Chess” by Vladislav Jovanović.

To conclude, “National Interest” is a journal significant not only for the researchers of social sciences, but also to all those in broader public interested in current national and state-related questions emerging in Serbia and in the World as a whole. Valuable scientific potential of the researchers from the publishing entity (Institute for Political Studies), along with the consistent editorial policy and approachable manner of the authors, make this journal an important read both in academic circles and general public alike.