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Integration of Youth: Ways of Perception and Understanding of “Others”

SUMMARY

In this paper the authors present the results of their research carried out within the international project on the integration of youth, which was carried out in cooperation with the University of Tübingen for many years (*Jugend zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration. Theorien und Methoden eines internationalen Projekts*). The data presented here are the result of the application of qualitative methods of analysis – focus groups analysis – applied in two schools in a part of the city of Zagreb – in a primary and in a secondary school. The main goal of the research was to establish potential differences in the aspects of pupil's integration in two schools – primary and secondary. The results indicated that major differences between these two groups of pupils were not present in the respect to the types of schools as well as to the ways of integration. The research results also confirmed that the expected relations in the processes of marginalization and stigmatisation of certain pupils are much more connected and affiliated with the social origins and social standings of their parents – and of the pupils themselves – than with any other “specific” characteristic and/or variable that might be found among the pupils.

KEY WORDS: integration, youth, school, Zagreb

1. Introduction

This paper interprets research data in Croatia concerning the progress of research in Croatia and in relation to research efforts in other countries participating in the international project on the integration of Youth¹ (Greece, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, and Spain). The scope of the research remained the same during the past six years, but the actual research techniques applied in each country were slightly specific and dependent on local conditions.² The main thesis of the overall project was: How

¹ The name of the project is: *Jugend zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration. Theorien und Methoden eines internationalen Projekts* (Universität Tübingen).

² For a detailed report on the previous research and theoretical findings see: *Jugend zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration*, 1997; Leiprecht et al., 2001.

does the young generation “see” the society in which it is growing up, how does it see “others” in their neighbourhoods, in the mezzo and macro environments, and what are the most appropriate ways in which the social integration of youth can be realized through the learning process? In other words, the main research target was: What are the main features of the perception of “others” by young people and how could they be taught to accept others in a friendly way? What techniques of social apprehension should be advised? What should be the roles of families, schools or wider environments in this process? Thus, in order to continue the realization of the project concerning different aspects of the role of learning for youth integration in Croatia and other countries participating in the project, the current research was oriented towards applying mostly qualitative research methods of analysis during 2004 and 2005. Qualitative techniques were chosen due to their many advantages, such as ease in approaching respondents, the quality of obtained data, and lesser budget and time restrictions when dealing with qualitative methods. It should also be stressed that the problem of “integration” (communication, respectiveness, friendly relations, peacefulness etc.) can be much more easily understood in expanded and deep interview situations than in, for example, survey based investigations. Previous research findings also gave the research team enough confidence to continue with the same techniques due to very interesting research data gained in previous researches.

In this sense, three focus group meetings (collective interviews) were held in the autumn of 2004 and in the spring of 2005 with youth representatives in Croatia. More precisely, this orientation research took place in one area, one community, in Dubrava, a part of Zagreb, which due to many reasons had been selected for several years as a key research point. The major reasons were:

- a. This part of the city represents a highly *dynamic environment*, with a high rate of immigration, social change, change in the population composition (mostly in-migration) and, from time to time, clashes occur between different layers of population. Furthermore, certain specific situations occurred during and after the end of the Homeland War in former Yugoslavia (Brčić and Čaldarović, 1998; Badcock, 1984; Čaldarović, 1975; Čaldarović and Richter, 1975; Čaldarović, Mesić and Štulhofer, 1992; Simmie and Dekleva, 1991).
- b. This area also represents fertile ground for *the development of different social processes*, thus representing a “natural social laboratory”, in which different social processes can be investigated “at hand” (Čaldarović, 1985a, 1985b).
- c. Finally, this area had been selected for our research analysis in previous years as well and thus can provide a good basis for comparative and developmental analysis (Čaldarović, 1987).

2. Description of the Research Area

Dubrava, as a part of the city of Zagreb, is the third largest among 17 city areas.³ Due to the previously mentioned fact that Dubrava is “a target” for many in-migrant groups

³ According to the 2001 census, Dubrava had almost 100,000 inhabitants or 12.5% of the total population of the city.

of residents, it is not surprising that the highest proportion of the young population lives in this part of the city – younger than 15 years of age 19% in Dubrava and 16% in Zagreb; younger than 18 years of age 19% in Zagreb and 23% in Dubrava. More detailed data are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Selected demographic data

	1. Total population		2. Younger than 18 years of age		3. Ethnic minorities			
	1991	%	2001	%	1991 %	2001 %	1991 %	2001 %
Zagreb	933,914	100.0	779,145	100.0	26%	19%	14%	5%
Dubrava	86,241	9.2	97,332	12.5	27%	23%	12%	5%

Source: Census 2001

This rather periphery area of the greater Zagreb urban area, was and still is “selected” by new settlers or in-migrants mostly due to its proximity to existing communication lines, potential employment possibilities (closeness to existing factories and employment places), easiness in purchasing land and developed social practices that have been structured through many years, especially in the implementation of different types of “illegal (‘wild’) housing practices” (Čaldarović, 1975; Čaldarović and Richter, 1975; Čaldarović, 1991; Podgorelec, Čaldarović, Brčić and Švob, 2001).

