

## NEZAPOSLENOST I NEFORMALNA EKONOMIJA U HRVATSKOJ: ANALIZA DISKURSA

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UDK 331.56(497.5)

316.644(497.5):331.56

Izvorni znanstveni rad

Primljeno: 8. 3. 2013.

Prihvaćeno: 15. 8. 2013.

*Kroz kulturnu analizu i analizu diskursa, u radu se prikazuju narativni (diskurzivni) elementi suvremene nezaposlenosti i neformalne ekonomije u Hrvatskoj. Istraživanjem je uočena metaforičnost i višeznačnost uvriježenih elemenata medijskoga i kolokvijalnoga diskursa o nezaposlenima i nezaposlenosti: kako kroz medije, tako i kroz naracije nezaposlenih, perpetuiraju se predodžbe o nezaposlenima kao trpećim pojedincima, dok, s druge strane, prakse i iskustva nezaposlenosti pokazuju heterogeniju sliku. Premda pozicija dugotrajne nezaposlenosti mahom nije utemeljena na samoizbornosti, viktimizacijski diskurs o nezaposlenima i nezaposlenosti također nije uvijek podudaran s praksama i iskustvima nećije (dugotrajne) formalne nezaposlenosti.*

**Ključne riječi:** nezaposlenost, neformalna ekonomija, strategije preživljavanja, analiza diskursa, Hrvatska

### UVOD

Osnovna teza rada počiva na rezultatima istraživanja i zapažanjima proizašlim iz šireg istraživanja, iz kojega ovdje izdvajam dio o narativnim (diskurzivnim) elementima suvremene nezaposlenosti i neformalne ekonomije u Hrvatskoj. Polazište za tumačenje ovih elemenata počiva na spoznajama da su nezaposleni heterogena populacija, da se “preživljavanje” ostvaruje mahom izvan formalnih ekonomskih sustava ili u prožimanju formalnih i neformalnih sustava te da formalno nezaposleni pojedinac vlastiti ekonomski, simbolički te socijalni integritet i identitet ostvaruje velikim dijelom kroz neformalni sektor (društvene mreže i neformalnu ekonomiju).

U razgovornom i medijskom diskursu dominiraju naracije o pasivnoj, trpećoj ulozi nezaposlenih te predodžbe o nedostatku ikakve pozicije samoizbornosti nezaposlenih, odnosno aktivne uloge nezaposlenih

pojedinaца u okviru vlastite socioekonomske situacije. Premda su, u inicijalnoj fazi, nezaposleni među kojima je vršeno istraživanje mahom ostajali bez posla u trenutku općeg posruća i preobrazbe ekonomskog sustava te masovnih likvidacija zaposlenih radnika i stečaja poduzeća, dakle nemavši mogućnost izbora i ne ostavši bez posla vlastitom krivnjom, ti nezaposleni su se nakon toga, mnogi ostajući formalno nezaposleni u kontinuitetu od dvadeset godina, ipak nekako nosili s vlastitom nezaposlenošću, tj. određenim si mehanizmima osiguravali ekonomsku dostatnost i sl. Može se pretpostaviti da su ti dugotrajno nezaposleni ne samo u međuvremenu drastično osiromašeni i ekonomski destabilizirani, već i emocionalno shrvani. Ipak, njihove življene prakse i iskustva pokazuju složeniju, slojevitiju sliku jer nezaposleni nerijetko nisu socioekonomski posrnuli, neumreženi i isključeni pojedinci, barem ne na onoj razini na kojoj to hipostazira medijski i kolokvijalni diskurs.

Istraživački impuls za temu nezaposlenosti, ali i mnogih drugih fenomena iz nedavne i suvremene hrvatske stvarnosti (onih koji su se uglavnom spontano isprofilirali u istraživanju), potekao je iz uočene potrebe za kritičkim propitivanjem protuslovlja između najmanje dviju razina – diskurzivne i praktične (življene) *stvarnosti*, odnosno potrebe za razumijevanjem i razotkrivanjem, kako je o tome bila pisala etnologinja Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, svega onoga “što se, u okvirima naših povijesnih iskustava, čini normalnim. A najčešće ne bi smjelo biti normalno, jer nije ni legalno ni legitimno” (1996:61). Potekao je, dakle, iz potrebe za odmakom od, kako je to izrekao sociolog Zoran Malenica, oslanjanja na kolektivne “impresionističke uvide” o polarizaciji hrvatskoga društva te o golemoj većini “obespravljenih i nemoćnih” (2001:118, 232).

U proteklih sam nekoliko godina zapazila kako su predodžbe “običnih” ljudi o vlastitoj sadašnjosti i budućnosti uokvirene dominantnom karakteristikom, a koju je uočila još polovicom devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća Rihtman-Auguštin: “začaranim krugom mizerije” (1996:60) – narativnom i mentalnom konstrukcijom (psihozom preživljavanja) koju ću posebno istaknuti u ovom radu. S jedne strane stoji pesimističan i/ili oportunistički stav o (i među) nezaposlenima koji afirmira viktimizaciju “običnog” čovjeka, a s druge najraznovrsnije *strategije* kojima “obični”

ljudi (u ovom slučaju nezaposleni) iznalaze načine da prežive, da iz *ničega* stvore *nešto*, da vlastitim životima daju smisao, čak i da ispunjavaju vlastite (materijalne i druge) želje.<sup>1</sup>

## RIJEKE NEZAPOSLENIH

U Hrvatskoj je početkom devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća “uslijedila ‘eksplozija’ u broju nezaposlenih”<sup>2</sup> (Galić 2008:1). Premda je i u socijalizmu problem nezaposlenosti postojao<sup>3</sup>, socijalistička je nezaposlenost

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<sup>1</sup> Pojednostavljeno bi, a time i netočno, bilo ova tumačenja razumijevati kao potvrdu tomu da nezaposleni ustvari u Hrvatskoj žive *dobro*. Kritički u cjelokupnome svojem širem istraživanju nezaposlenosti nastojim ukazati na to kako su socioekonomske prakse nezaposlenih sprega formalne i neformalne sfere ekonomije i društvenih odnosa. To je ujedno i snažna kritika postojećih formalnih sustava, prije svega ekonomskog sustava, sustava socijalnih politika i formalnoga tržišta rada, koji, takvi kakvi jesu i kroz formalne mehanizme, ljudima ne omogućuju (u ekonomskom, socijalnom i bilo kojem drugom smislu) “preživljavanje” i dostatnost, a kamoli nešto “više”. Uhodane i perzistentne aktivnosti u sferi neformalne ekonomije jedan su od bitnih “amortizera” tranzicijskih izazova, napetosti i nevolje, a duboko je potresan kontinuirani jaz između potreba nezaposlenih i onoga što im omogućava formalni sustav socijalnih politika, politika rada i zapošljavanja. Sve to odnosi se ne samo na njihove ekonomske potrebe, već i one vezane uz njihov simbolički i socijalni integritet.

<sup>2</sup> Premda je visoka nezaposlenost problem koji je pratio tranziciju i ostalih postsocijalističkih zemalja, u usporedbi s drugim tranzicijskim zemljama Hrvatska je imala izrazito visoku nezaposlenost (Teodorović 2001:141). Godine 1994. Hrvatska je imala stopu nezaposlenosti 18%, što je bila i najviša stopa među zemljama u tranziciji (Vojnić 1996:187).

<sup>3</sup> Premda se prikivala na razne načine (Cifrić i Lay 1990:166; Woodward 1995) (pa se i danas često socijalistička nezaposlenost percipira kao oksimoron) (Woodward 1995), nezaposlenost je i u socijalizmu postojala (dapače, ona je i stalno rasla), o čemu svjedoče najmanje službeni podaci o registriranoj nezaposlenosti pri Hrvatskom zavodu za zapošljavanje (HZZ), koji se ondje sustavno vode od 1952. godine. Također je to bilo prisutno i ranije: u *Spomenici Zavoda za zapošljavanje u Zagrebu* spominje se kako je još 1927. godine uočen porast nezaposlenosti na razini Grada Zagreba (Barić i Šešo 2006:13). Sustavna evidencija registrirane nezaposlenosti na razini Hrvatske vodi se od 1952. godine i pritom se uočava stalan porast registrirane nezaposlenosti (ibid.); Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje HZZ: Kretanje broja nezaposlenih osoba po godinama, URL: <http://www.hzz.hr/docslike/statistike/grafikon%208.xls> (2. 2. 2011.). U nekim mjesečnim tiskanim zagrebačkim listovima počinju se već krajem sedamdesetih godina uočavati zabrinjavajući

zanemarivih numeričkih razmjera u odnosu na porast nezaposlenosti od početka tranzicije i nakon socijalizma (Ott 2002:3). Dugotrajna stagnacija zapošljavanja (daleko ispod razine iz 1990. godine)<sup>4</sup> i stalan rast stope nezaposlenosti obilježili su razdoblje *tranzicije* – “zahtjevnu preobrazbu postsocijalističkog društva” (Šundalić 2001:65), tj. zahtjevnu promjenu gospodarskih i političkih sustava od početka devedesetih godina, u kojima je “u euforiji početka (...) jedva (...) poneko sebi predstavljao koliko može da bude spor i mučan prelaz iz socijalizma u tržišnu ekonomiju. Koliko duboko će da zahvati politički i ekonomski život zemlje, naroda kao celine i svakog pojedinca posebno...” (Ivanova 2000:149). “Masovne likvidacije i stečajni poduzeća” (Kerovec 2001:271; usp. Vojnić 2000:25) u okviru tih su promjena ostavili bez posla oko 500.000 radnika<sup>5</sup>, a okolnosti na tržištu rada bile su od 1991. do 1995. godine dodatno dramatzirane ratnim uvjetima.<sup>6</sup>

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naslovi, poput: “Sve teže do radnog mjesta” (*Dubrava – list radnih ljudi i građana općine Dubrava*, br. 58, II, travanj, 1983., str. 3) s podacima ondašnjeg USIZ-a za zapošljavanje koji broji nešto više od 15 tisuća nezaposlenih u Zagrebu.

<sup>4</sup> Izvor: *Prijedlog Izvješća o radu za razdoblje 1996. – 2000. godine Sindikata zaposlenih u poljoprivredi, prehrambenoj i duhanskoj industriji i vodoprivredi Hrvatske*, 2000., str. 3. <http://www.ppddiv.hr/dokumenti/4kongres/izvjesce.doc> (20. 9. 2010.).

<sup>5</sup> “Bez obzira koji se izvor podataka promatra, tendencija rasta nezaposlenosti je razmjerno snažna. Od početka tranzicije ukupan broj zaposlenih se smanjio za gotovo 500 tisuća.” Izvor: *Strategija razvitka “Hrvatska u 21. stoljeću – makroekonomija”*. Strategija razvitka i Zaključak Vlade RH o donošenju te strategije objavljeni su u *NN 145/2002*.

<sup>6</sup> Rat na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije, od kraja osamdesetih do sredine devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća, na europskoj je razini najdrastičniji i najteži ratni sukob nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata (Dimova 2006:2). Prema podacima i tumačenjima Državne revizije za popis i procjenu ratne štete, izravna ratna šteta u Hrvatskoj uključuje štetu u gospodarstvu, društvenim djelatnostima, štetu na kulturnim, prirodnim i dobrima građana, troškove rata i neodržavanja dobara te štetu u vidu života i zdravlja ljudi u razdoblju od 1990. do 1999. godine. Šteta je, izražena numerički i samo u materijalnim troškovima, iznosila više od 236 milijardi kuna (Perković i Puljiz 2001:231). Dodatno, i u dokumentima vlade RH, poput *Strategije razvitka*, realno se uzimaju u obzir ratne okolnosti, razaranja i oštećenja kao otegotna okolnost hrvatskoga tranzicijskog puta (“Hrvatska je bila zahvaćena ratom proživljavajući gotovo petogodišnju okupaciju trećine svog teritorija”), premda uz jasna i realna iskazivanja kako to nikako nije bila jedina karakteristika prednosti i mana ukupnoga razvojnog puta i hrvatskoga tranzicijskog procesa. Izvor: *Strategija razvitka u razdoblju 2001. – 2015. “Hrvatska u 21. stoljeću – makroekonomija”*, *NN 145/2002*. Na to se jasno kritički osvrće i ekonomist Dragomir Vojnić koji ističe kako “glavni uzroci zastoja nisu ni rat ni posljedica rata, nego greške ekonomske i ukupne politike” [do 2000. godine, op. T. R.] (Vojnić 2000:21).

Kao posljedica previranja iz devedesetih, vrhunac nezaposlenosti na nacionalnoj razini bio je dosegnut krajem 2001. godine, s brojem od 395.141 registriranim<sup>7</sup> nezaposlenim<sup>8</sup>, odnosno približno 10% ukupne hrvatske populacije.<sup>9</sup> Ne čudi stoga da zaposlenici HZZ-a i zagrebačkih centara za socijalnu skrb nezaposlenost iz devedesetih godina pamte i opisuju kao “rijeke nezaposlenih”.<sup>10</sup> Na Grad Zagreb od 1990. godine kontinuirano otpada oko 10% ukupne nezaposlenosti te se porastom nezaposlenosti na nacionalnoj razini proporcionalno povećavala i nezaposlenost u Zagrebu (sa 17.745 nezaposlenih, koliko ih je bilo registrirano 1990. godine, krajem devedesetih je u Zagrebu bio registriran 41.181 nezaposlen).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Nisu svi nezaposleni prijavljeni na Zavod za zapošljavanje. Kako to tumači Zoran Malenica, “uglavnom se radi o građanima koji više godina traže posao pa su izgubili povjerenje u institucije ili su u onoj kategoriji nezaposlenih koji preko Zavoda ne mogu ostvariti nikakva prava” (2007:132).

<sup>8</sup> Prema podacima Hrvatskog zavoda za zapošljavanje, Područna služba Zagreb: [www.hzz.hr](http://www.hzz.hr) (1. 10. 2011.) (usp. Bejaković 1999:122).

<sup>9</sup> Prema popisu stanovnika iz 2001. godine ukupan broj stanovnika je iznosio 4.437.460. Izvor: Državni zavod za statistiku (DZS), [www.dzs.hr](http://www.dzs.hr) (21. 9. 2011.). Ovdje navodim podatke iz popisa 2001. godine jer se odnose na razdoblje otpuštanja o kojima je riječ.

<sup>10</sup> Da bi se tada umanjile goleme gužve na Zavodu za zapošljavanje, dio zaposlenika je, na primjer, organizirano tih godina odlazio na lice mjesta (u poduzeća u stečaju) kako bi u registar nezaposlenih upisali mase otpuštenih radnika. Zaposlenici institucija jednako se sjećaju prepunih hodnika u kojima su rijeke ljudi stajale (mnogi od njih su i sjedili po podovima hodnika), satima iščekujući rješavanje nekih obveznih administrativnih aspekata iznenadnog statusa nezaposlenih. (Iz polustrukturiranih intervjua sa savjetnicima u Hrvatskom zavodu za zapošljavanje u Zagrebu 29. travnja 2010. godine i djelatnicima jednog od gradskih centara za socijalnu skrb 27. siječnja 2012. godine).

<sup>11</sup> Izvor: Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje, Područna služba Zagreb, <http://www.hzz.hr/default.aspx?id=7567> (30. 3. 2011.).

## O ISTRAŽIVANJU

Zaključci i analiza u ovom radu temeljeni su na kvalitativnim podacima i narativnim izvorima prikupljenima u okviru doktorskog istraživanja na temu obitelji, nezaposlenosti i strategija preživljavanja.<sup>12</sup> U ovom se radu uže tematski fokusiram na medijske i razgovorno-kolokvijalne reprezentacije nezaposlenosti. U radu ću, kroz analizu diskursa, promišljati diskurzivne elemente, naracije i perpetuirajuće metaforičke

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<sup>12</sup> Doktorska disertacija o obitelji, nezaposlenosti i strategijama preživljavanja obranjena je 2012. godine pri Odsjeku za etnologiju i kulturnu antropologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, pod mentorstvom nasl. prof. dr. sc. Jasne Čapo Žmegač. Istraživanje je bilo zasnovano na nekoliko istraživačkih principa. U istraživanju nezaposlenosti to svakako nisu jedini mogući principi. Moglo se slijediti i neki drugi, na primjer istraživati radnike jednog poduzeća koje je devedesetih godina restrukturirano i koje je kao takvo do danas nastavilo s radom, ali s reduciranom radnom snagom (*etnologija poduzeća*). Bilo je zasnovano na principu teritorijalnosti, tj. postavljeno je u određene prostorne okvire (izabranoga naselja) te na principu praćenja logike i funkcioniranja zajednice, tj. socijalnih mreža opletenih oko pojedinca. Pojedinci koji na određenom fizičkom prostoru (u naselju) žive, rade i svakodnevno komuniciraju jedni s drugima, obavljaju svoje zadatke, poslove i namiruju svoje svakodnevne potrebe, imaju određeno *dijeljeno iskustvo*, što predstavlja relevantno kontekstualno polazište etnološkoga i kulturnoantropološkog istraživanja. Za istraživački postupak to ne znači tek zacrtavanje određenih fizičkih koordinata za istraživanje, već i nužnu sociokulturnu i historijsku kontekstualizaciju istraživane teme i istraživanih, tj. određenoga *društvenog prostora* (usp. Gulin Zrnić 2009; Škrbić Alempijević i Rubić, prihvaćeno za objavu). Dodatno, taj okvir ne funkcionira u vakuumu, već u istraživačkom smislu zahtijeva širu kontekstualizaciju s obzirom na to da je i dio raznih širih socijalnih, ekonomskih, društvenih i političkih procesa. Širi kontekst su i (post)socijalizam i hrvatsko dvadesetljetno tranzicijsko iskustvo. S tim u svezi, okvir jednoga stambenog naselja u mnogočemu je “propustan” i fluidan te se i samo istraživanje umnogočemu širilo izvan okvira naselja, najmanje na razini da se svakodnevne aktivnosti istraživanih ne odvijaju isključivo unutar naselja, već se oslanjaju na socijalnu, karitativnu i drugu infrastrukturu na nivou čitavoga grada. Ipak, brojni se kontakti i korisna poznanstva (razmjene informacija, iskustava te mreže podrške i solidarnosti) ostvaruju mahom u neposrednoj blizini stanovanja nezaposlenih i lokalno, a važan su element njihova preživljavanja, kako u socijalnom, tako i ekonomskom smislu. Na taj način okvir jednoga naselja (*kvarta*) u istraživačkom smislu ipak nije disfunkcionalan, niti irelevantan (usp. Gulin Zrnić 2009). Istraživanje je provedeno lančanim pronalaženjem sugovornika, upućivanjem kazivača jednih na druge, kao “spontaniji” istraživački princip kojim bi se razotkrivali rasteri poznanstava i društvenih odnosa opletenih oko pojedinca, uže obitelji i/ili pojedinih članova kućanstva, što je istraživanje, kako je spomenuto, nerijetko vodilo izvan naselja.

razine pripovijedanja o nezaposlenosti, nezaposlenima i o neformalnoj ekonomiji, a na osnovi podataka prikupljenih iz intervjua, promatranja sa sudjelovanjem te recentnih medijskih napisa o nezaposlenosti.