3. Methods

Due to the nature of the research – “difficult personal and social issues”, expectations of “opening up” and stimulating interaction during conversation, familiarity of the respondents involved, time and money resources, etc. – the *focus group analysis technique* was selected and applied in two public schools:⁴

- A. One in the public *secondary* school in 2005,
- B. Two in the public *primary* school – one in 2004 and one in 2005.

The technique of focus group analysis was selected due to the many advantages that this technique provides. First, it gives researchers the opportunity to develop a confidential climate for conversation; second, it gives an opportunity to participants in a rather familiar circle (several pupils from the same class) to express themselves without being restrained and constrained by anyone except by the course of the discussion and its internal dynamic; and third, it gives the possibility to members of the group to develop a free kind of interaction that can offer researches new insights on the substance and on major ideas concerning the research project. The selection of classes as well as of the pupils was done with the help of class teachers and headmasters of the schools. In each group we had a maximum of 10 pupils per each class.

The major research rationale for the selection of two types of schools for the re-

⁴ A sociologist, Maja Tretnjak, took part in the realization of these focus groups.

search – a primary and a secondary school – was *to test the hypothesis* whether the age of the pupils interacts and influences attitudes and statements concerning the ways of social integration of youth in a specific part of the city. The secondary school that we selected for our research goal in this part of the city was a vocational secondary school oriented towards food technology. In other words, this secondary school represented actually pupils with “lower grades” and – much more generally – “misfits” in the wider community, because many of them were not able to enrol in better schools owing to various reasons. It was much more difficult for the researchers to carry out their research in the second class, than in the two first classes, due to the age of pupils in the second class. They made a lot of “foolish statements” just to show off in front of each other and maintaining “research discipline” was sometimes difficult. Also, it was difficult to separate explicit “showing off” statements from “true statements”. Each focus group analysis was recorded with a tape recorder and three researchers took part in each analysis.

The notion of “social integration”⁵ is used in this paper to denote expected and accepted ways of behaviour, as exemplified by persons living in an area of the city. Social integration in the stricter sense also means “social adaptation” (to the present situation, to others, to norms, expectations, restrictions, etc.), “social regulation of behaviour” to expected and prescribed ways, as well as “following social norms” or more or less open and explicit acceptance of norms that regulate behaviour in a given society, that could and must be seen in the behaviour of each individual. In the very general sense, social integration depends mostly on the following:

- a. How present norms, regulations, laws, etc. are actually accepted and exemplified in the everyday practice of social life in their given environment.
- b. What are other the types of norms (habits, expected ways of behaviour in specific circles, etc.) that regulate everyday life in a certain society and how do they work.
- c. How contemporary context regulates and changes the ways of perception of others in an environment regulated by formal and informal norms.

In this paper we also use the expression “others”. The others are conceptualised as a dynamic composition that varies in different ways of perception, mostly depending on the social context. In another words, “others” are produced by everyday practices of the society, by local “pre-histories”, by the official and unofficial production of the news, ideas, values and situations. In this sense, “others” could be seen in our research as:

- a. Friends
- b. Just people living in the same environment
- c. “Enemies” (war enemies, people of other ethnic background)
- d. Counterparts (people to compete with)
- e. “Our people” (people from “my area”, my region ...)
- f. “My people” (people to be trusted)
- g. People to be afraid of (all “others”)
- h. People to be avoided in every case (“strangers”, criminals).

⁵ Already discussed and explained in previous reports – see the references.

Due to the multicultural and multiethnic composition of the population and the history of ethnic relations between different population layers in Croatia as a transitional society that has passed the difficult period of war, different perceptions of “others” could be expected. A rather specific combination of tradition and modernity, religious background and practices, ways of life etc., combined with the strength of the “grey zone” of life that is situated somewhere between the expected and normative dimensions and which is regulated by its own laws that are not transparent in most of the cases, is also one of the complex characteristics of the overall situation. In other words, “the other” is usually constructed situationally and contextually and that construction changes through time – from “bad” to “good” and vice-versa.