Etnološko i kulturnoantropološko istraživanje provedeno je od 2008. do 2011. godine u više navrata u jednome<sup>13</sup> zagrebačkom naselju s oko 10.000 stanovnika. Istraživanje nije provedeno među *svim* nezaposlenima

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<sup>13</sup> U svrhu zaštite sugovornika te s obzirom na karakter istraživane teme, ne iznosim niti implicitno sugeriram o kojem je naselju riječ, a ne donosim niti imena sugovornika. Ipak, neke karakteristike naselja u kojemu se istraživalo (a koje su bitne za kontekstualizaciju) u radu su predstavljene. Ipak, kako je šira i uža zagrebačka periferija oblikovana nizom naselja sličnih karakteristika, ne može se otkriti o kojem je naselju riječ.

Naselje u kojem je vršeno istraživanje nikad nije bilo dijelom određenoga projekta izgradnje i gradogradnje, kao unaprijed definirano i planirano stambeno naselje, kako je to, na primjer, kakva radnička četvrt ciljano građena za stambene potrebe radnika (usp. Kremenšek 1970), ili naselja koja su izgrađena kao dio velikih ambicioznih poslijeratnih urbanističkih projekata na području južnog dijela Zagreba (usp. Gulin Zrnić 2009). Za razliku od urbanistički definiranoga prekosavskog južnog dijela grada, koji se, u skladu s ondašnjim međunarodno priznatim standardima urbanizma i stambene gradnje, planirao i oblikovao na temelju urbanističkog plana, najveći dio istočne i zapadne periferije Zagreba, a tako i naselje u kojem je provedeno ovo istraživanje, nastajao je prema načelu individualne, privatne i bespravne stambene izgradnje manjih obiteljskih kuća, u početku prizemnica, kasnije katnica. Takve su se stihijske, bespravne, individualne izgradnje u raznim dijelovima Zagreba, kao i u mnogim drugim gradovima diljem prostora bivše SFRJ, odvijale mahom zato što je formalni stambeni sektor bio kontinuirano iznimno deficitaran, čak i onda kada je bio u najvećoj ekspanziji (Hutinec 1971:21; Puljiz 1977:85). Premda je prva asocijacija na socijalizam često koncepcija planirane stanogradnje, stanova i "stanarskog prava", a ne kuća i privatnoga vlasništva, iako je ono i tada imalo jednak statistički udio, prema percepciji (koja je dakako pretjerana, ali je ilustrativna) jednog dijela mojih sugovornika iz ovog istraživanja, "90% današnjega Zagreba izgrađeno je na ovaj način", od šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća do danas: bespravno, na razini pojedinačnih graditeljskih inicijativa i neformalnih mreža pomoći u izgradnji manjih obiteljskih kuća. Sve do danas najveći je dio naselja ostao u tome bespravnom građevinskom statusu, osim zgrada koje su izgrađene prije 15. veljače 1968. godine, kada su novoizgrađene kuće u jednom trenutku legalizirane automatizmom upravo s obzirom na tadašnji velik broj takvih izgradnji te golem daljnji priljev stanovništva u gradove. Gradnja obiteljskih kuća tekla je paralelno s procesom nečijega formalnog zapošljavanja u socijalizmu. Moji sugovornici, današnji nezaposleni, godinama su, još od djetinjstva, sudjelovali u izgradnji obiteljske kuće. Bili su djeca kada su njihovi roditelji prvi ulazili na socijalističko tržište rada u ekspanziji, pedesetih i šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća. Izgradnja kuće bila je, i još uvijek jest, višedestljetni, višegeneracijski obiteljski "projekt", a ujedno i primjer iznimnog snalaženja obitelji i pojedinaca u okrilju sfere neformalnoga i zakonom nedopuštenoga.

u naselju, već je odabrana uža skupina nezaposlenih, determinirana prije svega generacijskim karakteristikama, kao i specifičnim iskustvom nezaposlenosti: to nisu nezaposleni koji su to “oduvijek”.<sup>14</sup> To su muškarci i žene koji danas imaju između 50 i 65 godina, a koji su formalno zaposlenje izgubili u svojim četrdesetima, kada su kao “tehnološki višak” početkom devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća prisilno izmješteni s ondašnjega formalnog tržišta rada. Oni dakle posjeduju i iskustvo nezaposlenosti i formalne zaposlenosti.<sup>15</sup> U fokusu istraživačkog interesa bile su, u širem

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Premda je izgradnja u najvećoj mjeri počivala “na leđima” prve generacije doseljenih, u smislu obavljanja temeljnih dijelova izgradnje, izgradnja i dogradnja kuća odvija se do danas i preko druge i treće generacije.

<sup>14</sup> Premda nisu bili jedinim sugovornicima u istraživanju, muškarci i žene rođeni krajem četrdesetih i pedesetih godina 20. stoljeća činili su fokusnu skupinu i najveći broj intervjuiranih. Ta je generacija nekadašnjih radnika na Hrvatskom zavodu za zapošljavanje (u daljnjem tekstu: HZZ) kategorizirana kao *Kategorija 50+*, jedna od ugroženih skupina nezaposlenih na formalnom tržištu rada, s izrazito niskim izgledima za ponovno zapošljavanje (usp. Kerovec 2001:268–271). Unatrag dvadesetak godina kriza na hrvatskome tranzicijskom tržištu rada (kontinuirana, izuzmu li se određene naznake oporavka netom prije početka Velike svjetske krize 2008. godine i ponovnoga pojačanja krize zapošljavanja te novih otpuštanja) donijela je opći kontekst ionako teške zapošljivosti, a kod ove generacije nezaposlenih dodatno umanjila motivaciju za aktivnim traženjem formalnog zaposlenja, pored njihovih radnih znanja i vještina već ionako atrofiranih uslijed nezaposlenosti ranijih godina. Dvanaest godina nezaposlen čovjek, danas 57-godišnjak, na svoj se račun, na primjer, u razgovoru bio gorko našalio: “Tko bi mene sad zaposlio? To se sve tako promijenilo u mojoj struci da ja mogu danas samo biti stavljen za jedan radni stol kao izložak u Tehničkom muzeju! Da djeca tamo dolaze i da me gledaju kako ja crtam nacрте s onim velikim drvenim ravnalima i onim rapidografima, kako sam to nekad u firmi radio, i da im govore: ‘Vidite, djeco, ovako su se nekad izrađivali građevinski nacрте, a danas se sve to radi kompjuterima.’” Da ovakve percepcije vlastitoga nepovoljnog položaja na aktualnom tržištu rada nisu neutemeljene, govore nam podaci različitih kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih studija i izvješća. Na primjer u UNDP-ovu Izvješću o društvenom razvoju za Hrvatsku 2006. godine pod naslovom *Neumreženi: Lica socijalne isključenosti u Hrvatskoj* o dugotrajno nezaposlenima se govori kao o onima koji su sočeni “s povećanim rizikom pada u neimaštinu, a zastarijevanje ljudskog kapitala uslijed nezaposlenosti i slaba povezanost s tržištem rada jačaju začarani krug isključenosti i siromaštva” (Bayley i Gorančić-Lazetić 2006:26).

<sup>15</sup> Nakon gubitka radnog mjesta, od početka hrvatske državne samostalnosti, nezaposlenost kod mnogih od tih bivših radnika traje čak dvadeset godina, onoliko dugo koliko je osoba u socijalizmu, prije masovnih otpuštanja, bila zaposlena.



smislu, njihove “strategije preživljavanja”, s temeljnim istraživačkim pitanjem: na koji su način svoju formalnu nezaposlenost, koja kod mnogih traje gotovo dva desetljeća, osobe živjele i “preživjele”? Koji su to ključni socioekonomski mehanizmi kao glavni “amortizeri” nevolje nezaposlenosti? U užem smislu, i za potrebe ovoga rada, fokus je bio na naracijama o nezaposlenosti i neformalnoj ekonomiji.

## NEFORMALNA EKONOMIJA

Premda mnogi od intervjuiranih nezaposlenih kažu kako, kao dugotrajno nezaposleni i otkako su u svojim četrdesetima (mnogi u kontinuitetu) ostali bez posla, uglavnom “čekaju” godine starosti koje su u hrvatskome mirovinskom sustavu potrebne za ostvarivanje prava na starosnu mirovinu (65 godina), njihova se svakodnevnica ne svodi samo na “čekanje”. Kako je to primijetio i sociolog Zoran Malenica: “nerealno je vjerovati da nezaposlen muškarac (žena) može čekati pet, osam ili čak deset godina na zaposlenje, a da za to vrijeme nigdje ne radi. To bi mogao (mogla) jedino u slučaju da potječe iz ekonomski dobro situirane obitelji. Međutim, slično kao i umirovljenik koji ima vrlo nisku mirovinu, a zdravstveno je sposoban za rad, i on (ona) ulazi u svijet sive ekonomije i pokušava ostvariti kakve-takve dodatne prihode kako bi mogao (mogla) preživjeti” (2007:132).

Pojam “neformalna ekonomija” odnosi se na niz aktivnosti koje nisu dijelom registriranoga, formalnog tržišta rada. Prema zakonskim propisima u Republici Hrvatskoj, obveznik poreza na dohodak i registriranja svojih prihoda “jest fizička osoba koja ostvaruje dohodak”.<sup>16</sup> Svako zaobilaženje registracije prihoda i njegova oporezivanja (na primjer raznim privatnim, neregistriranim transferima novca), smatra se dijelom aktivnosti u sferi neformalne ekonomije i u tom je smislu protuzakonita. U znanstvenoj literaturi koncept označava paralelan sustav privređivanja koji funkcionira mimo zakonski utemeljenoga i organiziranoga formalnog tržišta rada.

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<sup>16</sup> Izvor: Godišnja prijava poreza na dohodak za 2010. godinu, Primjeri popunjavanja obrasca DOH-a, Republika Hrvatska, Ministarstvo financija, Porezna uprava, Zagreb, siječanj 2011.

Pojavljuje se u različitim sintagmama: “siva” ekonomija, skrivena ekonomija, paralelna ekonomija, neformalan rad, neformalna zaposlenost, neformalno zaposlenje, neslužbeni rad, neslužbeno gospodarstvo, gospodarstvo “u sjeni” i skriveno gospodarstvo.

Prema američkome kulturnom antropologu Williamu Havilandu, neformalna je ekonomija

“sustav u kojem proizvođači roba i usluga osiguravaju artikle koji se mogu prodati, a iz različitih razloga izmiču popisu (enumeraciji), propisu ili drugoj vrsti javnog nadzora ili revizije. Ona može obuhvaćati gotovo sve: poljoprivredne proizvode, (...), popravke i gradnju, prosjačenje, uličnu prodaju, izvođenje obrednih usluga, posuđivanje novca...” (Haviland 2004:198).

Neformalna je ekonomija prisutna u svim društvima i na svim društvenim razinama. Pojavljuje se među najsiromašnijima (Hart 1973) i među elitnim skupinama (usp. Sampson 2002:46). Polazišna pozicija manjka ili viška novčanih resursa nije ključan kriterij za (ne)participaciju pojedinca ili grupe u sferi neformalne ekonomije. Ta sfera nipošto ne zahvaća isključivo, kako bi se na prvoj razini moglo pomisliti, velike kriminalne miljee. Ona oblikuje umnogome i životnu svakodnevicu “običnih” ljudi.

“Različite metode procjene daju različite rezultate” (Ott 2002:1) – uglavnom je znanstveni komentar na pokušaj i doseg zadatka “izmjere” neformalne ekonomije. Prema pojedinim načinima izmjere<sup>17</sup> procjene variraju od 15 do 37% hrvatskoga bruto domaćeg proizvoda (BDP) (ibid.)<sup>18</sup>, s neznatnim godišnjim porastima i smanjenjima (Bićanić i Ott 1997; Ott

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<sup>17</sup> To je nekoliko statističkih metoda izmjere: metoda neusklađenosti nacionalnih računa, Eurostat metoda i procjene porezne evazije, monetarne metode, procjena po pojedinim djelatnostima i metoda potrošnje električne energije (usp. Zrinščak 1997; Bićanić i Ott 1997; Ott 2002). Usp. također s međunarodnim dokumentima i preporukama za izmjeru razmjera neformalnog sektora u nacionalnoj ekonomiji, na službenim stranicama Svjetske banke: <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/1f3aa35cab9dea4f85256a77004e4ef4/0e1cfcae7d9efa4185256a940073f4e5?OpenDocument> (21. 10. 2011.).

<sup>18</sup> U *Strategiji razvitka u razdoblju 2001. – 2015. “Hrvatska u 21. stoljeću – makroekonomija”*, službenom dokumentu Vlade RH, NN 145/2002, spominje se procjena od 25% BDP-a.

2002:2).<sup>19</sup> Riječju, procjenjuje se “da gotovo svaki drugi nezaposleni obavlja neke poslove i ostvaruje određene prihode kako bi preživio do dobivanja stalnog i legalnog posla.” (Malenica 2007:132).

Kulturnom insajderu te su prakse i u Hrvatskoj općepoznate i nisu novost. Kako je, prema kazivanjima, u socijalizmu prijedpodnevni rad na formalnome radnom mjestu bio popraćen poslijepodnevni radom “u fušu” (Rubić 2013a, 2013b), tako je i danas teško zamisliti realizaciju nekih poslova na način drukčiji od “neformalnoga” (bez poreznog evidentiranja transfera novca) te postoji svojevrsna “naviknutost” na obavljanje tih poslova i usluga u sferi neformalnosti (to su razne vrste usluga poput poslova čišćenja, majstorskih popravaka i građevinskih radova, kupovina voća i povrća i sl.).

Tim aktivnostima vlada nekoliko logika. Između ostalih, jedna je svakako utemeljena na ekonomskoj racionalizaciji – uštedi i/ili zaradi, dok je druga (etnologima i kulturnim antropolozima zanimljivija) sadržana u simboličkom otporu pojedinca prema institucijama i središtima vlasti i moći. Treća pak (također sociokulturološki relevantna) sadržana je u kreiranju, podržavanju i/ili perpetuiranju logike “familijarnosti” i “korisnog poznanstva”, naročito u toj sferi – neformalne ekonomije. Upravo na osnovi ove posljednje, pojedinac izgrađuje i jača svoj simbolički i društveni kapital te *status*. Da netko ima “svoju” kumicu, “svojev” vodoinstalatera ili automehaničara u socijalnom je i simboličkom smislu vrlo važno. Pojedinac ne ide za tim da “dokaže” ili “propita” valjanost vlastitoga izbora – da se i kod drugih kumica povrće i voće isproba te da se na osnovi provjere i komparacije postavi (re)valorizacija. Ono što je zadovoljeno i bez te provjere, dakle bez obzira na “stvarnu” utemeljenost predodžbe o pozitivnim aspektima “korisnog” poznanstva, jest predodžba pojedinca da je putem tog poznanstva ostvario za sebe neku korist, nešto za što pretpostavlja da bez tog poznanstva ne bi bilo ostvareno (na primjer, jeftinija cijena neke usluge, bolji izbor voća i povrća, predaniji i brži rad majstora na popravljanju automobila, manja mogućnost “prijevare” i “podmetanja” kod trgovca i sl.). Primjećuje se i pozitivno vrednovanje “sposobnih” pojedinaca koji znaju

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<sup>19</sup> Velik dio rezultata istraživanja objavljen je i u časopisu *Financijska teorija i praksa* 21 (1–2, 5–6) Instituta za javne financije (IFJ) iz 1997. godine.

dogovoriti neformalne transakcije, a koje čak i ne moraju biti zasnovane na izravnom transferu novca. Naime, sugovornici su redovito poimence navodili znane pojedince iz neposrednog okruženja (ulica, naselje) za koje bi isticali kako imaju takve posebne “vještine” ili “dar” da u sferi neformalne ekonomije zaobiđu zakonske odredbe, pregovaraju s lokalnim autoritetima u svoju korist, dogovore “uslugu za uslugu” i sl.: “Ne zna se svako tako snać. To moraš znat” ili “Da, to oni imaju – moć govora.”

Moj je interes u ovome radu usmjeren na kvalitativne i diskurzivne značajke i dimenzije nezaposlenosti i neformalne ekonomije (usp. Ott 2002). Zanimanje za dublje propitivanje tih karakteristika potaknula su prije svega vrlo otvorena kazivanja o participaciji u sferi neformalne ekonomije već u inicijalnoj fazi terenskog istraživanja, kao i sveprisutno verbalno legitimiziranje tih aktivnosti u iskazima poput: “Preživljava se na svakakve načine, snalazim se” ili “Moraš se snać”.