An interesting feature of the overall situation in the place where the research took place is the reflection of familial relations, i.e. relations between parents and their children. Due to the different experiences and personal histories of each family (personal losses during the last war, refugee experience, forced migration, general insecurity of life, etc.), their perceptions of “others” differ in comparison to families with other specific personal experiences. One of the main tasks of this research was thus to establish the level of “reflection” of parents’ attitudes and statements, values and ideas on their children.

The research concentrated on several major aspects and items:

1. Personal self-representation of youth
2. Group belonging and stigmatisation of youth
3. (Potential) problems due to the young people’s origin
4. Advantages and disadvantages of Dubrava as a place for living
5. European identity and orientation among youth in Dubrava
6. Attitudes towards possibilities of living outside of Croatia.

The major results of the analysis will be presented in the text that follows.

4. Results

The groups were made up by pupils from Zagreb, from other parts of Croatia, from Bosnia and Herzegovina (mostly refugees) and from Croats and Albanians from the Kosovo region (Čaldarović, 1997; Čaldarović, 2004). Major findings will be presented separately for the pupils of the secondary school (“A”) and for the pupils of the primary school (“B”). The presentation of the results will be given according to the major thematic groups that were discussed in the focus groups, and conclusions will be presented at the end of the paper.

The reader will clearly see that differences between the statements, issues, and answers of pupils of different ages are not, in many cases, very dissimilar. But, still, as will become more obvious later, the age variable does have an influence on the statements of pupils. For this reason, we will interpret the research data taking into consideration the age division between the respondents.

a. The way of self-representation

“A” group

It was discovered that the ways in which pupils represent themselves mostly

depend on many situational factors. In this way, major conditioning factors influencing the ways of representation depend on the type of local (representative) environment where someone is asked or feels a need (pressure) to represent himself/herself. In this sense, two typical situations proved themselves to be important:

1. *Within the country* (Croatia) pupils usually represent themselves as (a) inhabitants of Zagreb, or (b) more strictly and specifically, as persons belonging to a certain neighbourhood (let us say, Dubrava).
2. When asked to represent themselves *outside of their home country*, the pupils usually answer that they are Croatians, without making it more specific.

It was also established that, as a rule, pupils from the Janjevo area (Kosovo) always represent themselves as Albanians.⁶

“B” group

For primary school pupils, the way of self-representation depends *mostly on the counterpart* (party) to whom one is expected to represent himself/herself and not so much on the local (representative) environment. Thus, the usual way of self-representation for Zagreb pupils was explained *in this sense* (a): “I always say that I am from Dubrava, because people do not know about Dubec” (a smaller part of the city further to the periphery from Dubrava). “But for the stranger, I will firstly say: I am from Croatia, then from Zagreb.” This represents a typical empirical reaction linked to the context – for “domestic” people, an exact specification of (territorial) belonging is felt almost as an obligation when responding, and for “strangers” a more general specification is usually expressed. In this manner we can easily see that territoriality as an affiliation (belonging, attachment, embeddedness, transformed and produced by the social environment /Derek and Urry, 1985/) is “blended” with social context.

The second example is also illustrative. (b) A girl who had moved to Zagreb recently represents herself in this manner: “I live in Zagreb”, but “I was born in Sarajevo” (the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina). This shows another way of self-representation: for a newcomer (migrant), a specification of the exact place (territory) in Zagreb as a way of self-representation is not important, but the broader context (due to many reasons) is important (“I was born in Sarajevo” – one of the motives to represent herself in this manner was probably the specific accent that could be noticed and heard in her speech, and to avoid necessary questions, such as: “Where were you born?” She was forced to say it in advance, to avoid any misunderstandings and surprises).

The third example (c) is a girl who was born in Kosovo and had lived there for only one year and then moved to Zagreb. For her it is important to say in the first place that “she was born there” (Kosovo, a part of Serbia and Montenegro), and only afterwards that “she lives in Zagreb. I always say where I am from”. The main rationale for mentioning that she always “says where she is from” is similar to every “newcomer’s” attitude – in order to avoid any misunderstanding with others, this affiliation and empirical fact should be mentioned in advance. This could also be considered one of the signs

⁶ “I am not ashamed to say where I come from.” “People always ask about the origin of your parents – and I do the same, just as a habit” (girl from Bosnia and Herzegovina).

of “developing strategies” for better and faster integration into a new environment.⁷

We might conclude that for the children – migrants who came to Zagreb from other areas of former Yugoslavia – a need to emphasize “outer environments” as referent frames and/or as the places where they were born or had grown up represents the result of an “inner pressure” that – due to the fact that “others probably know (and see?) the difference” – is much better explained first of all and in advance. We might say that here the context of self-representation is *situationally constructed from the usual and experienced ways of previous representations* and, in this sense, makes a necessary “explanatory addition” to the ways of youth self-representations.