Aktivnosti u sferi neformalne ekonomije sudionici su interpretirali i prezentirali prije svega kroz ekonomsku paradigmu kao egzistencijalnu “nužnost” u nedostatku ponuda na formalnom tržištu rada. Međutim, njihove motivacije i racionalizacije za participaciju na neformalnom tržištu rada ne slijede isključivo ekonomsku logiku i nisu samo u vezi s nedostatnom ponudom zaposlenja na formalnom tržištu rada. Niz je implicitnih motivacija za participaciju u toj sferi ekonomije, kao i određena “naviknutost”. Sveprisutna je “kolektivna racionalizacija” (Macura 2005:8), odnosno “društvena legitimizacija” (Štulhofer 2000) rada “na crno”. Legitimizacija aktivnosti u sferi neformalnog tržišta rada je obrazac, premda povezana sa sviješću o izostanku zakonskog legitimiteta tih praksi. Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, slijedeći suvremena istraživanja odnosa prema vlasti i zakonu u mediteranskim društvima, pojasnila je sredinom devedesetih godina tu polarizaciju (legitimno – legalno), kao i odnos “običnih” ljudi prema tim kategorijama:

“Jedna od bitnih značajki nepovjerenja u vlast dvoznačnost je legalnosti i legitimnosti, odnosno sukob među njima. (...) Riječ je o odnosu pravne države (legalnost) i dominantnog poimanja ‘pravde’ (legitimnost). Ono što je (...) legalno, tj. dio pravnoga sustava, pojedinac ili neka više ili manje moćna skupina ne moraju smatrati

‘pravednim’ ili opravdanim, čitaj – legitimnim. I obrnuto, postupci koje pojedini slojevi (...) smatraju legitimnim i apsolutno opravdanim ili barem prihvatljivima, razumljivima, nerijetko su u sukobu s pravnom državom.” (Rihtman-Auguštin 1996:60)

Neformalna ekonomija nema svoje uporište u zakonu jer se svodi (na primjer u vidu porezne evazije) na zaobilaženje formalno utvrđenih i reguliranih sustava. Međutim, ona ima svoj neprikosnoven *društveni legitimitet* (Štulhofer 2000). Poima se kao legitimno “snalaženje” pojedinca unutar sustava i mimo formalnih sustava, a u svrhu i s ciljem “preživljavanja” na pojedinačnoj razini. U tom se smislu neformalna ekonomija društveno odobrava.<sup>20</sup> Taj bi koncept značenjski odgovarao onome koji u etnološkoj literaturi, “na razini stručnog označavanja”, uglavnom poznajemo kao “narodno pravo” ili “običajno pravo” (Rihtman-Auguštin 1984:52; Čulinović-Konstantinović 1984), a koji se, prema pojedinim pravnim shvaćanjima (s kojim nas upoznaje etnologinja Vesna Čulinović-Konstantinović), odnosi na nepisane norme, “niz (...) nepisanih pravnih regulativa koji su imali: opću primjenu, dugotrajno vršenje, ”privrženost (...) i dobrovoljno njegovo prihvaćanje (...)”<sup>21</sup>, podesnost za dotičnu zajednicu (...) pa su na temelju toga bili sankcionirani od države...” (ibid. 52). To odgovara karakteristikama funkcioniranja neformalne ekonomije, kao i teorijsko-konceptualnom okviru koji je u domaćoj etnologiji predstavila i zagovarala

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<sup>20</sup> Tek nam kvalitativni podaci, oni koji se odnose na obje sfere – i formalnoga i neformalnoga tržišta rada, i socijalističkoga i postsocijalističkoga, otkrivaju ove “skrivenne” karakteristike na primjer socijalističkog tržišta rada, njegove dinamike i proturječnosti (Rubić 2013b). Između ostalog – da je socijalizam u svojoj izvedbi, ako ne u namjeri i ideji, bio “fleksibilan” sustav, što nije prva asocijacija na razini javne percepcije socijalizma (ibid.), također i vrlo propulzivan na različitim razinama, što potvrđuje niz pojedinačnih direktnih iskustava dogovornih situacija s predstavnicima institucija, na primjer (lokalne) vlasti s kojima bi se usmenim, neformalnim putem (mitom i razmjenom usluga) rješavalo niz ne malih, već životno važnih pitanja poput zaposlenja i stanovanja. O tomu nema dovoljno empirijskih, znanstvenih saznanja, uvjetno rečeno – “dokaza”. Međutim, percepcija o neformalnoj ekonomiji uglavnom je kontinuirano takva da *to svi rade*. Na razini svakodnevne komunikacije, dodatno, te se aktivnosti (moralno, etički, pravno itd.) ne propituju, a uvelike ih se društveno (čak najčešće niti pravno) ne sankcionira.

<sup>21</sup> Ovdje Čulinović-Konstantinović citira pravnu literaturu, točnije rad pravnika B. Perića o običajnom pravu iz 1957. godine.

osamdesetih godina 20. stoljeća D. Rihtman-Auguštin, pišući o zadrugama: dvostrukost svih fenomena i pojava, koja nalaže zastupljenost dviju razina svakoga etnološkog istraživanja: “ostvareni” i “zamišljeni” red, “struktura mišljenja” i “objektivna stvarnost” (Rihtman-Auguštin 1984:13).<sup>22</sup>

U svakom slučaju, oni koji participiraju u sferi neformalne ekonomije – nisu neinformirani i neupućeni pojedinci. Svijest o tomu da te aktivnosti nemaju svoje legalno, zakonsko uporište implicirana je kod njih u jeziku redovitom uporabom deminutiva i rečeničnim formulacijama kojima je cilj trivijalizirati materijalnu isplativost tih aktivnosti, poput: “Da, *s vremena na vrijeme* uleti *kakav-takav poslič*” ili “Zaradim si time još *koju kunicu*” (istaknula T. R.).

Da su postupci koji počivaju na sistemu prijevare i nadmudrivanja sustava (iznošenje sirovina iz formalnog sektora u kojemu su bili zaposleni) dugoročno gledano kontraproduktivni, jer se time reže “grana na kojoj se sjedi”, to je izvjesno. Ipak, u zapažanjima mojih sugovornika to je potpuno irelevantno. Individualan “osjećaj odgovornosti” prema posljedicama porezne evazije na nacionalnom planu (utjecaj neformalne ekonomije na državni proračun<sup>23</sup>) nije uopće impuls pojedincu za odustajanje od sudjelovanja u sferi neformalne ekonomije (usp. Štulhofer 2000). Postoje kognitivni mehanizmi kojima se te aktivnosti legitimiziraju. Jedan od njih je poimanje nečije participacije u tim aktivnostima kao “stabilizatora društvene pravde”. Ovo je osnova perzistentnosti i sveprisutnosti (ibid.; Šakić 1999) aktivnosti u sferi neformalne ekonomije. Dio toga je i uočena karakteristika naracija o tim aktivnostima: kada pojedinci govore o vlastitim aktivnostima koje su ustvari bile prijevera sustava i poduzeća u kojemu su bili zaposleni: one su redovito dio otvorenih i “lijepih” sjećanja na razdoblje kada su radili u poduzeću.

Konačno, visina zarade koja se odnosi na aktivnosti u sferi neformalne ekonomije u socijalizmu, kao i danas, u naracijama varira.

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<sup>22</sup> Taj se pristup naslanja na strukturalizam Claudea Lévi-Straussa, odnosno tezu o potrebi uvođenja opozicije u etnološka istraživanja, one “između *modela i stvarnosti*” (Lévi-Strauss 1989:315).

<sup>23</sup> Prema nekim procjenama, udio neformalne ekonomije u BDP-u Republike Hrvatske iznosio je 1995. godine najmanje 25% (Ott 1997; usp. Karajić 2002:280), a od toga bi otprilike bilo 200.000 nezaposlenih u toj sferi ekonomije (Malenica 2007:132).

Od toga *da se preživi*, kako to najčešće sugeriraju izvori, do toga da se podigne kat kuće, kupi *bolji* automobil, otiđe na ljetovanje i sl. Rad “na crno” (*fuš*) je i u socijalizmu bio uobičajena osnova za *bolje* funkcioniranje različitih razina socijalnoga i ekonomskog života jedne obitelji i uobičajena strategija nošenja s financijskom oskudicom i manjkom. No, nije bio *samo* to. Mnogi elementi neformalne ekonomije nemaju isključivo ekonomsku, već dominantnu simboličku važnost, o čemu ćemo reći više u nastavku rada koji se odnosi na razne diskurzivne elemente koji se tiču “običnih ljudi”, “strategija preživljavanja” i sl.

## MEDIJI O NEZAPOSLENOSTI

Pojam nezaposlenosti i u medijskome je i u razgovornom diskursu teško odvojiti od uvriježenog poimanja nezaposlenosti – kao degradacije i “tužne” priče. To je eksplicirano i nedavnim novinarskim videoprilogom objavljenim na jednome od domaćih internetskih portala, kojim su predstavljeni nezaposleni različitih generacija u odgovaranju na novinarova pitanja o motivacijama za prijavu na natječaj za popisivače stanovništva 2011. godine. Tugaljiva melodija kao zvučna kulisa priloga naslovljenog “Tužne priče nezaposlenih koji žele ‘u popisivače’” potvrdila je upravo takvo uvriježeno poimanje nezaposlenosti.<sup>24</sup>

U Hrvatskoj je prisutan opći negativan stav prema tranzicijskom procesu (Štulhofer 2000; Čengić i Rogić 1999; Šakić 1999), koji se, između ostaloga, oblikovao i manifestirao kroz spomenute predodžbe o “dobitnicima” i “gubitnicima” u tom procesu. Štoviše, jedno je domaće sociološko istraživanje, krajem devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća, pokazalo kako većina (riječ je o dvije trećine ispitanika u sklopu tog istraživanja) ima jasnu predodžbu i o strukturi tranzicijskih “dobitnika” i “gubitnika”.<sup>25</sup> Devedesetih je godina nova dinamika društvene stratifikacije – s jedne strane

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<sup>24</sup> Izvor: <http://www.srp.hr/?p=519> (17. 3. 2011.).

<sup>25</sup> “Dobitnici” su: članovi Hrvatske demokratske zajednice (HDZ), vodeće političke stranke u devedesetima, menadžeri privatiziranih poduzeća, političari i menadžeri državnih poduzeća; a “gubitnici”: poljoprivrednici, radnici privatiziranih poduzeća, stručnjaci i radnici u državnim poduzećima (Štulhofer 2000:98).

novonastali sloj financijskih društvenih elita s ekonomskom i političkom moći, a s druge brojni nezaposleni i osiromašeni (usp. Škovierová 2009:223) – stvorila dijeljeno uvjerenje i predodžbu o tranzicijskom “gubitništvu” većine. To se “gubitništvo” poima kao rezultat različitih faktora (sporst gospodarskog oporavka, korupcija, neučinkovitost pravosudnoga sustava, pretvorba i privatizacija, bogaćenje manjine i osiromašenje većine te visoka nezaposlenost). Predodžbe o hrvatskom poduzetništvu formirale su se uglavnom oko pejorativnih kategorija: nepoštenje i politički klijentelizam, a o jamstvu uspjeha i napredovanja veze, poznanstvo, novac i snalažljivost (Štulhofer i Karajić 1997; usp. Karajić 2002:274).

Kada sam se krajem 2007. godine počinjala zanimati za nezaposlenost koja se mnogima dogodila u kontekstu tranzicijskih promjena, tema nezaposlenosti u medijima se uopće nije pojavljivala, što je bilo vrlo neobično najmanje na razini već spomenutog podatka da je devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća u Hrvatskoj oko 500.000 ljudi izgubilo svoj posao. U općoj medijskoj i političkoj usmjerenosti na modernizacijske promjene i buduće pristupanju zemlje Europskoj uniji, pa i s višegodišnjim trendom smanjivanja registrirane nezaposlenosti, mediji nisu pisali o nezaposlenima. Međutim, kada su se krajem 2008. godine i u Hrvatskoj počeli osjećati učinci velike svjetske krize, novog vala otpuštanja koji je do danas u Hrvatskoj stvorio više od 100.000 novih nezaposlenih<sup>26</sup>, o tom se fenomenu medijski i politički počelo intenzivnije govoriti i pisati, do te mjere da je 2010. godine nezaposlenost zauzela najvažnije mjesto na naslovnim stranicama dnevnih novina<sup>27</sup> i postala središnjom vijesti domaćih informativnih televizijskih emisija<sup>28</sup>, u kojima je bila okarakterizirana kao “problem broj 1 u državi”.<sup>29</sup> Problem nezaposlenosti se, na primjer, medijski i politički reaktualizirao i “folklorno-prigodničarski”, u okviru predizborne političke kampanje u zimi 2011., kada se na reklamnim veleplakatima (tzv. džambo-plakatima) te u

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<sup>26</sup> Najveći pad ekonomske aktivnosti od osnutka hrvatske države, a uzrokovan svjetskom krizom, zabilježen je u 2009. godini (Lakoš 2010:433).

<sup>27</sup> *Večernji list*, 30. lipnja 2010.

<sup>28</sup> U prilogu središnjeg *Dnevnika Nove TV* pod naslovom “Nezaposlenima nikad teže” objavljen je broj od 319.845 registriranih nezaposlenih, uz popratnu ilustraciju prema kojoj je u Zagrebu svaki 13. stanovnik nezaposlen, a 241 osoba dnevno dobiva otkaz.

<sup>29</sup> *Dnevnik Nove TV*, 5. veljače 2011.



predizbornim programima stranaka i stranačkih koalicija izravno obećavalo rješavanje problema nezaposlenosti i nedostatka radnih mjesta u Hrvatskoj u slučaju izborne pobjede. Jedna od političkih parola bila je: *Mi znamo kako – do više radnih mjesta.*

Međutim, i u tome iznenadnom medijskom zanimanju za nezaposlenost, generacija koja je ostala bez posla propašću nekadašnjih socijalističkih poduzeća, a kojom se bavim u istraživanju, bila je i dalje *zaboravljena*. U kolokvijalnom diskursu ih se i naziva: “izgubljenom”, “žrtvovanom”, “zaboravljenom” generacijom, o čemu će više biti riječi u idućem poglavlju rada. Težište u informiranju o rastućoj nezaposlenosti bilo je ipak i tada isključivo usmjereno na novootpuštene, ali ne i na dugotrajno nezaposlene. Ovi drugi tek su sporadično i posredno spominjani na razini svakodnevne komunikacije, u valu novih otpuštanja, u vidu pokojih općih retoričkih referenci i usporedbi. Tako se na primjer moglo čuti kako *nezaposlenost u Hrvatskoj nije ništa novo* ili pak *zašto odjednom takva pompa oko nezaposlenosti, a kad su ljudi devedesetih dobivali otkaze, nikom ništa.*

## **DISKURS O “ZABORAVLJENOJ”, “IZGUBLJENOJ”, “ŽRTVOVANOJ” GENERACIJI**

Pitanje nezaposlenosti, osim ekonomskih parametara, nosi i svoje sociokulturne, simboličke značajke. Usko je povezano i sa sustavima dominantnih društvenih i individualnih vrijednosti:

“(o)dređeni oblik interpretacije života, kao jedan od konstitutivnih ljudskih odnosa spram osnovnih fenomena ljudske egzistencije (slobode, vlasti, vrednota, običaja, prava, rada, personalnosti, kolektiva, strasti, ljubavi, igre, smrti) ne možemo ignorirati ili zaobići (...) Naime, svi na određeni način doživljavamo i odnosimo se prema ovim fenomenima našeg opstanka, bilo da ga u osnovi preuzimamo iz tradicije ili ga oblikujemo sami” (Skledar 2003:13).

Te društvene vrijednosti iskazane su uvelike u javnom diskursu i naracijama.

Istraživanje vrijednosnih orijentacija i vrijednosnih razina, kako individualnih, tako i grupnih, kakvo sugerira Rihtman-Auguštin u okviru

hrvatske etnologije već šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća, pomaže nam u razumijevanju značenja koja “obični” ljudi pripisuju makroprocesima i vlastitim pozicijama unutar tih procesa.<sup>30</sup> To, između ostaloga, mogu biti i često spominjani motivi “dobitnika” i “gubitnika”, oni koji su istaknut dio naracija o (vlastitoj) nezaposlenosti, kroz koje se (samo)interpretira pozicija nezaposlenoga pojedinca u društvu i koje utječu na odluke, racionalizacije, strategije i prakse.

Srodno predodžbama o “dobitnicima” i “gubitnicima”, postoji još jedna predodžba – o tomu kako je “teret” tranzicijskih promjena (bio) socijalno neproporcionalno “raspoređen”. To se odnosi uvelike na pozicije pojedinca i određenih (na primjer dobnih) skupina na (i prema) formalnom tržištu rada. Fokusna skupina u mojem istraživanju nisu bili *svi* današnji nezaposleni.<sup>31</sup> To su bili oni nezaposleni koji su posao izgubili, kako sami često ističu, “dok su još bili u punoj radnoj snazi”. Upravo je ovo temelj za razumijevanje pozicija “izgubljenosti” i “žrtvovanosti”, kategorija u kojima se o tim bivšim radnicima najčešće govori i u kojima i sebe samopozicioniraju u društvu. Dok su radili, bili su “radnička klasa”<sup>32</sup>, obnašatelji “pretežno manualnih funkcija u industrijskim, građevinskim, prometnim, turističkim, trgovačkim i drugim organizacijama. Velik je broj mojih sugovornika nekad bio upravo na radnim mjestima tih kvalifikacija, čak i onda kada su imali završenu srednju školu (stručna škola ili gimnazija<sup>33</sup>). Nekadašnja je ta “radnička klasa”, kako tumači i Malenica, doživjela

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<sup>30</sup> “Sociokulturna transformacija hrvatskoga društva i kulture očituje se prije svega u transformaciji društvenih vrijednosti koja implicira promjenu motiva djelovanja kod većine pripadnika društva” (Čolić 2008:951). U hrvatskoj je etnologiji istraživanje vrijednosti inaugurirala D. Rihtman-Auguštin još krajem šezdesetih godina. Vrijednosti autorica poima kao “prisutnu dimenziju u ponašanju i odlučivanju” (Rihtman 1967) pa “akcije koje nam se čine neracionalne, gotovo lude, nakon spoznaje vrijednosti pojedinaca i grupe postaju nam zanimljive pa čak i prihvatljive” (Rihtman 1967:3).

<sup>31</sup> Uostalom, već je naznačeno kako nezaposlene i ne tretiram kao homogenu populaciju.

<sup>32</sup> Riječ je o tradicionalnom pojmu radničke klase koja obuhvaća “nekvalificirane, polukvalificirane, kvalificirane i visokokvalificirane radnike” (Malenica 2007:128).

<sup>33</sup> Motiv završene gimnazije nije etnologu i kulturnom antropologu zanemariv. To je motiv koji se uvriježio i kolokvijalno poima kao nešto “neodređeno” pa u tom smislu “beskorisno”. Naime, stalno se može čuti kako si “s gimnazijom *ništa*”. Da bi bio nešto, trebao bi ili nastaviti školovanje, ili NE upisati gimnaziju, već nešto “konkretnije” Ove

“velike promjene početkom devedesetih kako u brojčanom, tako i u socijalno-ekonomskom smislu. Zbog ubrzanog procesa deindustrijalizacije, ukinut je velik broj radnih mjesta koja su popunjavali upravo pripadnici tog sloja (...). Dio bivših radnika otišao je u mirovinu (redovitu ili prijevremenu), a drugi na zavod za zapošljavanje.” (2007:128)

Malenica također isitče kako je s time nestao i čitav niz pogodnosti koje je

“taj sloj otpuštenih radnika (...) imao u socijalizmu: sigurnost radnog mjesta, tendencijski porast životnog standarda, mogućnost dobivanja stana u sklopu modela stambene izgradnje (...) [ne osjetivši] neke prednosti kapitalizma (prosječno viša cijena rada, jaka sindikalna zaštita...). U procesu pretvorbe i privatizacije bivala je često puta žrtva samovolje novih vlasnika i poslodavaca, a gubitak samoupravljačkih prava nije bio nadoknađen primjerenom sindikalnom zaštitom.” (ibid.)