(d) Other participants explained that they *do not feel a need* to emphasize their (real) origin, except in the case if someone is interested – and then they will say something about their origin more specifically.

b. Group belonging and stigmatisation

“A” group

Group belonging and problems with (negative) stigmatisation typically assigned to members of such a group are common processes with great importance in youth life. In this sense, we discovered that friendships among pupils are mostly *established on the basis of sympathy*, and not on the basis of belonging to a national or religious group.⁸ This speaks for itself – young people make their friendships and develop feelings of group belonging *occasionally*, with no reference to one’s origin or “attachment”. It should also be emphasized that, according to the pupils’ responses, friendships are mostly made on the school or neighbourhood basis. It means that simple aggregation in the classroom or in the playground will provide a chance to socialize with one’s peers.

But in some cases, *selection principles* were also recorded – against the Roma, for example.⁹ This “selection principle” was registered only in two cases during the focus group interviews, not surprisingly in the secondary school (!), but they are significant due to the fact that, as a rule, the Roma are usually stigmatised as a group, as a people, and therefore as individuals. In this sense, the empirical dimension (how one actually behaves?) does not matter – the mere fact of “belonging” to a group, people, nation, etc., makes one eligible to be discriminated against and/or stigmatised.

Other major “divisions” are usually based on *the principles of neighbourhood*. “Street gangs” are often in conflict, but these conflicts serve mostly for “showing off”. Girls are usually the common reasons for conflicts among boys.

Prejudices towards some ethnic groups always exist, but they are not so often expressed and/or shown.¹⁰ In most cases children feel that parents should be blamed for

⁷ They should know where I am from, it is not good to try to hide it, it will come out sooner or later... I have nothing to hide...

⁸ “Friendships are set accidentally. You never know when you’ll meet someone.”

⁹ “I know them better. They only make problems. I saw one of them stealing mobile phones.”

¹⁰ “There will be always people who will tell you ‘You are Bosniaks, go back to your Bosnia’; or the same for the Herzegovians, Janjevo people, etc. Not all people are the same!” “When I was smaller, it hit me much more. When you are a child, you are ashamed to say where you are from.”

prejudices: “How can young children say who is ‘good’ and who is ‘bad’? They can hear these things only in their home.” This quote represents an illustrative answer to the following question: what is and what should be the role of responsible parents – to try to avoid “teaching” their children about prejudices, or to “teach” them what prejudices consist of.

“B” group

The primary school respondents socialize mostly with peers *from their settlements (neighbourhoods)* or from *their school*. Many of them participate in different out-of-school activities located in other parts of the city, in this way making friendships based on common interests and the fact that they usually attend these activities together (sport activities, music school, language courses, etc.).

They fully agree that friendships *are not formed according to any “special principle”* – national, religious or territorial affiliation. Moreover, “I am forced by my parents to socialize with everybody”, one participant said. This illustrates an open principle of making friendships and also illustrates tolerant parents.

In some cases, however, we discovered that *there were also some restrictions* that parents placed on their children – one Roma mother, for example, forbids her daughter “to socialize with other Roma people, who are filthy and do not want to go to school”. In her family, all children go to school and that’s the principle of selection she applies. Thus, taking into account the social, economic and political position of the Roma in contemporary Croatian society, we might say that the “orientation of children” on the part of their parents in regard to making (or not making!) friendships with Roma children *reflects actual divisions, prejudices and experiences* that exist between “the others”, i.e. the Roma people themselves, and the rest of the community. These types of behaviour are obviously heavily burdened with previous experiences, prejudices, and actual situations experienced on an everyday basis.

Through discussions with the primary school pupils, it became clear that, in most cases, the Roma are *the most stigmatised social group* in regard to social contacts and socialization in general. These attitudes are mostly based on personal experiences and their interpretations, as well as on actual consequences that have been experienced.