Jedan od sugovornika, u dobi od 58 godina, gotovo dva desetljeća nezaposlen, priča kako je “devedesetih izgubio svoju mladost” i kako mu je “oduzeto 20 godina života”, misleći na svoje godine nezaposlenosti, nakon gubitka formalnog zaposlenja. Te se retrospektivne samopredodžbe nekadašnjega vlastitog radnog kapaciteta u dobi od 40 godina (kada su ti radnici mahom i ostajali bez posla) bitno razlikuju od “službenih” poimanja ove generacije radnika na formalnome postsocijalističkom tržištu rada. Jednom nakon što su u toj dobi ostali bez posla, bitno im je otežan ili onemogućen ponovni ulazak na formalno tržište rada, između ostaloga i zbog toga što se u kontekstu novostvorenih ekonomskih odnosa i potreba te prelaskom na neoliberalno tržišno gospodarstvo nakon socijalizma, radnici u dobi od 40 godina počinju smatrati “starijim” radnicima (Kerovec 2001:271; Šverko et al. 2006:12; usp. Ainsworth 2006). Još je paradoksalnije

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su predodžbe velikim dijelom proistekle iz specifičnih karakteristika nekadašnjega socijalističkog tržišta rada u ekspanziji, koji je ubrzo pokazao “ekstenzivno povećanje zaposlenosti”, ali i “nepovoljnu kvalifikacijsku strukturu zaposlenih”, “uz sve očigledniji manjak stručnih radnika” (Barić i Šešo 2006:35).

to da su, ubrzo nakon otpuštanja, u administrativno-pravnom smislu ti nezaposleni bili “premladi” za prijevremeno umirovljenje (opcija za one kojima je nedostajalo od jedne do pet godina do starosnog umirovljenja ili onoga zasnovanog na punom radnom stažu)<sup>34</sup>, dok su istodobno, u odnosu na novouspostavljene vrijednosti i potrebe na tržištu rada, bili “prestari” za novo zapošljavanje<sup>35</sup>:

“Prestar za zapošljavanje, a premlad za mirovinu [sugovornik misli na punu, starosnu mirovinu]. Da, to ti je, u sredini si nekoj, a to ti je najgore.”<sup>36</sup>

Pozicija “ni na nebu, ni na zemlji” osnova je za razumijevanje predodžaba o “žrtvovanosti” i “izgubljenosti” ove generacije (bivših radnika) u procesu tranzicije u Hrvatskoj. Treba uzeti u obzir da su ovi nekadašnji radnici “nedobrovoljno” postali nezaposleni, a time i socijalno ugroženi (usp. Babić 2007), da bez posla nisu ostajali svojom krivnjom te da su njihova otpuštanja bila dijelom opće situacije tadašnjih masovnih otpuštanja.

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<sup>34</sup> Prema mnogim kazivanjima, prijevremeno umirovljenje u okolnostima masovnih otpuštanja radnika i pokretanja nizova stečajnih postupaka bilo je za radnike “najbezbolnija” administrativno-pravna opcija. To su ostvarili oni radnici koji godinama radnog staža nisu ispunjavali uvjete za starosnu mirovinu, ali su bili blizu tim godinama (usp. Škovierová 2009:223). Prijevremeno umirovljenje početkom devedesetih u bivšoj je Jugoslaviji “više nego bilo gdje drugdje u Srednjoj i Istočnoj Europi služilo za ublažavanje prijelaza na tržišno gospodarstvo” (Guardiancich 2007:89).

<sup>35</sup> Podaci jednoga kvantitativnog istraživanja u Hrvatskoj pokazuju kako osobe starije od 45 godina imaju vjerojatnost ponovnog zapošljavanja ispod 30% (Šverko et al. 2006; usp. Vukelić 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Pozicija “ni na nebu, ni na zemlji”, odnosno percepcija takve pozicije generacije koja je u srednjim godinama (oko 40), čak i unatoč ovom drastičnom iskustvu naglog izmještanja s formalnog tržišta rada nije, međutim, prvi put tako percipirana. Naime, potvrdu o sličnim percepcijama ove generacije nalazimo čak i u književnim tekstovima nastalim u doba socijalizma i relativno stabilnih pozicija na formalnom tržištu rada, barem stabilnijih u odnosu na one kasnije, tranzicijske. Zvonimir Milčec, ugledni zagrebački književnik, 1980. je godine na primjer objavio roman pod naslovom “U Zagrebu prije podne” koji već na naslovnici donosi ovu uvodnu misao o generaciji četrdesetogodišnjaka kojoj je, u vrijeme kada je pisao roman, i sam pripadao: “Rođeni smo u krivo vrijeme: za rat smo bili premladi, za košarku prestari” (Milčec 1980).

## “OBIČNI” LJUDI

Premda godišnje statistike pokazuju kontinuiran rast životnog standarda u Hrvatskoj<sup>37</sup>, predodžbe o vlastitim životnim prilikama i stalnim “potrebama”, koje se ne uspijevaju (s lakoćom) namiriti kod većine sugovornika, stvaraju uvjerenje o vlastitom siromaštvu i “preživljavanju” kao načinu i modelu življenja.<sup>38</sup> To se spominje i kao “paradoks siromaštva” (Bošnjak et. al. 2003:13), u novijemu znanstvenom diskursu kao “subjektivno siromaštvo”<sup>39</sup> (Šućur 2006; Malenica 2001:231), a u medijima popularne kulture i publicistike – “sirotinjski mentalitet”.<sup>40</sup> U svakom slučaju, te “subjektivne percepcije društvene situacije puno su čvršće povezane s obrascima imitacije referentnih grupa nego s realnim financijskim mogućnostima” (Šućur 2006:237).

“Obični” su ljudi iznimno čest diskurzivni, narativni motiv pripovijedanja o (vlastitoj) nezaposlenosti. U ovome poglavlju taj ću motiv, koji je konstrukcija što se uvriježila u razgovornom diskursu, pokušati demitologizirati i dekonstruirati. Premda u radu na više mjesta koristim

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<sup>37</sup> Životni standard mjeri se ekonomskim i socijalnim pokazateljima, različitim metodama, prema, na primjer, raspoloživom dohotku u jednom kućanstvu u jednomjesečnome razdoblju (Bejaković 2005:134). Promatramo li statistički kategorije kao što su plaće i osobna potrošnja, pokazuje se kontinuiran rast pa se, najmanje na toj osnovi, načelno može govoriti i o ukupnom porastu životnoga standarda.

<sup>38</sup> Ova predodžba jednim dijelom ima svoje uporište. Dio domaćih radova iz područja društvenih znanosti pokazuje da opći porast životnog standarda ne pogađa sve skupine društva, da ne amortizira socijalne i ekonomske razlike i isključenosti, već da ih produbljuje (Karajić 2002). Dakle, opća konstatacija o ukupnom porastu životnog standarda u tom smislu ne govori puno o nekim strukturnim značajkama tog porasta.

<sup>39</sup> “Pojam apsolutnog siromaštva odnosi se na određivanje granice siromaštva nezavisno od vremena i prostora i sadržava zadovoljavanje egzistencijalnih ili primarnih potreba pojedinca (smještaj, prehrana i odijevanje). Pod pojmom relativnog [subjektivnog] siromaštva podrazumijeva se određivanje granice siromaštva u konkretnom društvu, u određenom vremenu” (Malenica 2007:231).

<sup>40</sup> Osviještenost o relativnosti u poimanju (vlastitog) siromaštva nalazimo i u publicistici. Sanjin Frlan, mladi hrvatski bogataš koji trenutačno u Hrvatskoj putem interneta reklamira svoju autorsku knjigu o uspješnome i legitimnom (“poštenom”) bogaćenju, pod naslovom “Financijski preporod”, “sirotinjskim mentalitetom” naziva malodušnost i pesimizam većine kao jednu od temeljnih karakteristika hrvatskoga društva u cjelini i prepreka za bogaćenje. Izvor: <http://www.financijskipreporod.com/index.html> (2. 5. 2011.).

ovu sintagmu, ne perpetuiram i njezino “mitsko” značenje (shvaćajući ju zdravo za gotovo), već ju donosim pod navodnim znakovima upravo time podvlačeći njezin, između ostaloga, politizirani potencijal. Zapaža se, naime, kako sintagme poput “običnih” ljudi i “strategije preživljavanja” u razgovornom, a dijelom i političkom<sup>41</sup> diskursu zamagljuju granicu između metafore i stvarnosti. Ta je “zamagljenost” česta upravo u diskursu koji aktivno oblikuje i/ili reproducira neku kolektivnu identifikaciju, na primjer u slučaju mitologizacija vezanih uz konstruiranje i izgradnju nacionalnih identiteta. Tako se, raspravljajući o razlikama i prožimanjima “objektivnih” (povijesnih) činjenica i mitova<sup>42</sup>, britanska antropologinja Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers zalaže za pojam *mythistory*, čime upozorava na stalno preklapanje jedne i druge razine: povijesne (činjenične) i mitske. Prema toj autorici, mitologizacijski potencijal nekog pojma ili pojave može se razotkriti već na nivou narativnih tehnika – ako je riječ o mitologizaciji, neće se oklijevati da se u tu svrhu koriste metafore te da se kazivač identificira s onim o čemu govori. U suprotnom, kazivač će pokušavati uspostaviti “emocionalnu distancu prema objektu o kojem govori” (2002:12–13).

“Obični” su ljudi upravo takav motiv – bez distance. To smo “svi Mi” – ti za koje se podrazumijeva da ne raspolažemo nekim oblikom društvene i ekonomske moći, “žrtve” makroprocessa koji su temelj naše individualne inferiornosti i “nevolje”, što je vrlo srodno retorici klase (usp. Prica 1990). “Obični ljudi” inferiorni su i trpeći (“pjunji”), a ne aktivni sudionici makroprocessa<sup>43</sup>, mitologizirana vrijednosno-klasna kategorija koja je u sebi vrlo heterogena, iako se takvom eksplicitno ne predstavlja. Na što točno mislim, možda će jasnije biti očitam li pojedine istraživačke situacije. Da *sam* među “običnim” ljudima i sama, sugeriralo mi se više puta upravo u, na primjer, inicijalnim fazama intervjuja tim situacijama. Naime, kao uvod u razgovor o pojedinačnim ekonomskim prilikama

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<sup>41</sup> O karakteru političkog jezika u Hrvatskoj kao persuazivnog, odnosno onoga kojemu je cilj uvjeriti nas u ono o čemu se govori i s tim u svezi čestoj uporabi konceptualnih metafora, vidi podrobnije u doktorskom radu u pripremi mr. sc. Nikoline Borčić pod naslovom *Konceptualna metafora i semantička polja u tekstnoj vrsti politički intervju u odnosu na rodne osobitosti*.

<sup>42</sup> Autorica to čini na primjeru albanske kulture, povijesti i identiteta.

<sup>43</sup> Pritom je glavni izvor “nevolje” “običnih” ljudi – država (o čemu će biti više riječi u jednom od idućih poglavlja).

mojih ispitanika razgovor bih započinjala općenitim pitanjima o “situaciji u zemlji”. Upravo u kontekstu takvog početka razgovora, iako sam već u vlastitom predstavljanju otkrila da sam zaposlena, nezaposleni sugovornici su mi, pričajući o općoj, a potom i o vlastitoj ekonomskoj oskudici, u više navrata iskazivali simpatiju, empatiju i vlastito poistovjećivanje s *mojom situacijom*, time me percipirajući, i u svojim iskazima eksplicitno tretirajući, kao “jednu od njih”, iskazujući to u razgovoru najčešće korištenjem plurala. Tako su, na primjer, govorili o “našim” problemima spram represivnih državnih sustava, često rukama pokazujući i na mene i na sebe. Dodatno, na spomen da sam zaposlena na fakultetu, unaprijed su moje zanimanje ocijenili kao ono s nevelikim primanjima, a što me je ponovno legitimiziralo kao “jednu od običnih ljudi”. Kada bi u razgovoru doznali i da imam dvoje male djece, tim bi podatkom, imala sam dojam, dodatno potkrijepili moju pretpostavljenu egzistencijalnu oskudicu i nesigurnost. Participacija, odnosno neparticipacija na formalnom tržištu rada, dakle, nisu ključne i potpuno oprečne kategorije u određivanju nečije (ne)pripadnosti “običnim” ljudima. To se nadovezuje na već ranija, tomu slična zapažanja o *relativnosti, subjektivnosti* siromaštva, tj. da je stabilnost zaposlenja tek jedna od odrednica relativnog siromaštva (Karajić 2002:291). Dakle, u percepciji nečije “pripadnosti” “običnim” ljudima ključno je više (pretpostavljenih) faktora, pri čemu “procjene” u razgovoru sežu od vizualnih do karakternih razina pojedinca, a podlogu imaju u kolektivnim percepcijama o osiromašenju i nevolji, inferiornoj poziciji i viktimizaciji većine – riječju, u sveprisutnome viktimizacijskom diskursu o “običnim ljudima”, raznim skupinama društva, među kojima su i nezaposleni.

### **JESU LI NEZAPOSLENI HOMOGENA POPULACIJA?**

Sredinom 20. stoljeća socijalni je ekonomist Rudolf Bićanić dekonstruirao jedan od općeprihutnih mitova o sudionicima seljačke bune u 16. stoljeću. Istaknuo je kako “sami pobunjeni kmetovi nisu bili neizdiferencirano i bespravno roblje. Tu vulgariziranu i simplificiranu sliku moramo odbaciti i zamijeniti pobližom konkretnom analizom” (Bićanić 1952:11–12), predlagao je Bićanić. Da je i tada bila riječ o heterogenoj populaciji, s bitno različitim imovinskim obilježjima i prilikama, Bićanić je podrobnije dokazao u nastavku:

“Među kmetovima bilo je već u 16. st. i tako različitih, da su neki imali čitavo selište od 12 jutara oranice, a drugi pola, četvrt, pa i osminu selišta. Bilo je i inquilina i subinquilina, bezemljaša. Za izučavanje sudjelovanja kmetova u trgovini ta je pojava od velikog značenja. A kmetovi su se bavili i trgovinom. Neki su se upoznali s tržištem i trgovanjem, vozeći robu svoga gospodina, drugi su trgovali za njega, a opće je poznata pojava da su se kmetovi bavili trgovinom i sami, za vlastiti račun” (ibid. 12).

Na heterogenost pak seoskih zajednica upozorila je etnologinja i kulturna antropologinja Jasna Čapo Žmegač – na raslojenost na “bogate i siromašne obitelji, na obične seljake i na one koji posjeduju neke specifične vještine – obrtnike, trgovce, glazbenike, ljude koji su liječili i sl.” (Čapo Žmegač 1998:275). U svojem magistarskom radu o creskom ribarenju etnolog i kulturni antropolog Goran Pavel Šantek kritički je istaknuo “kako je hrvatska etnologija dugo tretirala hrvatske seljake kao ekonomski homogenu društvenu grupu siromašnih ljudi orijentiranih na proizvodnju za vlastite potrebe i samoodržavanje” (Šantek 2000:2) te je tu koncepciju u svojoj radnji pokušao, kroz ekonomsko-antropološku interpretaciju, složnije promotriti, problematizirati, pa i redefinirati, mahom u odnosu na širi kontekst, na svjetska ekonomska strujanja (Šantek 2000).

Srodno svim spomenutim tumačenjima, a na temelju svojeg istraživanja, također zastupam tezu o *heterogenosti* populacije nezaposlenih. I drugi noviji znanstveni radovi društveno-humanističke provenijencije donose spoznaje o tomu kako nezaposleni u Hrvatskoj nisu homogena i uvijek na isti način i s istim intenzitetom društveno marginalizirana skupina. Potvrđeno je jednom kvalitativnom studijom kako postoje bitne razlike među populacijom nezaposlenih u Hrvatskoj, s obzirom na, na primjer, njihov stupanj siromaštva (usp. Karajić 2002:291), a također je naznačeno kako

“[s] obzirom na to da je u Hrvatskoj strukturni i masovni fenomen, nezaposlenost nije obilježje izoliranih i marginaliziranih skupina već pogađa različite slojeve u društvu. Takva situacija utječe na samopercepciju nezaposlenih, ali i na odnos uže ili šire društvene okoline prema njima. Sami nezaposleni sebe često ne doživljavaju kao manje vrijedne osobe, ne smatraju se izoliranima



ili stigmatiziranima. S druge strane, rijetko se događa da socijalna okolina okrivljuje nezaposlene za stanje u kojem se nalaze.”<sup>44</sup> (Ofak et al. 2006:21; usp. Šverko et al. 2004)

Premda među mojim sugovornicima to nije prva asocijacija na nezaposlene i nezaposlenost, nego jedni druge poimaju uniformnije, jednakije i više “sebi nalik”, samo među nezaposlenima koji su bili obuhvaćeni istraživanjem pokazuju se znatne razlike u socijalnome, materijalnom, imovinskom i obiteljskom statusu.

Također postoji sraz u poimanju nezaposlenosti i nezaposlenih između zaposlenih i nezaposlenih. S jedne strane, onih koji su formalno zaposleni i imaju određeno radno vrijeme u okviru tog zaposlenja, te, s druge, formalno nezaposlenih i/ili aktivnih u sferi neformalne ekonomije. Na primjer, formalno nezaposleni koje sam intervjuirala i pratila u njihovim dnevnim situacijama ne uklapaju se u uvriježene predodžbe o nezaposlenima, mahom one predodžbe koje imaju formalno zaposleni o njima. “Imati vremena napretek” osnovna je etska prosudba nezaposlenih, stereotipizirana predodžba o nezaposlenima koja se razotkriva kako u mnogim strukturiranim kazivanjima i intervjuima, tako i nekim mojim osobnim procjenama njihovih kazivanja, čak i kad taj stav o nezaposlenima nije direktno izrečen. A nezaposleni su ipak “vrlo zaposleni”, što se ne odnosi samo na njihovu uključenost u razne poslove u sferi neformalne ekonomije, već i na “otvorenost” prema nenadanim situacijama (na primjer, iznenadni poziv na kakav honorarni posao). Ta se “otvorenost” i “pripravnost” odnosi i na muškarce i na žene. Naročito su često žene znale, na primjer, više

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<sup>44</sup> Važno je primijetiti kako se ta empatija ipak ne odnosi na sve društvene skupine. Neki su isključeni na razini etniciteta, povijesnih okolnosti i stereotipizacija. Problem heterogenosti populacije nezaposlenih dodatno se usložnjava kada pomislimo na Rome koji su u višestruko nepovoljnijoj (polaznoj) poziciji spram bilo kojih drugih (siromašnih, socijalno isključenih) društvenih skupina. Ne samo kada je riječ o stopi njihova siromaštva (Ofak, et al. 2006:23) jer “romsko siromaštvo često ima ekstremno oblik” (ibid. 24), već i zato što su Romi “jedna (...) od rijetkih skupina koju se najčešće okrivljuje za vlastito siromaštvo” (ibid.). Rome se kontinuirano okrivljuje za njihov težak materijalni i društveni položaj, kao krivce za vlastitu sudbinu. U nastavku rada upozorit ću na sličan animozitetan odnos i nedostatak empatije prema nezaposlenim “Bosancima” (Hrvatima iz Bosne, doseljenima u Hrvatsku u tijeku i neposredno nakon Domovinskog rata).

puta pomicati dogovoreni razgovor za potrebe ovoga istraživanja za ranije ili kasnije jer im je toga jutra primjerice bilo ponuđeno da dođu oprati zavjese, obaviti kupovinu nekoj starijoj osobi o kojoj se brinu ili (ranije nego su prethodno planirale) očistiti ured. Također, iznenadne situacije mnogima nisu bile povezane samo s poslom, već i s organizacijom života u vlastitoj kući. Naime, jedna moja sugovornica od 57 godina, dugotrajno nezaposlena, živi sa slabo pokretnim, pet godina starijim suprugom. K njoj sam navraćala više puta na razgovor. Novi “aranžman” suživota u kući bio je kod nje redovita pojava. Jedanput je u kuću na nekoliko mjeseci bila primila susjedu koja je, zbog unutarobiteljskih sukoba i pravnih sporova, bila u postupku deložacije. Susjeda je kod nje s maloljetnim sinom stanovala besplatno, ali su dijelile troškove kave, cigareta i naizmjenično odlazile po ručak u pučku kuhinju (svaki dan druga), koji bi podijelile. Nekoliko mjeseci poslije, nakon što je susjeda kao samohrana majka riješila stambeno pitanje (s ponosom je prepričavala kako je to uspjela “preko veze”) i dobila na korištenje jedan od tzv. socijalnih stanova od Grada, u svoju je kuću, u jednu od dviju soba, moja sugovornica primila podstanare koji su kod nje živjeli unazad nekoliko mjeseci. Nedugo nakon što su ti podstanari (s dvoje male djece) pronašli nešto veći podstanarski stan u naselju, ta je moja sugovornica primila na stan muškarca beskućnika za kojega su, preko jedne susjede, časne sestre iz reda Majke Terezije (čiji je on bio štíćenik) molile da ga netko prihvati na godinu dana, zbog manjka njihovih smještajnih kapaciteta, a za što su nudile mjesečno pokrivanje troškova u visini od 500 kuna.

Svaki od tih neformalnih “aranžmana” bio je, osim činjenice da je riječ o vrlo brižnoj osobi, kod moje sugovornice i ekonomski motiviran jer bi novi podstanar participirao, prema mogućnostima, u troškovima režija, dnevnih namirnica i/ili cigareta. Razmjena unutar tih “aranžmana” nije bila zasnovana uvijek izravno na novcu, već i na fizičkoj pomoći te reciprocitetu usluga i roba. Na primjer, spomenuti muškarac beskućnik nije mogao adekvatno novčano participirati. Premda su mu časne sestre davale 500 kuna mjesečno koje je trebao proslijediti udomiteljima, često bi taj novac potrošio na pivo i cigarete, lutajući ulicama preko dana. To je bio i osnovni izvor sukoba u kući, ali koji su se bitno ublažavali činjenicom da on ipak redovito pomaže u raščišćavanju dvorišta od krupnog otpada, hranjenju životinja (pasa i mačaka) na dvorištu, u cijepanju drva i loženju

ili u fizičkoj pomoći oko slabo pokretnoga sugovorničina muža, vlasnika kuće. Ovakva i slična razmjena usluga stalno je bila prisutna među mojim sugovornicima. Iako se takvima na prvoj razini čine, te uslužne i robne transakcije nisu potpuno “besplatne”. Naime, one zahtijevaju vrijeme i energiju (za planiranje, društveni angažman – zajedničko pijenje jutarnjih kava, pružanje pomoći), što je jedan od segmenata koji čini populaciju nezaposlenih “vrlo zaposlenom”. Taj je segment često, u nedostatku novca, nezaposlenima neizbježan i najrelevantniji. On je jedna od “strategija preživljavanja”:

“Zapiši! Živi se iz trena u tren. Nema tu plana. Ne možeš ga ni imati. Za budućnost. Kao što i ne razmišljam o prošlosti. Svemu se prilagodim kako mi u tom danu samo dođe.”

Osim društvenog angažmana, vrijeme nezaposlenih uvelike je organizirano i oko ustaljenih dnevnih i mjesečnih administrativnih obveza: redovita mjesečna prijava Zavodu za zapošljavanje (“na burzi”), podizanja mjesečne kartice (“pokaza”) za donedavno besplatan gradski prijevoz, odlaska po ručak u pučku kuhinju, mjesečno javljanje referentici na Centru za socijalni rad, rješavanje zdravstvenih pregleda (zbog narušena zdravlja u nekom segmentu) ili administrativnih poslova pri Hrvatskom zavodu za zapošljavanje – onih koji se odnose na alimentaciju, dječji doplatk ili pak dobivanje jednokratne novčane pomoći od Centra za socijalnu skrb – te odlaska opunomoćenika u poštu za provjeru isplata na tekućem računu banke (na koji sjeda mirovina nekog od uzdržavanih (slabije pokretnih) članova kućanstva) i sl. Zatim – *čekanja u redu*: čekanje u redu za mjesečni pokaz, čekanje u redu za ručak u pučkoj kuhinji. Pored toga, kod mnogih, na dnevnom rasporedu “zadataka” je i, dok se obavljaju neizbježni administrativni poslovi: obilazak uličnih kanti za otpad u potrazi za bocama za koje se prima povratna naknada.

Sve to zahtijeva iznimno mnogo vremena, organizacijskih vještina i radne energije, protivno općeprisutnim percepcijama kako nezaposleni, s obzirom na to da “ne rade”, u danu imaju vremena i energije napretek. Nezaposlena žena od 59 godina koja već više od 10 godina, kao i njezin suprug, radi poslove “na crno” (ona uglavnom čišćenja, dok suprug obavlja raznovrsne poslove – od kućnih popravaka, zaštitarstva do raznošenja

pošiljaka i reklamnih materijala), prisjetila se kako su svojoj kćeri prije nekoliko godina kupili prijenosno računalo koje je tada stajalo njezine dvije mjesečne plaće koje bi zaradila pojačano kroz nekoliko mjeseci radeći “na crno”, u sklopu tada triju poslova:

“Mi [misli na svoju užu obitelj, na sebe, supruga i dvije kćeri] ti se stalno ‘snalazimo’, ali i umoriš se od takvog ‘stila života’. Ali nismo nikad bili da baš nešto nemamo. Na primjer, mi smo ti mlađoj kćeri, sad nedavno, na kraju srednje škole, bili kupili laptop. A oboje nezaposleni! Znam, nije to mala stvar. To je bilo negdje 5.000 kuna za laptop. Provukli smo karticu tekućeg računa na koji sjedaju mirovine i otišli u ogroman minus. Ali mi ti ne trošimo na ovako neke izlaske, na primjer muž nije od onih što stalno izlaze, tu i tamo s dečkima izađe, ali ne često. Dok ja vidim, ovi drugi neki njegovi dečki, oni izlaze svaki dan, a kukaju kako nemaju. Ali, to ti je, što mi je muž stalno u nekim ‘kombinacijama’. Radi ovako, pomalo, gdje ima posla, tu građevinu i to. Ali to te i izmori. Nekad mu i ne plate pa mi je jedne godine bio poklonio rabljen, ali skoro nov auto za rođendan jer mu je taj jedan tip dugovao za to što mu je radio kuću, pa su to nekako iskompenzirali. Ja sam skoro pala u nesvijest! Nisam mogla vjerovati! (...) I onda smo to prodali i opet tako došli do nekog novca.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Sanja Crnković-Pozaić u jednom svojem radu upravo i piše o “radnicima i poduzetnicima iz sjene”, o “nezaposlenima koji rade”, kako to formulira već u naslovu svojega rada. Oslanjajući se na ondašnje postojeće statističke izvore pri HZZ-u u kojem je zaposlena i fokusirajući se na skupinu samozaposlenih, autorica podvlači upravo podvojenost pozicije formalno nezaposlenih i zaposlenih u sferi neformalne ekonomije. Formalno nezaposleni (registrirani pri HZZ-u), kako piše, rade raznovrsne poslove u sferi neformalne ekonomije (i to ne samo kao samozaposleni) i oni su, dakle, ti – “nezaposleni koji rade” (Crnković-Pozaić 2002).

## DISKURS O PREŽIVLJAVANJU

“Objektivni”<sup>46</sup> parametri, “indikatori siromaštva” (Škare 1999), kojima se ekonomske, egzistencijalne prilike pojedinaca i kućanstva mogu “izmjeriti” unificiranim, međunarodno priznatim klasifikacijama, u Hrvatskoj postoje. Tako se zna da je

“osoba ili obitelj (...) izložena ekonomskoj deprivaciji ukoliko su njihova raspoloživa sredstva manja od službeno utvrđenog praga siromaštva, to jest potrebnog praga potrošnje radi zadovoljenja osnovnih životnih potreba” (Škare 1999:280; Malenica 2007:117).

Prag siromaštva za hrvatske prilike prvi put je izračunat “na osnovi ankete o potrošnji kućanstava u 1963. godini” (Škare 1999:283–284), na temelju koje su, primjerenom metodologijom, izvedeni daljnji podaci o ukupnoj novčanoj vrijednosti “potrebnih prihoda obitelji (...) dovoljnih radi osiguranja kvalitetnog života”<sup>47</sup> (Škare 1999:286). “Polazeći od tog određenja nacionalnog praga siromaštva, u Hrvatskoj živi 8,4% siromašnih osoba” (Malenica 2007:117), odnosno “u Hrvatskoj je otprilike svaki

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<sup>46</sup> Marinko Škare, hrvatski socijalni ekonomist, pišući o izvođenju i mjerenju indikatora siromaštva metodologijom kojom se dobiva vrijednost praga siromaštva, tu metodologiju smatra zadovoljavajućom i “objektivnom”, prije svega s obzirom na njezin potencijal da se definira “neophodna potrošnja” koja je nužna za zadovoljenje osnovnih životnih potreba, a izražena u nutritivnim vrijednostima prehrambenih namirnica (Škare 1999:289). Ono što autor (prema mojemu zapažanju, s pravom) smatra nedostatkom ove metodologije jest nedostatan uzimanje u obzir nenovčanih aspekata, koji se odnose na “zadovoljstvo u poslu, uživanje u slobodnom vremenu i drugim, zasad nemjerljivim čimbenicima” (ibid.).

<sup>47</sup> Na osnovi tih izračuna može se pratiti razina potrebnih prihoda (izraženih u dolarima) koja je od 1963. do 1995. bila potrebna na godišnjoj osnovi četveročlanoj obitelji za namirivanje osnovnih životnih potreba (“granica siromaštva u dolarima kupovne moći”) (vidi Škare 1999:285). Isti autor donosi i zanimljiv podatak o tomu da je “najviša razina siromaštva zabilježena (...) u 1972. godini”, a da je “ekspanzivan trend rasta stope siromaštva i broja kućanstava u siromaštvu krajem 1978. godine konstantan sve do kraja 1988. godine” (ibid. 287). “Nagli je porast stope siromaštva [od 1990. do 1995. godine] bio uvjetovan ratnom agresijom i razaranjima te tranzicijskim teškoćama u gospodarstvu s kojima se Republika Hrvatska susrela.” (ibid. 287–288). Prema podacima Državnog zavoda za statistiku (DZS), aktualan službeni prag siromaštva za Hrvatsku unatrag nekoliko godina iznosi oko 20.000 kuna godišnje za samačko kućanstvo, odnosno oko 50.000 kuna za kućanstvo s dvoje odraslih i dvoje djece. Izvor: *Hrvatska u brojkama*, Državni zavod za statistiku, 2010, str. 13.

22. građanin apsolutno, a svaki 10. relativno siromašan” (ibid.). Prag siromaštva i međunarodno priznati standardi izmjere postoje i određenim su parametrima definirani. Ipak, kvantitativni, numerički pokazatelji, pokušaji “izmjere” i kvantificiranja nečijih (nepovoljnih) ekonomskih prilika, nisu jedini mogući okvir promatranja.<sup>48</sup>

Od devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća u Hrvatskoj nailazimo na novouspostavljene ekonomske sustave, odnose i potrebe, na promjene na tržištu rada i visoku formalnu nezaposlenost. U tim su okolnostima brojni nezaposleni, u kontekstu smanjenoga i restrukturiranoga formalnog tržišta rada, u materijalnom i simboličkom smislu, različitim “strategijama preživljavanja” nastojali kompenzirati izostanak formalnog zaposlenja i nedostatak svih “manifestnih” i “latentnih” funkcija zaposlenja koje su prethodno imali. Dakle, riječ je o osobama koje su nekoć bile zaposlene, kojima je zaposlenje dio nekadašnjega neposrednog življenog iskustva, a ne načelna vrijednost ili životni cilj. Kojim su to strategijama ti nekadašnji zaposleni, danas nezaposleni, odgovarali na promjene na makroplanu kako bi, u okolnostima svoje (dugotrajne) nezaposlenosti, unaprijedili, održali i/ili redefinirali svoj ekonomski, društveni i simbolički položaj? U “vrtu metafora” (Gerc 1998:87) koje nalazimo u razgovornom i medijskom diskursu, često se može čuti pitanje: *Kako “naši ljudi” uopće preživljavaju?*, tj. kako su, u kontekstu svoje nezaposlenosti, nezaposleni oblikovali svoju življenu, obiteljsku i “radnu” svakodnevicu? Na tim se (retoričkim) pitanjima temelji sveprisutan kolokvijalni diskurs o “preživljavanju”.

Koncept “strategije preživljavanja” (engl. *survival strategies, strategies of survival, coping strategies*) koristi se u suvremenoj sociokulturnoantropološkoj literaturi (Italo 2004; Bridger i Pine 1998;

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<sup>48</sup> Na primjer, sociolog Zoran Malenica postavljanjem pitanja *Što znači biti siromašan u Hrvatskoj?* sugerira daljnja empirijska istraživanja koja bi se odmaknula od oslanjanja na kolektivne “impresionističke uvide” kojima zasad raspolažemo (Malenica 2007:118), na primjer one prema kojima se, kako je rekao, “hrvatsko društvo (...) polariziralo na malobrojnu elitu bogatih i moćnih te na ogromnu većinu obespravljenih i nemoćnih...” (ibid. 232). S Malenicom se slažem, s tom razlikom da u tim “impresionističkim” uvidima, kako ih Malenica naziva, za razliku od njega vidim potentan istraživački materijal, potencijalan sadržaj i građu, a ne nešto što bi u istraživanjima trebalo biti prevladano.

Procoli 2004; Kideckel 2008), ali ga nalazimo i u suvremenim službenim dokumentima velikih međunarodnih financijskih organizacija, poput Svjetske banke, u okvirima njihovih različitih financijskih fondova (*coping strategies, survival activities*)<sup>49</sup>, kao i u svakodnevnoj uporabi, na razini kolokvijalnoga diskursa.

Sintagma u sebi sadržava pojam koji je neprecizan – “preživljavanje”. Posebice na razini kolokvijalnog diskusa, taj se pojam često koristi bez propitivanja (slično kao i “obični” ljudi o čemu smo govorili nešto ranije), a odnosi se na (samo)percepcije, (samo)vrednovanja, na subjektivne (samo)procjene (ekonomskih) prilika. Pojam “preživljavanja” podrazumijeva nekakvu ekonomsku, egzistencijalnu nedostatnost. Međutim, iako se izravno takvim ne predstavlja, on je najčešće tek – metafora. Riječju, iznimno je širok raspon materijalnih i drugih okolnosti u kojima se netko može nalaziti, a da za sebe kaže kako “preživljava”.<sup>50</sup> U razgovornom diskursu riječ je o akcentiranoj, retoričkoj završnici emocionalno uzavrele rasprave o domaćim dnevno-političkim temama, kod kuće ili u kafiću. Njome se najčešće interpretiraju (vlastite) materijalne prilike kao oskudne, a koje se poimaju kao standard, kao prilike (svakog) “običnog” čovjeka u Hrvatskoj. Istovremeno su u predodžbama i “anomalija” (kako *ne bi trebalo* biti) i “normalitet” (kako uglavnom *jest*). Dodatno, u razgovornom se diskursu uz motiv “preživljavanja” često implicitno provlači i motiv “granice izdržljivosti” i s time povezan “mit o socijalnoj bombi” (Županov 1995:110), na koji se kritički i dekonstrukcijski osvrću sociolozi, kao o “općoj predrasudi” (ibid.) (...) o granici kolektivne izdržljivosti u koju “vjeruje običan ‘mali čovjek’, smatrajući kako ‘srozavanje u bijedu i siromaštvo ne može trajati u beskonačnost, da ono mora naići na neku granicu gdje će se dogoditi ‘big bang’” čime će “položaj malog čovjeka biti bitno poboljšan”

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<sup>49</sup> Izvor: <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/Sectors/ECSPE/2E4EDE543787A0C085256A940073F4E4?OpenDocument> (21. 10. 2011.).