The second group emphasized in this sense were people from Janjevo (in the Kosovo region). “They are always provocative towards others and start fighting!” “This is true, but not all people from Janjevo are the same” – this statement by a boy from the Janjevo area is very illustrative. Generally, people from Janjevo are mostly perceived as members of a closed social group and their behaviour is mainly aggressive, because they want to dominate and be noticed. “They think that in this manner they will be accepted by others.” In this case, we do not have elements of “a generalized stigmatisation” (which might be characteristic of the Roma), but rather of “a specific stigmatisation” of a specific social (ethnic) group that arrived (on more massive scale) in this area 15 years ago, and was perceived as successful (in commerce), but at the same time as “rude”, “aggressive” and “not polite”. The reactions of others towards the Janjevo people also reflect envy, fear, insecurity and the problematic nature of the relations.

c. Problems due to pupils' origin

"A" group

Although we live in a global, multicultural society, at some occasions and in some situations, one's origin can make "a difference" and can become *a reason for isolation and stigmatisation* (Čaldarović, 2004). During our conversations with pupils in Dubrava, one pupil, Albanian by origin, now living in Croatia, told us his bad experience. For example, in the primary school on many occasions, he had been told something like: "Go back to where you've come from!" He was even beaten at times by other boys just because he had been heard talking in the Albanian language.¹¹ In this sense, we might conclude that "Albanians" (in general) are sometimes "blamed" only on the basis of their origin.

A girl from Bosnia and Herzegovina also had some bad experiences when she moved (as a refugee) to a periphery area of Dubrava (Markuševac). Even in the primary school she had bad experiences, both with pupils and their parents. "Go back where you belong!" – she heard many times. That was a major reason why she, together with her parents, moved to Dubrava where she had no problems at all. This example reflects, to a certain degree, "a periphery" situation and the attitudes of people in rather closed social spheres. For someone coming from the outside world, there should be no difference between, let us say, Dubrava and Markuševac, but on a more "micro level", even the attitude of people concerning the origin of children could be different, according to their place of residence (more or less peripheral).

During the conversation we noticed another thing – a negative attitude expressed at times towards Serbs as an ethnic group, probably due to many already well-known reasons – war aggression, "the difference", etc. Some pupils even mentioned the destruction of an automobile with Serbian license plates in Dubrava.¹²

"B" group

Conversations with the group of primary school pupils showed that *no serious problems* arose due to one's origin. "Only when we tease one another", one respondent said, the problems appear. The derogatory term "Tzigan", the respondents mentioned, is used for the Roma who "are filthy and who are beggars", as well as the term "Bosniak", which is used for someone who is "thick-brained", and the name "Herzegovian" for someone who is "difficult on money". However, on the level of primary school children, these terms were used mostly for teasing, in the common technique of "giving names", and not as a derogatory names with greater consequences and for the purposes of isolation.

¹¹ "When I came to Zagreb, I had a very nice opinion about Croatia. But, not any more. For the Albanians in Kosovo, Zagreb is like Germany to you – something developed, new, better."

¹² "That's the right way to punish them." The history of antagonism between Croats and Serbs exists in many ways and can be seen, for example, during football and other sport activities. It is obvious that, for example, football games and teams were used as "weapons" in the political battles between republics in former Yugoslavia. Thus the war, which ended only recently, is also one of the reasons for (occasional) aggressive feelings towards Serbs in general as representatives of aggressors during the Homeland War.

d. Advantages and Disadvantages of Dubrava as a Place of Residence

“A” group

There is a general tendency, which can be noticed in the answers of secondary school pupils, that Dubrava is “a nice place to live”, but the specific reasons why they judged the situation in this way were not indicated. Only one respondent said that Dubrava was “... a troubled place. Everything bad is happening here. A major reason for this is a specific mixture of the population”. In other words, “a specific mixture of the population” might be one of the causes why a part of the city could be named “a troubled place”. Thus, although specific groups of people and their “attitudes” were not mentioned, there is a feeling that the composition of the population (migration, “mixture”, behaviour, attitudes, habits etc.) could add to the characteristics of a certain part of the city.

“B” group

Respondents in the group of younger school children mentioned that one of the advantages of the settlement in which they live was the fact that “We are close to the Centre of the town and at the same time it is not crowded with traffic and buildings”. Another advantage was that in the close vicinity there are many possibilities for extracurriculum activities, such as sport activities, a school for foreign languages, a library, etc. The school organizes foreign language instruction and, once a month, a dance is held at the school. One pupil emphasized tidiness and many green areas in the place of residence as its advantage. Thus, altogether, positive responses are based on the potentials for many activities, which this area offers, as well as on the urban land-use pattern in the settlement. It is also interesting that the spatial dimension – closeness and distance from the city’s centre – also presents a dimension taken into account by young school children.

Concerning *potential negative elements* in their settlement, respondents mentioned the lack of public street lights.¹³ Parents warn their children of the drug addicts that can be found there, as well as of the problems of bullying.¹⁴ So, apart from common problems with drug addicts and bullies, so specific for youngsters, for many of the respondents Dubrava seems to be a nice place in which to live.

e. European Orientation and Identity

“A” group

In current discussions and developments concerning the necessity of Croatia’s accession to the EU, and on the basis of this focus group, we could say that the majority of the pupils are “Euro-sceptics”, not “Euro-optimists”.¹⁵ One of the expressed feelings

¹³ “The whole neighbourhood is dark and the environment of the school, too. Vandals destroy public lights the moment they are installed (repaired).”

¹⁴ “This is a general problem which will never be solved. I was also doing the same, trying to become a member of the group, but I changed after I was beaten up myself. Only when I experienced that on my own skin, I stopped doing it to the others.”

¹⁵ The reader must bear in mind that the research took place in June 2005, before Croatia was given “the green light” to start negotiations with the European Union.

and statements was that accession would bring nothing good: “It will be even worse! They have taken from us almost everything. It is best for us to stay alone.” It is not sufficiently clear what is meant by “they”, but a certain “fear” of being dominated by “others” was felt during the conversations. The statement that the influence of other European countries is too strong and that our culture will simply be lost (washed away) in the course of time, may also illustrate this. Thus, “fear” and insecurity concerning “the European orientation”, at present and on the basis of these three focus groups, is based mostly on (a) fear of losing the independent (and unique?) character of our culture, (b) fear of being “invaded” (economically, culturally, politically, etc.) by the EU.

Some statements are “more optimistic”: “It will be better. We will get more money!”, but also that “It will be difficult for us to level-up with other countries. As long as we have poverty here, we’ll also have criminals. The European Community cannot change it.” This statement illustrates the transitional character of Croatian society, as well as the need to change the “situation of insecurity” concerning criminal, the feeling that a conspiracy theory dominates the development of society, etc.

“B” group

We found that, even in the younger group of the respondents, almost all belonged to the group of “Euro-sceptics”. They are against accession of Croatia to the EU and the following statement illustrates this: “Let it be as it is now. It will take us a lot of time to become similar to more developed nations. For us it will be better to stay independent, relying on tourism and on our products.” Our independency, it seems, must be preserved, specifically relying on tourism and other indigenous resources. These statements could be operationalized through several dimensions, such as: (a) fear of change, (b) fear of being “invaded”, (c) fear of losing a specific character, and (d) fear of being insufficiently developed, which could lead to becoming a subject of discrimination.

How to be and stay independent? Primarily, we must “...invest into our tourism and nature and we must prove that we have also our own values and advantages and that we are not only a small country”. In the second place, we must be specific, unique in a certain way: “We may have something that larger countries do not have!” Further, we must follow the examples of some other countries (that are independent, or are not members of the EU). “We have to follow the example of Switzerland – it is one of the richest countries in the world, and they are not within the EU.” Certain additional fears are also connected to potential accession to the EU: “As a member of the EU, we could also become a terrorist target”.

It is likewise interesting to note that respondents see “soft borders” and/or travelling without a passport as the only positive fact linked to potential accession to the EU. They acquired these attitudes, understandably, mostly from their parents.

f. Attitudes of Youth towards Possibilities of Living outside of Croatia

“A” group

Statements concerning the dilemma – to live in Croatia or to go abroad – were also one of the research goals. It was found that respondents were rather free in expres-

sing their wishes to “go abroad” and try to live in some other countries. This is also an illustration of the fact that, in a way, they do not feel “attached” to their homeland, as much as it seems in their answers.¹⁶ This opinion reflects the attitude that better opportunities for living and working can be found outside the home country.

“B” group

Younger respondents concentrated on slightly different issues. Based on their personal experiences and travelling abroad, most of them noticed that there were differences between children living abroad and children in Croatia. For example: “in Germany children learn faster, they think differently and develop differently”, and in Switzerland: “there is a generally different approach to people than in our country – all people are taken as the same. Although I had come from Sarajevo, I started to socialize with other children immediately”. Thus, a higher level of tolerance was noticed in other countries.