<sup>50</sup> Gdje je i u znanstvenoj literaturi prisutan taj princip nejasnosti i višeznačnosti – u kojem smislu (faktičkom ili metaforičkom) neki autor koristi termin “preživljavanje”. Kada se u literaturi koja se odnosi na ekonomske i društvene strategije u raznim kontekstima (na primjer Ott 2002) neformalna ekonomija eksplicitno pojašnjava kao “pojava potrebna za preživljavanje” (Ott 2002:3), nije potpuno jasno u kojoj mjeri (i je li to uopće slučaj) možda sama autorica (nesvjesno) podliježe narativnim matricama svakodnevnoga diskursa.

(ibid.) Ova se predodžba kontinuirano provlači i u iskazima sugovornika u ovom istraživanju, koji gotovo uniformno završavaju iskaze o vlastitim prilikama uopćenim formulacijama, valorizacijama i projekcijama budućnosti, poput “bit će bolje” ili “možda će se ‘taj narod’<sup>51</sup> jednog dana pobuniti”. Ovdje, dakako, nije riječ isključivo o čvrstom uvjerenju. To je istovremeno i općeprisutna “poštapalica” i retorika, dijelom i “narrativna strategija”.<sup>52</sup> Međutim, pojavljuje se često i instrument je za *status quo* na raznim razinama, između ostalog, za održanje dominantne, vrijednosne i narativne “*mizerabilističke* perspektive” (Đordano 2001:130).

## ZAKLJUČNA RAZMATRANJA

Uraduse, na osnovi kulturne analize, ukazalo na nekoliko kvalitativnih, diskurzivnih aspekata nezaposlenosti i neformalne ekonomije u Hrvatskoj. Od toga da su nezaposleni heterogena populacija, da se “preživljavanje” kontinuirano ostvaruje izvan formalnih sustava (što je ujedno i najснаžnija kritika formalnih sustava), da formalno nezaposleni pojedinac vlastiti ekonomski, simbolički te socijalni integritet i identitet ostvaruje mahom kroz neformalne društvene mreže i neformalnu ekonomiju, do ukazivanja na metaforičnost i višeznačnost uvriježenih elemenata javnoga diskursa o nezaposlenima i nezaposlenosti (kao što su “obični ljudi” i “strategije preživljavanja”). U radu se analiziraju i otkrivaju razni diskurzivni, narativni i simbolički elementi nezaposlenosti i neformalne ekonomije, po kojima uviđamo kako “preživljavanje” i “obični ljudi” jesu sveprisutan narativni motiv, ali su i metafora. Nezaposlenost i neformalna ekonomija već su na toj razini, pokazuje se, kompleksan sociokulturni fenomen koji traži suptilno kritičko promišljanje i pozicioniranje, prije svega prema uvriježenim individualnim i kolektivnim stavovima i dominantnim predodžbama o nezaposlenosti i nezaposlenima te neformalnoj ekonomiji.

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<sup>51</sup> Ovo se odnosi na “obične” ljude, koji se percipiraju u ulozi žrtve.

<sup>52</sup> Kojom sugovornici, došavši do teme razgovora o individualnim prilikama, koja ih posebno pogađa, čine svojevrstan odmak ili autocenzuru, banalizirajući vlastitu nevolju, odnosno amortizirajući njezine razmjere u vidu predodžbe (ili retorike) o nekom vjerojatnom općem budućem boljitku.



## UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFORMAL ECONOMY IN CROATIA: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (Translation)

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UDC 331.56(497.5)  
316.644(497.5):331.56  
Original scientific paper  
Received: 8 March 2013  
Accepted: 15 August 2013

*The paper uses cultural and discourse analysis to present the narrative (discursive) elements of unemployment and informal economy in Croatia today. Research has pointed to the metaphorical usage as well as the ambiguity of deeply rooted elements characterising media and colloquial discourse on unemployment and the unemployed. Both the media and the personal accounts of the unemployed perpetuate the image of the unemployed exclusively as suffering people. On the other hand, practice and direct experience of unemployment present a more heterogeneous picture. Although long-term unemployment in Croatia is largely not the result of personal choice, victimization discourse concerning unemployment and the unemployed does not always concur with the practices and direct experiences of one's (long-term) formal unemployment.*

**Key words:** *unemployment, informal economy, survival strategies, discourse analysis, Croatia*

### INTRODUCTION

The basic premise of the paper rests on the findings from research and observation that were conducted as a part of a more comprehensive research from which I am presenting a part on the narrative (discursive) elements of contemporary unemployment and informal economy in Croatia in this paper. The starting point in interpreting these elements is based on the following findings: the unemployed are heterogeneous population; "survival" is largely achieved outside the formal economic systems or in a mixture of formal and informal systems; a formally unemployed person achieves their own economic, symbolic as well as social integrity and identity largely in the informal sector (e.g. social networks and informal economy).

Both the conversational and media discourse abound with narratives about the passive, suffering position of the unemployed and perception

about the lack of any personal choice or active role of the unemployed in their socio-economic situation. Initially the majority of the unemployed, who were the subjects of the study, lost their jobs at the moment when the economic system as a whole was stumbling and going through transformation. Mass lay-offs and company bankruptcy procedures, which were taking place at the time, did not leave them much choice in the matter so they ended up out of work through no fault of their own in their early forties. Nevertheless, many of them, in spite of remaining formally unemployed for more than twenty years, somehow found a way to cope with their unemployment i.e. they achieved economic sufficiency by using certain mechanisms. It can be assumed that the unemployed and long-term unemployed were not only dramatically impoverished and economically destabilised but also emotionally devastated in the meantime. However, their life practices and experiences reveal a more complex and multi-faceted picture because the unemployed are often not socio-economically fallen, isolated individuals without networks, at least not to the extent that would constitute hypostasis for the media and colloquial discourse.

The impulse to examine the topic of unemployment as well as other phenomena in recent and contemporary Croatian reality (mainly those that spontaneously took shape during the course of the research), derives from the observed need for critical questioning of the juxtaposition between at least two levels, namely discursive and practical (lived) *reality*. In other words, the need for understanding and disclosing everything, according to ethnologist Dunja Rihtman-Auguštin, “that seems normal within the framework of our historical experience, but should very often not be normal because it is neither legal nor legitimate” (1996:61). Hence the need for distancing oneself from, as sociologist Zoran Malenica put it, relying on collective “impressionist insights” about Croatian society polarisation and a huge majority of “the disenfranchised and the powerless” (2001:118, 232).

In the past few years I have come to notice that “common” people’s perceptions about their own present and future are interlaced with a dominant characteristic, which was observed by ethnologist D. Rihtman-Auguštin in mid-1990s, namely the “vicious circle of misery” (1996:60) – a narrative as well as a mental construct (survival psychosis) to which I shall give special attention in this paper. On the one hand, there is a pessimistic and/or

opportunistic attitude about (and among) the unemployed which confirms the victimisation of the “common” man while on the other, there is a wide variety of *strategies* that “common” people (in this case the unemployed) use to survive, to create *something* out of *nothing*, to give meaning to their lives and even fulfil their (material and other) desires<sup>1</sup>.

### “RIVERS” OF THE UNEMPLOYED

At the beginning of the 1990s there was an “explosion in the number of the unemployed in Croatia<sup>2</sup> (Galić 2008:1). Although the problem of unemployment was there in socialism too<sup>3</sup>, the numbers were negligible in

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<sup>1</sup> It would be too simplistic, not to mention false, to take these interpretations as a confirmation that the unemployed in fact live a *good* life in Croatia. In the broader research of unemployment which I have conducted, I attempt to critically point out that the socio-economic practices of the unemployed occur as a result of a combination of formal and informal economy and social relations. This is at the same time a strong criticism of the existing formal systems, primarily economic, social policy and formal labour market systems, which in their present form with their formal mechanisms do not make it possible for people to “survive” (economically, socially or in any other sense) and be self-sufficient, let alone something “more”. The established and continuous informal economic activities are one of the essential “shock-absorbers” of the transition challenges, tensions and hardships. It is also deeply tragic to see that the gap between the needs of the unemployed and that which the formal social policy, labour and unemployment systems allow for continually persists. This pertains not only to the economic needs but also to the symbolic and social integrity needs.

<sup>2</sup> Although high unemployment rates were a common transition problem in other post-socialist countries, Croatia had a distinctively high rate of unemployment in comparison to other transition countries (Teodorović 2001:141). In 1994 Croatia’s unemployment rate was 18%, the highest among transition countries (Vojnić 1996:187).

<sup>3</sup> In the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) the problem of unemployment was present but hidden in a variety of ways (Cifrić and Lay 1990:166; Woodward 1995) often creating the perception that the notion of socialist unemployment was an oxymoron (Woodward 1995). However, unemployment in the socialist period was there (indeed, it was constantly increasing), which is supported by the official data on registered unemployment at the Croatian Employment Service (CES), which have been kept continuously since 1952. Also, it was present before: the publication entitled *Monuments of the Zagreb Croatian Employment Service (Spomenici Zavoda za zapošljavanje u Zagrebu)* mentions that the rise of unemployment in Zagreb was observed even in 1927 (Barić and

relation to the rise of unemployment in the period after socialism, from the beginning of transition on (Ott 2002:3). A long stagnation in employment rates (far below the levels from 1990)<sup>4</sup>, together with the continuous rise of unemployment, marked the *transition* period as “a demanding transformation of the post-socialist society” (Šundalić 2001:65), i.e. a demanding change of economic and political systems from the beginning of the 1990s in which “it was hardly possible to imagine in the euphoria at the beginning (...) how slow and arduous the transition from socialist to market economy would be and how deeply it would affect the political and economic life of the country, the nation as a whole and especially the individual...” (Ivanova 2000:149). Mass liquidations and bankruptcy procedures (Kerovec 2001:271; cf. Vojnić 2000:25), which were part and parcel of these changes, rendered around 500,000 workers<sup>5</sup> jobless, while labour market conditions additionally worsened due to the conditions of war<sup>6</sup>. The peak unemployment rate at the national level, as a result of the

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Šešo 2006:13). Systematic records of registered unemployment in Croatia have been kept since 1952 and show that it is constantly increasing (ibid.); Croatian Employment Service (CES: Trends in the number of the unemployed according to years. URL: <http://www.hzz.hr/docslike/statistike/grafikon%208.xls>; 2/2/2011). In some Zagreb periodicals alarming headlines begin to appear at the end of 1970s, namely: “Getting a job is becoming more and more difficult” (*Dubrava – newsletter of working people and citizens of Dubrava municipality*, no. 58, II, April, 1983, p. 3) presents the data from what was then called Self-governing Interest Community for Employment, stating that there were more than 15.000 unemployed in Zagreb at the time.

<sup>4</sup> Source: *Proposal of Report on Work Done between 1996 – 2000 Trade Union of Workers in Farming, Food and Tobacco Industry and Water Management of Croatia*, 2000, p. 3. <http://www.ppddiv.hr/dokumenti/4kongres/izvjesce.doc> (20/9/2010).

<sup>5</sup> “Regardless of the source of data analysed, the tendency of increasing unemployment is rather strong. From the beginning of transition the total number of the employed has decreased for almost 500 000.” Source: *Development Strategy – Croatia in XXI Century – Macroeconomics*. Development Strategy and the Government’s Conclusion on adopting the Strategy were published in the *Official Gazzette NN 145/2002*.

<sup>6</sup> The war in the territory of ex-Yugoslavija which began at the end of 1980s and lasted until mid-1990s was the most drastic and difficult war to take place after WWII (Dimova 2006:2). According to the State Committee for War Damage Inventory and Assessment, direct damage in Croatia includes damage to economy, social affairs, cultural and natural treasures, citizens’ property and lack of their maintenance, war costs as well as the damage to human life and health between 1990 and 1999. Overall damage expressed

turmoil in the 1990s, was reached in late 2001, with as many as 395,141 of registered<sup>7</sup> unemployed<sup>8</sup>, i.e. nearly 10% of the total population<sup>9</sup>. Hence, it is no surprise that the employees of Croatian Employment Service (CES) and Zagreb Social Welfare Centres remember and refer to the unemployment in the 1990s as “rivers of the unemployed”<sup>10</sup>. Zagreb accounts for about 10% of the total number of the unemployed. Zagreb unemployment rate has continuously risen in proportion to the increase of unemployment at the national level (17,745 unemployed were registered in Zagreb in 1990 in comparison to 41,181 registered unemployed at the end of the 1990s)<sup>11</sup>.

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numerically and only relating to material costs was estimated to more than 236 billion HRK (Perković and Puljiz 2001:231). Additionally, the Croatian Government documents, such as *Development Strategy*, take into account the war circumstances realistically listing destruction and damages as aggravating circumstances on the Croatian transition path (“Croatia was engulfed in war and went through almost five years long occupation of the third of its territory.”). It is clearly and realistically stated that this was not the only characteristic, neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, of the development path in the transition process in Croatia. Source: *Development Strategy 2001 – 2015 “Croatia in XXI Century – Macroeconomics”, Official Gazette, NN 145/2002*. Economist Dragomir Vojnić gives a critical account of this by underlining that “the main causes of delay are neither war nor its repercussions, but rather the errors in the overall economic and general policy” [until the year 2000, author’s comment T. R.] (Vojnić 2000:21).

<sup>7</sup> Not all unemployed are registered with the CES (Croatian Employment Service – HZZ). Zoran Malenica interprets this: “these are mostly citizens who had been looking for a job for many years and in the process lost their trust in the institutions or they belong to those categories of the unemployed which are not entitled to any rights through registering with the CES” (2007:132).

<sup>8</sup> According to CES data, Zagreb Regional Office: [www.hzz.hr](http://www.hzz.hr) (1/10/2011) (c.f. Bejaković 1999:122).

<sup>9</sup> According to 2001 Census the total number of population was 4,437,460. Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics (DZS), [www.dzs.hr](http://www.dzs.hr) (21/9/2011) I am citing the data from 2001 Census here because they pertain to the period of lay-offs in question.

<sup>10</sup> In order to decrease huge crowds at the CES, a part of the employees used to go to the spot where lay-offs were taking place (e.g. a bankrupt company) and enter masses of laid off workers in the unemployment register. Also, many public institution employees remember rivers of people overflowing the hallways as they waited (many of whom were sitting on the floor) for hours in order to take care of administrative tasks connected with their sudden unemployment status. (From semi-structured interviews with CES advisors in Zagreb 29 April 2010 and employees from one of Zagreb Centres for Social Welfare on 27 January 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Source: CES, Zagreb Regional Office, <http://www.hzz.hr/default.aspx?id=7567> (30/3/2011).

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Conclusions and analysis presented in this paper are based on the qualitative data and narrative sources collected as a part of doctoral dissertation research into the topic of family, unemployment and survival strategies<sup>12</sup>. The topic of this paper is more narrowly focused on the media and conversational and colloquial unemployment representation. The paper will use discourse analysis in order to examine the discursive elements

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<sup>12</sup> PhD thesis on family, unemployment and survival strategies was defended in 2012 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ethnology and Anthropology Department under the mentorship of Professor Jasna Čapo Žmegač, PhD. The research was based on several research principles. The one was based on the territoriality principle, i.e. it was set in a specific spatial framework (selected neighbourhood) and relied on monitoring the community logic and its functioning, i.e. social networks created around a person. People who live and work in a specific physical space (a neighbourhood) communicate with each other daily, run errands and do odd jobs to fulfil their everyday needs, have a specific *shared experience* which represents a relevant contextual starting point for ethnological and anthropological research. Hence, this does not only mean setting specific physical coordinates to research but also a necessary socio-cultural and historical contextualisation of the research topic and subjects, i.e. specific *social space*. (c.f. Gulin Zrnić 2009; Škrbić Alempijević and Rubić, approved for publication). Additionally, the framework does not exist in a vacuum but requires wider context in terms of research bearing in mind that it is a part of various wider social, economic and political processes. The wider context included (post) socialism and two decades of Croatian transition experience. Along these lines, the framework of a neighbourhood is in many aspects “permeable” and fluid and the research itself went beyond the borders of the neighbourhood in that the research of everyday activities also included those taking place outside the neighbourhood and relied on the social, charity and other infrastructures of the whole city. Still, numerous contacts and useful acquaintances (information exchange, experiences within the support and solidarity network) were made mostly locally and in close proximity to the place where the unemployed live. It is an important element of survival both in social and in economic sense. In this way the borders of one neighbourhood (*quarter*) is neither dysfunctional nor irrelevant in the research (c.f. Gulin Zrnić 2009). The research was conducted by talking to a chain of interlocutors, whereby interlocutors would recommend each other. This was a more “spontaneous” research principle, which revealed underlying acquaintanceships and social relations that were a part of a network existing around an individual, a close family and/or particular household members, which as was already mentioned, often took the research outside of the neighbourhood. These are by no means the only principles in researching unemployment. Another approach could have been taken, for example research could have looked at the employees of a company which was restructured during 1990s and continued to work with reduced labour force (*ethnology of enterprises*).

in narrations and the perpetuating metaphorical levels of narration about unemployment, the unemployed and the informal economy based on the data collected from interviews, observation and participation as well as recent media coverage of unemployment.

The ethnological, cultural and anthropological research was conducted from 2008 to 2011 on many occasions at one of Zagreb neighbourhoods with around 10.000 inhabitants<sup>13</sup>. The research did not

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<sup>13</sup> In order to protect the respondent and taking into account the character of the research topic, I neither state nor imply which neighbourhood this is, nor do I give the respondents' names. Still, some characteristics of the neighbourhood where the research was done (which are important for the contextualisation) were presented in the paper. Nevertheless, Zagreb periphery, in the broad and narrow sense, is made up of a number of neighbourhoods of similar characteristics so it is impossible to detect which particular neighbourhood this is.

The neighbourhood where the research was conducted has never been a part of a specific construction or urban planning project as a defined and planned housing area unlike for example a workers' quarter which was constructed with a specific aim of providing workers with accommodation (c.f. Kermenšek 1970) or the settlements which were built as a part of very ambitious post war urban projects situated in the south of Zagreb (c.f. Gulin Zrnčić 2009). Unlike the southern part of the city, across the river Sava, which was built in line with the urban planning which relied on the internationally acknowledged urban and housing construction standards of the time, the biggest part of Zagreb periphery to the east and west, including the part of town where this research was done, was built based on the principle of individual, private and illegal housing construction including small family houses, which were at first single storey and later became multi-storey buildings. Such ad hoc, illegal individual house constructions took place in Zagreb and other cities all over ex Yugoslavia (SFRY) mostly because the formal housing sector was extremely scarce even at the height of its expansion (Hutinec 1971:21; Puljiz 1977:85). Although the first associations connected with socialism often include a concept of planned housing construction, flats and the so-called "tenants' rights" and not necessarily privately owned houses, the latter represent an almost equal statistical share according to the perception (which of course is exaggerated but useful as an illustration) held by some of my respondents in this research. Namely, "90% of today's Zagreb was built in this way", from the 1960s until today – illegally, based on individual construction initiatives and informal support networks during the small family houses construction. Even to this day, the biggest part of the neighbourhood has remained in this illegal construction status except the buildings which were constructed before 15 February 1968 when newly constructed houses were suddenly legalised automatically precisely because of the large number of such houses existing at the time and a huge further inflow of the population into the cities. A family house construction was taking place in parallel with the process of one's formal employment in socialism. My interlocutors, who are unemployed today, had

encompass *all* the unemployed who lived there but focused on a selected core group. The group was formed based on generational characteristics and specific experiences arising from unemployment, namely it did not involve the “perpetually” unemployed<sup>14</sup>. The participants were men and women currently aged between 50 and 65 who lost their formal jobs and became

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participated in the construction of a family house for years, since their childhood. They were children when their parents first entered the expanding socialist labour market in the 1950s and 1960s. House construction was and still is a family “project” that lasts many decades and involves many generations. At the same time, it is an example of exceptional resourcefulness on the part of a family and an individual within the sphere of what is informal and legally prohibited. Although the construction mostly rested “on the backs” of the first generation of settlers, meaning that they built the basic parts of the building, further construction and adaptation of the house continues to this day involving second and third generations.

<sup>14</sup> Although they were not the only respondents in the research, nevertheless the men and women born in the late 1940s and 1950s were in fact our focus group and represented the highest number of the interviewees. This is the generation of previously employed who were categorised at the Croatian Employment Service (hereafter: CES) as the Category 50+, namely one of the vulnerable groups of the unemployed at the formal labour market whose chances for reemployment were very slim (c.f. Kerovec 2001:268-271). In the last twenty years the crisis on the Croatian transition labour market (remains continuous, if we exclude some indications of recovery shortly before the beginning of the Global Financial Crisis from 2008 and the subsequent lower employment and new dismissals) gave a general context to the already difficult employability. This generation of the unemployed experienced an additional plunge in motivation for active formal job seeking compounded with the already atrophied working knowledge and skills due to the long term unemployment. For example, a man who is currently 57 and had been unemployed for 12 years, made a caustic joke at his own expense during the conversation: “Who would hire me now? Everything has changed so much in my profession that I could be displayed as an exhibit sitting at a desk in the Technical Museum! Children could come to watch me draw blueprints by hand using wooden rulers and vintage rapidographs as I used to when I was working in my company. They would say: ‘You can see children, this is how construction blueprints used to be made in the past, and today all this is done by a computer.’” Such perceptions of one’s own unfavourable position at the current labour market are not without foundation which can be seen from the data of different quantitative and qualitative studies and reports. For example, the UNDP Human Development Report for Croatia 2006 entitled *Unplugged: Faces of Social Exclusion in Croatia*, which focused on the long term unemployed, states that people facing “the long-term unemployed are at a higher risk of becoming poor, while the obsolescence of human capital due to unemployment and poor connections with the labour market creates a circle of exclusion and poverty” (Bayley and Gorančić-Lazetić 2006:26).



redundant in their forties when they were forced to exit the formal labour market. Hence, they have the experience of both being formally employed and unemployed<sup>15</sup>. The focus in the research was placed on their “survival strategies” in the broadest sense. The basic questions that the research focuses on are: “How did they live through and ‘survive’ their formal unemployment period which had in many cases lasted almost two decades? Which socio-economic mechanisms were the key ‘shock absorbers’ of hardships brought on by unemployment?” More specifically and for the purpose of this paper the focus was placed on unemployment and informal economy narrations.

### **INFORMAL ECONOMY**

Although many interviewees said that being long-term unemployed and being made redundant in their forties (many of them in continuity), they mostly spent their time just “waiting” to reach the age necessary to take old-age pension, according to the Croatian pension system it is the age of 65, their everyday life involves much more than just “waiting”. As sociologist Zoran Malenica observed: “It is unrealistic to believe that an unemployed man (woman) could wait for five, eight or even ten years to get a job without working in the meantime. They could afford to do this only if they belonged to a family which was financially well situated. However, much like an able bodied pensioner whose pension is quite low, he (she) enters the underground economy in an attempt to earn at least a minimum additional income in order to survive” (2007:132).

The term “informal economy” denotes a set of activities which are not a part of the registered, formal labour market. According to the legislation of the Republic of Croatia, “any natural person who earns an income”<sup>16</sup> is subject to income tax and registration of income. Any attempt

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<sup>15</sup> Following the loss of a job, since the beginning of Croatian independence, unemployment for many of the formerly employed people has lasted longer than twenty years, which is as long as a person had held a job in socialism before mass lay-offs ensued.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Annual Income Tax Return data for 2010. Examples of how to fill in the tax return (DOH form), Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Finances, Tax Administration, Zagreb, January 2011.

to avoid registering one's income and its taxation (e.g. by using different private, unregistered money transfers), is considered informal economy activity and is as such illegal. In the literature the concept denotes a parallel system of making money, which operates outside the legally established and organised formal labour market. This is termed differently by different authors, e.g.: "gray" economy, underground economy, parallel economy, informal work, informal employment, informal jobs and unofficial work, unofficial economy, "shadow" economy and hidden economy.

According to anthropologist William Haviland, informal economy is "a network of producing and circulating marketable commodities and services that for various reasons escape listing (enumeration), regulation, or other types of public monitoring and auditing. Such enterprises may encompass nearly all agricultural products (...), repair or construction work, begging, street peddling, performing ritual services, money lending..." (Haviland 2004:198). Informal economy is present in all societies and on all social levels. It exists among the poorest (Hart 1973) and among elite groups (cf. Sampson 2002:46). As a starting point, lack or surplus of financial resources is not the key criterion for (non) participation of an individual or a group in informal economy. Such economy by no means refers exclusively to big criminal milieus, as one could think at first sight. It shapes the everyday lives of "ordinary" people to a great extent.

"Different evaluation methods give different results" (Ott 2002:1) – is the usual scientific comment given whenever the attempt to "measure" and quantify informal economy is mentioned. Depending on the measuring methods<sup>17</sup> the estimates vary from 15% to 37% of the Croatian GDP (ibid.)<sup>18</sup>, with slight annual increases and decreases (Bićanić and Ott 1997;

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<sup>17</sup> Several statistical measuring models were used: discrepancies in the national accounts methodology, Eurostat methodology and estimated tax evasion, monetary methods, assessments of particular activities and electricity consumption (c.f. Zrinščak 1997; Bićanić and Ott 1997; Ott 2002). Compare with international documents and recommendations for measuring the size of informal sector in a national economy, the official World Bank internet site: <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/1f3aa35cab9dea4f85256a77004e4ef4/0e1cfcae7d9efa4185256a940073f4e5?OpenDocument> (21/10/2011).

<sup>18</sup> *Development Strategy 2001-2015 "Croatia in the XXI century – Macroeconomics"*, the official document of the Croatian Government (*Official Gazette* 145/2002) mentions the estimated 25% GDP.

Ott 2002:2).<sup>19</sup> In a word, it is estimated that “nearly every other unemployed person does some work in the informal economy and earns certain income in order to survive until such time as they can get a permanent legal job“ (Malenica 2007:132).

To a cultural insider these practices are well known and *nothing new* in Croatia. According to narrative sources, in socialism doing formal work in the morning was often followed by doing informal work in the afternoon i.e. “moonlighting” (Rubić 2013a, 2013b). This existed to such an extent that it is difficult to imagine doing some type of work in any other way but the “informal” (that is to say without money transfer tax records) since many people are “accustomed” to these jobs and services being done only in the informal sphere (namely different types of cleaning services, repairs, construction work, buying fruits and vegetables, etc.).

These activities are governed by several different types of rationale. Among others, there is the rationale based on the economic rationalisation – savings and/or earnings. Then there is the one (which is much more interesting to ethnologists and anthropologists) immanent in the symbolic resistance of the individual to formal (state) institutions as centres of authority and power. The third (also socio-culturally relevant) occurs as the rationale of establishing, supporting and/or perpetuating “acquaintanceship” and “useful acquaintances” especially in the informal economy sphere. It is precisely on the basis of the latter that one establishes and strengthens his or her symbolic and social capital as well as their *status*. The fact that one has “his or her own” green-market saleslady, “his or he own” plumber or car mechanic is significant both socially and symbolically. One is not interested in “proving” or “examining” the validity of his or her choice – by for example sampling fruit and vegetables sold by other salesladies, comparing them and reevaluating the results. Regardless of the “real” basis for perceiving “useful” acquaintances as positive, there is a precondition which is fulfilled even without testing, namely the person’s idea that due to such acquaintances one gains some benefit, something that he or she assumes would not be possible without said acquaintances (e.g. lower price of a service, better selection of fruit and vegetables, better and

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<sup>19</sup> A significant part of the research results was published in the journal *Financial Theory and Practice* 21 (1-2, 5-6) published by the Institute for Public Finance in 1997.

faster car mechanic's repair work, smaller possibility of "being cheated" or "slyness" on the part of the seller, etc.). Positive evaluation of people who are "capable" is noticeable, that is to say of those who can make informal transactions, which do not need to be based on direct money transfer at all. In fact, our interlocutors regularly listed people from their immediate environment (street, neighbourhood) and stressed that they had special "skills" or "talents" allowing them to circumvent legal provisions in the sphere of informal economy, negotiate favourable deals with the local authorities or agree on "quid pro quo" etc.: "Not everyone can be that resourceful. You must know that" or "Yes, they have it – the gift of the gab."

My interest in this paper is aimed at the qualitative and discursive characteristics and dimensions of unemployment and informal economy (c.f. Ott 2002). An interest to investigate these characteristics more deeply was prompted by very open accounts about the participation in informal economy at the very outset of the field work, as well as by the ubiquitous verbal legitimacy that was being given to these actions in testimonies such as: "One has to survive by using any and all means, I'm getting by or You have to get by."

Activities in informal economy were interpreted and presented by the participants primarily through an economic paradigm as an existential "necessity" and lack of demand on the formal labour market. However, the motivation and rationalisations used for participation on the informal labour market neither blindly follow this economic rationale, nor are they connected exclusively with the insufficient demand for various jobs on the formal labour market. There are a number of implicit motivations for participation in this sphere of economy and there is also a degree of "habit". "Collective rationalization" is prevalent (Macura 2005:8), more precisely "social legitimization" (Štulhofer 2000) is given to moonlighting. Legitimizing the activities in the informal labour market is a pattern, albeit a pattern connected with the awareness that these activities lack any legitimacy in the legal sense. Having followed the contemporary trend of studying the attitudes of individuals to the government and the law in Mediterranean societies D. Rihtman-Auguštin clarified this polarisation (legitimate vs. legal) in the mid 1990s as well as the "ordinary" people's attitudes about these categories:

“The lack of confidence in the government is primarily due to the ambiguity between legality and legitimacy, which are in conflict. [...] This refers to the rule of law (legality) vs. a dominant notion of justice (legitimacy). Something (...) legal, i.e. a part of the legal system is not always considered ‘fair’ or justified, in other words legitimate, by individual members or more or less powerful groups of a society. And vice versa, actions which some strata (...) consider legitimate and absolutely justified or at least acceptable and understandable are as often as not in conflict with the rule of law.” (Rihtman-Auguštin 1996:60)

Informal economy does not have its basis in the law because its main purpose is (as is the case with tax evasion) to circumvent the established formal and regulated systems. However, it has its sacrosanct *social legitimacy* (Štulhofer 2000) and is generally socially approved as one’s *getting by* within and without the formal systems with the aim of securing “personal survival”. In this sense informal economy enjoys social approval<sup>20</sup>. This concept fits into the frame that is generally referred to in ethnological literature as “the common law”, which, according to some legal concepts reported by ethnologist Vesna Čulinović-Konstantinović, refers to “the unwritten norms, a series of (...) unwritten legal regulations that had both general and long-term use”, “were held in affection (...) and voluntarily accepted”<sup>21</sup> (...), “were suitable for a particular community

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<sup>20</sup> Qualitative data referring to both spheres, the formal and informal, socialist and post socialist labour market reveal all the “hidden” characteristics of e.g. socialist labour market, its dynamics and contradictions (Rubić 2013b). Inter alia socialism in its performance, even if not in its intention and ideas, was “a flexible” system, which is not the association in the public perception of socialism (ibid.). Also, it was on many levels very propulsive, which is corroborated by a number of individual direct experiences of making agreements with the institutions of e.g. (local) government based that were made orally in an informal way (including bribe and exchange of services) and based on which a number of vitally important problems like employment and housing were solved. However, the perception about the informal economy mainly continues to be the following: “everybody does it.” Moreover, in everyday communication, these activities are not questioned (morally, ethically or legally, etc.) and most of them remain socially (and even legally) unsanctioned.

<sup>21</sup> Čulinović-Konstantinović quotes from legal literature here, more precisely the works of a jurist B. Perića on common law from 1957.

(...) and thus sanctioned by the State...” (ibid. 52). This is in line with the characteristics of the way informal economy functions as well as with the theoretical and conceptual framework which was introduced and advocated by D. Rihtman-Auguštin in the 1980s among Croatian ethnologists, especially in her research on cooperatives: duality of all phenomena and occurrences requires the representation of two levels to every ethnological research, namely the “real” and the “imaginary” order, “thought structure” and “objective reality” (1984:13).<sup>22</sup>

In any case, those who participate in the sphere of informal economy are by no means uninformed or ignorant. The awareness that these activities do not have either legal or legislative basis is implied in the language used e.g. diminutives and sentence formulations that are aimed at trivialising the material gain and cost-effectiveness the activities bring, such as: “Yes, *from time to time some odd (little) job comes my way*” or “So I make *a few (little) kunas on the side.*”<sup>23</sup>

It is evident that actions based on fraud and outwitting the system prove to be counterproductive in the long run (e.g. taking raw materials out of the formal sector where one was employed) because by doing them one is “cutting their own throat”. Nevertheless, in many of my informants’ observations this is completely irrelevant. Individual “feeling of responsibility” when it comes to the consequences of tax evasion throughout the country (the effect that informal economy has on the State Budget<sup>24</sup>) was in no way an incentive for one to stop participating in informal economy, which has continued to this day (c.f. Štulhofer 2000). There is of course an awareness that these actions belong to a “gray” zone, “informality” zone. Consequently, it can be said that the people in question *know not what they are doing*. This can be clearly observed in the use of vocabulary and language (diminutives are used when such activities are described) while

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<sup>22</sup> This approach draws on Claude Levi-Strauss’ structuralism, more precisely, on his thesis about the need to introduce opposition in ethnological research, the one that stands “between *the model and reality*” (Levi-Strauss 1989:315).

<sup>23</sup> Highlighted by T. R. (t.n.: diminutives are translated by using the word *little* in parenthesis since they are not common in standard English).

<sup>24</sup> According to estimates, the share of informal economy in Croatian GDP in 1995 amounted to at least 25% (Ott 1997; c.f. Karajić 2002:280), from which it can be concluded that about 200.000 unemployed were active in this sphere economy (Malenica 2007:132).

at the same time other cognitive mechanisms are being used in order to give these actions legitimacy. One of them perceives those who participate in these activities as “social justice stabilizers”. This is the basis for the persistence and omnipresence of informal economy activities (ibid. Šakić 1999). Narrations about such activities have a common characteristic namely, when a person gave account of his or her own activities, which were in fact a fraud committed against the system or the company where they had been employed, he or she would present them as “pleasant” memories about the time when they had worked in the company.

Finally, the amount that one could earn in the sphere of informal economy, whether in socialism or at present, varies in narrations. It ranges from “in order to survive”, which is most often suggested by informants, to building another floor to a house, buying a *better* car, going on a summer vacation, etc. Moonlighting is the usual basis for *better* functioning of a family in different social and economic aspects of life and a common strategy used when coping with a lack of or insufficient funds. However, in socialism it was not *only* that. Many elements of informal economy have not only economic but also dominant symbolic value, which will be discussed in more detail in the following part of the paper that deals with various discursive elements relating to “ordinary people”, “survival strategies”, etc.

## **MEDIA ON UNEMPLOYMENT**

It is difficult to detach the term unemployment in either media or conversational discourse from the conventional perception of unemployment as degradation and a “sad” story. This is explicit in a recent news video clip posted on one of the Croatian Internet portals which portrays the unemployed who belong to different generations as they answer a journalist’s questions on their motivation in applying to the tender for census takers in 2011. A melancholy melody is the background music for the media feature entitled “Sad Stories of the Unemployed Who Wish to Become Census Takers” confirms that this is exactly how unemployment is commonly perceived<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Source: <http://www.srp.hr/?p=519> (17/3/2011).

There is a general negative attitude towards the transition process in Croatia (Štulhofer 2000; Čengić and Rogić 1999; Šakić 1999). Among other things, such attitude has been moulded by and manifested through the aforementioned ideas about “winners” and “losers” in the transition process. Furthermore, a Croatian sociological research conducted in the late 1990s showed that the majority (i.e. two thirds of the participants in this research) had a clear idea about who “winners” and “losers” in the transition process were and how they were structured.<sup>26</sup>

During the 1990s social stratification gained a new dynamic – on the one hand there was a newly formed stratum of financially strong social elite who had economic and political power and on the other, the unemployed and the impoverished (c.f. Škovierová, 2009:223) This created a shared conviction and perception that the transition process turned the majority into “losers”. The “loser mentality” is seen as a result of different factors (slow economic recovery, corruption, justice system ineffectiveness, transformation and privatisation, minority becoming richer and majority becoming poorer as well as high unemployment). The perceptions about Croatian entrepreneurship were mostly formed around pejorative categories: dishonesty and political clientelism whereas contacts, acquaintances, money and resourcefulness were considered guarantees of success and advancement (Štulhofer and Karajić 1997; c.f. Karajić 2002:274).