The respondents think that people living in Western countries live better, especially in Scandinavian countries.¹⁷ For one girl “it would be better to spend some time outside the home country, on specialization, and then return. Education abroad is much better than in Croatia”. To put it shortly, due to many reasons, the respondents are prepared to leave their home country for a longer or shorter period. In a sense, we may conclude that we noticed an open attitude towards the possibility of living permanently outside one’s home country.

5. Sonnenberg – Dubrava Initiative

We will also briefly outline the major research results on the topic “The Appearance of aggressive behaviour among youth in Dubrava”, as surveyed in the academic year 2004/2005 among youth in the 7th and 8th grades in two elementary schools in Dubrava.¹⁸ A total number of 225 pupils were included in the sample. The survey was organized on the basis of a written questionnaire with a total of 12 questions. The main goal of this research was to investigate and determine attitudes and statements among youth, concerning the aggressive behaviour of the young generation.

The major results show that 97% of respondents stated that there were manifestations of aggressive behaviour in their school or, in other words, that many “bad things” could happen at school. It was also discovered that in 64% of the cases “bad things” happen on the way to school, and in 20% of cases on the way back. The most frequent kinds of aggressive behaviour are insults and bad words (54%), fights (13%) and exclusion from a group (8%). How to resolve a conflict? In most cases, the conflict is resolved by the pupils themselves (57%); a call for help was mentioned in 16% cases, and avoidance of conflict was mentioned in 20% of the cases. The greatest number of pupils (73%) sees a solution of the conflict and aggression in respect for the opinions and statements of others’, as well as in developing a dialogue among the young generation.

¹⁶ “I will leave Croatia and live abroad. Croatia is a good place to visit and spend money.”

¹⁷ “If there is an opportunity for me to move permanently from Croatia to some other more developed country, I will not hesitate – people outside live better.”

¹⁸ At present there are 11 elementary schools in Dubrava, with a total number of 9,161 pupils.

The school is definitely seen as one of the most important centres for social inclusion and for resolving conflicts between young people. In this sense, the elementary school in Dubrava was included in the Programme “Sonnenberg-Dubrava”, where both special partnership relations and different communicative skills were developed. A special report was also written on the complex relationship concerning the partnership: the school – the family – the local community, resulting in respect for the community within a multicultural environment.

It was emphasized that aggressive behaviour among youth can be, in principle, prevented through an open relationship and active communication among all participants in the social and educational process, especially taking into account the partnership role of an important triangle: the school – the parents – the local community. It was proven that efficiency and fast reactions, as well as feedback relations, are the most important ways of preventing aggressive behaviour in certain situations. That was the principal reason why “Association Sonnenberg – Croatia” was established in the area of Dubrava in 2004. Until now, the major activity of this association was the organisation of several workshops for pupils and teachers in the nearby “City of Youth”, in the same community (Dubrava). Precisely by means of the workshops, another interdisciplinary research project, entitled “Intercultural learning on the level of local community”, is being carried out. The main goals of this project are:

- Development of major topics, such as intercultural communication, tolerance, mechanisms to promote interculturalism and communication, the avoidance of aggressive behaviour and conflict resolution;
- Building-up an awareness and correction of pupils’ opinions in regard to some issues and problems among youth in local environments;
- Setting up a group of young people which would work in its local community on specific topics such as:

Who are your and our neighbours?

Do you know your neighbours?

How to overcome prejudices?

What is the meaning of tolerance?

We must act responsively.

The first results of these actions show that much “positive energy” has been accumulated. All workshops were widely accepted by the young people. It was interesting to note that a smaller part of the participants became nostalgic in regard to their native areas and, in a sense, they, as well as the majority of their parents, have not yet fully integrated themselves.

6. Conclusions

The major conclusions in regard to our research findings are the following:

1. *The age variable* seems to be very important in respect to readiness towards the acceptance and recognition of “others”: younger participants (primary school pupils) were much

more open to cooperation and prepared to accept the “differences” that exist in the young generation.

2. The variable *type of school* (“quality”, reputation) also proved to be very important: the secondary school in which the focus group meeting was held has a “bad” reputation in Zagreb, and in this sense, the social composition of the pupils reflects this perception – only the worst children enrol (finally find a place) in this school.

3. The importance of the complex *mobility variable* also proved to be significant. The entire area of Dubrava represents an area in transition. This is the area inhabited, during last 10–15 years, by many refugees, displaced persons and other people that were forced to leave their homes. Tensions between “us” and the “newcomers”, between us (Croats) and “others” are also rather high. This was established during the focus group analysis in the secondary school.

4. The *personality experience variable* showed itself as being very important for the perception of potential apprehension towards “others”. During the focus group meeting, especially in the secondary school – it was found that migratory, refugee experiences (and identities) constituted a much more flexible basis for the apprehension and recognition of “others”. Minorities in our focus groups were represented by Albanians, Roma, Bosniaks or by the “others”, “newcomers”, “different ones” etc. – all of which were much more timid and inclined towards cooperation and adaptation, presumably due to the “adaptation experiences” that they had had so far during their short lifetimes.

5. The variable *searching new security, stabilization and peace* was also recognized as an important set of situations. In-migrant (minority) young people were much more prepared to accept differences, new situations and problems, due to the fact that they were searching for a new stabilization. At the same time, “rooted” respondents revealed signs of repulsion towards all others, forms of cruel behaviour and the need to show their rights, their strength and their “uniqueness”.

6. The *European identity variable* at present, in both focus groups of respondents, is still contaminated by current social and political issues, and is not sufficiently clear. On the one hand, affiliation with the home country has a tendency of having more of a symbolic nature, and at the same time the advantages of accession to the EU are not clear enough. In this sense, “Euro-scepticism” and “Euro-optimism” are not yet rationally based choices and alternatives.

7. The *identity building variable* proved to be of a dynamic nature. There is no recipe nor formula for identity structures and processes of their formation. We might say that identities are formed in accordance with occasions, situations and local interactive dynamics. “Prejudices” against “others” are often taken up only symbolically and situationally, not structurally, as “taken for granted facts” used in the continuous stigmatisation of a certain group.

8. One important result of the research so far is that *much more should be done* in Croatia *for better integration and cooperation between members of different minorities and “groupings” with different social experiences and personal destinies*. Populations in trouble or with troubled past must be helped much more efficiently by the state, the municipality and by school authorities. Parents-Teachers associations (PTA) should do much more, due to the fact that the school is one of the domains in which efforts towards integration could be made every day in an efficient way.

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INTEGRACIJA MLADIH: NAČINI PERCIPIRANJA I RAZUMIJEVANJA »DRUGIH«

SAŽETAK

U radu se iznose rezultati istraživanja koje je realizirano u okviru međunarodnog projekta o integraciji mladih koji se već niz godina realizira u suradnji sa Sveučilištem u Tübingenu (*Jugend zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration. Theorien und Methoden eines internationalen Projekts*). Predstavljeni su rezultati kvalitativnog istraživanja koje je provedeno u dvjema školama u Dubravi (Zagreb) uz uporabu metode analize fokusnih skupina. Osnovna namjera istraživanja bila je ustanoviti potencijalne razlike koje postoje u načinima integracije učenika u dvjema školama – osnovnoj i srednjoj. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da nisu uočene važnije razlike u načinima integracije i dezintegracije između dviju ispitanih skupina (osnovnoškolci i srednjoškolci) iako su neke razlike ipak ustanovljene. Istraživanje je pokazalo da se očekivani aspekti procesa stigmatizacije i marginalizacije obično vezuju uz socijalno podrijetlo učenika, odnosno podrijetlo roditelja, a ne uz neke specifične načine ponašanja ili specifične stavove ispitanika.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: integracija, mladi, škola, Zagreb

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L'INTÉGRATION DES JEUNES: MODES DE PERCEPTION ET DE COMPRÉHENSION DES «AUTRES»

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article expose les résultats d'une recherche réalisée dans le cadre d'un projet international d'intégration des jeunes, qui se déroule depuis plusieurs années en collaboration avec l'Université de Tübingen (*Jugend zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration. Theorien und Methoden eines internationalen Projekts*). Les auteurs présentent les résultats d'une recherche qualitative menée dans deux écoles du quartier de Dubrava, à Zagreb (Croatie), mettant en œuvre la méthode de l'analyse groupes focaux. Cette recherche avait pour objectif essentiel de discerner les différences potentielles entre les modes d'intégration des élèves de ces deux écoles, respectivement primaire-collège et lycée. Les résultats de la recherche ont montré qu'on ne discerne pas de différence notable dans les modes d'intégration et de désintégration entre les deux groupes sous étude (élèves de primaire-collégiens d'une part et lycéens d'autre part) quoique que quelques divergences soient observées. La recherche a montré que les aspects attendus des processus de stigmatisation et de marginalisation sont généralement liés à l'origine sociale de l'élève ou à celle de ses parents, et non pas à des types spécifiques de comportement ou encore à des prises de position spécifique des interrogés.

MOTS CLÉS intégration, jeunes, école, Zagreb