In 2007, when I started to be interested in unemployment which befell many as part of the transitional change, the topic of unemployment was not discussed in the media at all. This was unusual to say the least and juxtaposed with the above mentioned data about 500,000 people losing their jobs in Croatia during the 1990s. Generally speaking the media and politics focused mostly on the modernisation changes and the subsequent Croatian accession to the EU and in the light of the declining trend in the registered unemployment that had been present for many years, the media did not discuss the unemployed. However, at the end of 2008 when the impact of the global financial crisis was beginning to take the toll and

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<sup>26</sup> “Winners” were the members of HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union), leading political party in 1990s, private company managers, politicians and state owned company executives; “losers” were farmers, private company employees, professionals and those employed in state owned companies (Štulhofer 2000:98).



there were waves of new lay-offs rendering more than 100 000 people newly unemployed<sup>27</sup>, this phenomenon was taken up more intensively and reported about both in the media and in the political life, so much so that in 2010<sup>28</sup> unemployment was given the most prominent place among the dailies' headlines and became the central piece of news in television broadcasts<sup>29</sup> in which it was dubbed "country's no. 1 problem"<sup>30</sup>.

For example, the problem of unemployment regained media and political attention and became a part of "the folklore and occasional speeches" during political campaigning in winter 2011 election. At the time, in various parties' and coalitions' election programmes, as well as on billboards all over the country, explicit promises of solving unemployment and lack of jobs problem in Croatia were solemnly made in the instance of winning the elections. One of the political slogans said: *We know how to create more jobs.*

In spite of the sudden media interest in unemployment, the generation which was out of work because of socialist companies' collapse, namely the people my research deals with, still remained *forgotten*. In the colloquial discourse they are called: "lost", "sacrificed", "forgotten" generation, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter of this paper. The dissemination of information about the growing unemployment mostly focused on the newly dismissed and not to the long-term unemployed. The latter were only sporadically and indirectly mentioned in everyday communication about a wave of new dismissals and only rarely indicated as a general reference or a rhetorical comparison. Thus phrases like *unemployment is nothing new in Croatia* or *why is there suddenly such a fuss about unemployment – when people were laid off in the 1990s, nobody bat an eye* for example could be heard.

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<sup>27</sup> Biggest downturn in economic activity since the foundation of Croatian state was caused by the global economic crisis and recorded in 2009 (Lakoš 2010:433).

<sup>28</sup> *Večernji list* (a Croatian daily), 30 June 2010.

<sup>29</sup> In a feature which was broadcast in the central news programme at Nova TV entitled "*Worst Uphill Struggle for the Unemployed Ever*" the number of 319.845 registered unemployed was given and followed by an illustration according to which one in 13 residents of Zagreb was unemployed and 241 people were being laid off daily.

<sup>30</sup> Nova TV *Evening News*, 5 February 2011.

## **DISCOURSE ON “FORGOTTEN”, “LOST” OR “SACRIFICED” GENERATION**

The question of unemployment, apart from the economic parameters, also has its socio-cultural and symbolic characteristics. It is closely linked to the systems of dominant social and personal values:

“as a form of life interpretation and one of the elements that constitute human attitudes to the basic phenomena of human existence (freedom, authority, values, customs, rights, work, personality, collective, passion, love, play and death) it cannot be ignored or avoided (...) That is to say, we all experience and relate to these phenomena of our survival in a certain way, regardless of whether we basically accept their traditional form or we shape them ourselves” (Skledar 2003:13).

These social values are present to a large extent in public discourse and in narrations.

Conducting research on values and their orientations and levels, whether individual or group values, which was suggested by D. Rihtman-Auguštin in Croatian Ethnology as early as the 1960s, helps us understand the significance that “ordinary” people give to macro processes and their own positions in them<sup>31</sup>. This can, inter alia, refer to the frequently mentioned motifs of “winners” and “losers”, which are prominent parts of narrations about (one’s own) unemployment through which one (self-) interprets his or her position as an unemployed person in a society and which influence their decisions, rationalisations, strategies and practices. Similar to the ideas of “winners” and “losers”, there is another perception, namely the one about the “burden” arising from transitional changes not having been proportionally “distributed”. This largely refers to the positions held by individuals or certain groups (e.g. age group) on and about the formal labour market. In my research the focus group did not encompass *all* those who

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<sup>31</sup> “Socio-cultural transformation of Croatian society and culture is primarily manifested in the transformation of social values which implies the change in motives for work among the majority of society members” (Čolić 2008:951). Researching values was introduced into Croatian ethnology by D. Rihtman-Auguštin as early as 1960s. The author understands values as “a dimension present in behaviour and decision making” (Rihtman 1967) so that “actions which seem irrational, almost crazy, after getting to know individual and group values, become interesting and even acceptable” (Rihtman 1967:3).

are unemployed today<sup>32</sup>. It was made up of the unemployed who lost their jobs, as they themselves often point out, “while they were still fully capable of working”. This is the foundation for understanding the position of being “lost” and “sacrificed”, the categories within which formerly employed people are most often discussed and through which they themselves define their position in the society. When they were working they were “a working class”<sup>33</sup>, doing “mainly manual work in the industry, construction, transport, tourist, trade and other organisations”. A large number of my interlocutors used to have jobs that precisely required these qualifications, in spite of having finished secondary schools (VET or comprehensive schools<sup>34</sup>). Former “working class”, as Malenica interprets it, had experienced

“great changes at the beginning of the 1990s, in terms of numbers as well as in the socio-economic sense. Due to the accelerated deindustrialisation process, a large number of jobs were closed down and these were the jobs performed by members of this stratum (...). A part of former workers retired (regular or early retirement) and the others registered with the CES.” (2007:128)

He also points out that this was the end of a whole range of perks that

“this stratum of laid-off workers (...) used to have in socialism: job security, a tendency of increasing living standard, a possibility of getting an apartment through a model of public housing policy

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<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it was already stated that I do not treat the unemployed as a homogeneous population.

<sup>33</sup> Referring to the traditional definition of working class, which encompasses “unskilled, semi skilled, skilled and highly skilled workers” (Malenica 2007:128).

<sup>34</sup> A motif of finished comprehensive school is not something that an ethnologist or an anthropologist would ignore. This motif carries the colloquial and deeply rooted connotation of being something “unspecified” and so “useless” in this sense. More precisely, it can often be heard that those who finished a comprehensive school “are *nothing*”. In order to be something, one should either continue their education or NOT enrol in a comprehensive school and opt for a more “specific” school. These perceptions largely derive from the specific characteristics of an expanding socialist labour market which promptly “increased employment extensively” but also had “an unfavourable qualification structure of the employed” where “lack of professional workers was becoming more and more evident” (Barić and Šešo 2006:35).

(...) [without having experienced] certain advantages of capitalism (higher labour cost on average, strong trade union protection...). In the transformation and privatisation process they were often the victims of new owners' and employers' autocracy while the loss of self-management rights was not being compensated for by adequate trade union protection." (ibid.)

One of the participants, aged 58, who has been unemployed for almost two decades, says that he "lost his youth in the 1990s" and that "he was deprived of the 20 years of his life", meaning the years of his unemployment following the loss of his formal job. These retrospective self-perceptions of a person's former working capacity at the age of 40 (when these workers were largely rendered jobless) are significantly different from how this generation was "officially" perceived on the formal post-socialist labour market. After they lost their jobs at this age, it was significantly more difficult or even impossible for them to re-enter the formal labour market, inter alia, because in the context of newly established economic relations and the need to transition to a neoliberal market economy after socialism, the workers in their 40s were beginning to be considered "older" workers (Kerovec 2001:271; Šverko et al. 2006:12; c.f. Ainsworth 2006). To make the paradox even bigger, soon after being laid off, these unemployed became administratively speaking "too young" for the early retirement (an option which was available to those who had one to five years left before reaching regular retirement age or retirement based on the full contribution period)<sup>35</sup>, while at the same time in relation to the newly established values and needs on the labour market they were "too old" to get new employment<sup>36</sup>:

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<sup>35</sup> According to numerous narrations, early retirement was the least painful administrative and legal option for workers under the circumstances, i.e. mass lay-offs and a whole range of bankruptcy procedures underway. This was possible for workers who did not fulfil all the conditions for the old-age retirement but were close to it in terms of the number of years of service (c.f. Škovierová 2009:223). The early retirement in the early 1990s in ex-Yugoslavia was used "more than anywhere else in central and eastern Europe as a mechanism for mitigating the transition to market economy" (Guardiancich 2007:89).

<sup>36</sup> The data from a quantitative research conducted in Croatia show that the probability of finding employment for people older than 45 is lower than 30% (Šverko et al. 2006; c.f. Vukelić 2008).

“Too old to employ, to young to retire [participant refers to a full, old-age pension]. Yes, it is like being somewhere in between and there is nothing worse.”<sup>37</sup>

The position of “being in a limbo” is the basis for understanding perceptions of “being sacrificed” and “being lost” in the transition process in Croatia, which this generation of former workers share. It needs to be taken into account that these former workers became unemployed and thus socially vulnerable “involuntarily” (c.f. Babić 2007), that losing a job was not their fault and their lay-offs were a part of general mass lay-offs which took place at the time.

### “ORDINARY” PEOPLE

Although annual statistics show that the living standard is steadily increasing in Croatia<sup>38</sup>, the perception about one’s life circumstances and constant “needs” which one cannot (easily) fulfil create among the majority of the research participants a conviction that they are poor and that “surviving” is a way and mode of life.<sup>39</sup> It is also referred to as “the

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<sup>37</sup> Being in “a limbo”, that is to say the perception of being in such a position evident among the middle aged generation (around 40) in spite of their having gone through the drastic experience of sudden displacement from the labour market did not occur for the first time. In fact a confirmation about similar perceptions on the part of this generation can be found even in literary works written during socialism when their position on the formal labour market had been relatively stable or at least more stable in comparison with their position in the subsequent period of transition. For example Zvonimir Milčec, an eminent Zagreb author, published a novel entitled *In Zagreb in the Morning* in 1980 which opens with the following thought on the generation in their forties to which the author himself belonged to at the time: “We were born at the wrong time – too young for war, too old for basketball” (Milčec 1980).

<sup>38</sup> Standard of living is measured by economic and social indicators and various methods, e.g. by income available to a household in a course of a month (Bejaković 2005:134). From a statistical point of view categories like salaries and personal consumption are continuously growing so it can be said that, at least on this basis of these indicators, the overall standard of living is improving.

<sup>39</sup> The idea is partly well founded. A number of Croatian social science papers show that the general increase in the living standard does not stretch to all society groups nor does

poverty paradox” (Bošnjak et. al. 2003:13) and “subjective poverty”<sup>40</sup> in recent scientific discourse (Šućur 2006; Malenica 2001:231). In the popular culture and non-fiction it is dubbed – “poverty mentality”<sup>41</sup>. In any case, these “subjective perceptions of the situation in society are much more strongly linked to the reference groups’ imitation patterns than to their genuine financial capabilities” (Šućur 2006:237).

“Ordinary” people occur often as motifs in discourse and narrations about (one’s own) unemployment. In this chapter I shall attempt to demythologize and deconstruct this motif, which is a construct deeply rooted in conversational discourse. Although I have used this expression on many occasions throughout the paper, I do not wish to perpetuate its “mythological” meaning (taking it at face value) which is why I use it in quotation marks thus inter alia underlining its politicised potential. It can be observed that expressions such as “ordinary” people and “survival strategies” blur the line between metaphor and reality both in the conversational and partly in political discourse<sup>42</sup>. This “blurred line” is often present in a discourse which actively shapes and/or reproduces a certain collective identification, e.g. in case of mythologizing in connection

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it compensate for the social and economic differences and exclusion, quite the contrary, it aggravates them (Karajić 2002). Therefore, a general statement about the overall increase of the living standard does not say much about its structural characteristics.

<sup>40</sup> “The expression *absolute poverty* refers to defining a poverty line regardless of time and space and takes into the account the fulfilment of one’s existential or primary needs (accommodation, food and clothes). The term *relative [subjective] poverty* denotes defining a poverty line in a specific society at a specific time” (Malenica 2007:231).

<sup>41</sup> There is an awareness of the relativity in the perception of one’s (own) poverty in non-fiction. Sanjin Frlan, a rich young Croatian man is advertising his book about a successful and legitimate (“honest”) way to get rich on the Internet entitled *Financial Revival*. In the book he uses the expression “poverty mentality” to describe dejection and pessimism on the part of the majority as one of the basic characteristics of Croatian society as a whole and an obstacle to becoming rich. Source: <http://www.financijskipreporod.com/index.html> (2/5/2011).

<sup>42</sup> For more information about the persuasive character of the political language in Croatia, used in order to convince the audience about the subject matter, which is characterised by frequent use of conceptual metaphors, consult the PhD thesis which is being written by Nikolina Borčić, M.A. entitled *Conceptual Metaphor and Semantic Fields in Political Interviews in relation to the Characteristics of Gender*.

with constructing and building a national identity. Hence, in her discussions on the discrepancies and overlapping of “objective” (historical) facts and myths<sup>43</sup>, a British anthropologist Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers advocates the term *mythistory*, thus pointing to the constant overlapping of the two levels: historical (factual) and mythical. According to this author, potential for mythologization of a certain term or occurrence can be uncovered at the level of narration techniques. In case of mythologization there is no hesitation about using metaphors and identifying the narrator with what is being said. Otherwise, the narrator tries to be “emotionally distant from the subject matter” (2002:12–13).

“Ordinary” people are precisely such a motif – distancing oneself from them is absent. They are “all of us” – meaning those of us for whom it is implied that we do not exercise any kind of social or economic power. The “victims” of macro processes, which are the very basis of our individual inferiority and “trouble” that is very much akin to the class rhetoric (c.f. Prica 1990). “Ordinary people” are the inferior and the suffering (“pawns”) and are not active participants of macro processes<sup>44</sup>. They are a mythologized class and value category which is quite heterogeneous in itself although it is not explicitly presented as such. My precise meaning might be clearer if I outline examples from particular research situations. The fact that I myself *belonged* to the category of “ordinary” people was suggested to me many times, especially in the initial stages of the interviews for example. Specifically, by way of introduction before discussing the respondents’ specific economic circumstances, I often started by asking questions about the “situation in the country”. It was in this context at the beginning of the interview, in spite of my having already introduced myself as an employed person, that my unemployed respondents, while talking about the general followed by their particular economic hardships, expressed their sympathy and empathy toward me and said they could relate to *my situation*, thus perceiving me “one of them” and explicitly treating me so in their statements. In the majority of cases this was done by using

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<sup>43</sup> The author uses an example of Albanian culture, history and identity for the purpose.

<sup>44</sup> Unsurprisingly, the main source of “ordinary people’s trouble” is the state (to be discussed more thoroughly in one of the following chapters).

plural forms in the conversation. Hence, they talked about “our” problems versus repressive state systems, often pointing at me and at themselves as they did so. In addition, when I mentioned that I was employed at the Faculty they would a priori estimate that my income was not high, which in turn legitimised their seeing me as “one of the ordinary people”. During the conversation, when they found out that I was also a mother of two small children, I had the feeling that this reinforced my assumed existential hardship and insecurity. Therefore, participation and non-participation, on the formal labour market were neither essential nor completely opposite categories when it came to deciding whether or not a person belonged to the “ordinary” people. This ties in with previous similar observations of *relativity and subjectivity* of poverty i.e. employment stability is just one of the many indicators of relative poverty (Karajić 2002:291). Hence, in the perception of one’s “belonging to” the “ordinary” people several (presumed) factors play key roles, where “estimates” in the course of a conversation range from visual to character features of a person. This is based on the collective perception of pauperisation and hardship, the inferior position and victimisation of the majority – to put it briefly, on the omnipresent victimisation discourse about the “ordinary people” and different social groups of whom the unemployed are one.

### **ARE THE UNEMPLOYED HOMOGENEOUS POPULATION?**

In the mid-20th century Rudolf Bićanić, a social economist deconstructed one of the ubiquitous myths about the participants of the Peasants’ Revolt in the XVI century. He pointed out that “the serfs who were revolting were themselves undifferentiated slaves without rights. This vulgar and simplified depiction must be rejected and replaced by a deeper, more specific analysis” (Bićanić 1952:11–12). Bićanić proved that the population in question was indeed heterogeneous, having very different assets and circumstances, by stating:

“Even the XVI century the serfs were different among themselves. Some had a whole serf settlement with 12 acres of arable land and others had a half, a quarter or a one-eighth of a settlement. There



were tenants, subtenants and landless peasants. This phenomenon is significant in the research of serfs' participation in trade. The serfs were doing trade, too. Some of them were acquainted with the market and trading because they were transporting their master's goods, the others were doing trade on their master's behalf, and it was very well known that serfs were also trading on their own behalf." (ibid. 12)

The heterogeneity in rural communities was pointed out by ethnologist Jasna Čapo Žmegač who observed that there were "rich and poor families, ordinary peasants and those who had specific skills – craftsmen, tradesmen, musicians, healers, etc." (Čapo Žmegač 1998:275). In his master's thesis about fishery on the island of Cres, ethnologist Goran Pavel Šantek critically underlined that "Croatian ethnology had long treated Croatian peasants as and economically homogenous social group of poor people who were focused solely on the producing for their own needs and self-preservation" (Šantek 2000:2). In his thesis he attempted to take a deeper look at, challenge and redefine this concept by way of economic and anthropological interpretation, primarily in relation to a wider context of global economic trends (Šantek 2000).

In line with all of the above mentioned interpretations, and based on my own research, I also support the thesis about *heterogeneity* of the unemployed population. Other more recent science papers of social and humanistic provenance present findings that the unemployed in Croatia are neither a homogeneous social group nor the one that is always marginalised in the same way or with the same intensity. It has been confirmed in a qualitative study that there are significant differences among the unemployed population in Croatia, in respect of their level of poverty for example (c.f. Karajić 2002:291). Also, it was specified that

"taking into account that unemployment in Croatia is a structural and mass phenomenon, it is not a characteristic of isolated and marginalised groups alone but rather affects different social strata. This situation has an impact on the way in which the unemployed perceive themselves but also on how they are treated by their closer and wider social environment. The unemployed often do not view themselves as less worthy nor do they consider themselves isolated or stigmatised. On the other hand, it is very rarely that their social

environment blames the unemployed for the situation they are in.”<sup>45</sup>  
(Ofak et al. 2006: 21; c.f. Šverko et al. 2004)

Although this was not the first association connected with the unemployed or unemployment among my respondents, who tend to view themselves as more uniform, more equal and more “like themselves”, it was evident that among the unemployed encompassed by the research there were significant differences in social, financial, property and family status.

Also, there is a clash between the employed and the unemployed perception of unemployment and the unemployed. On the one side, there are persons with formal employment and set working hours within their job and on the other persons formally unemployed and/or active in the informal economy. For example, formally unemployed whom I interviewed and followed in daily situations do not fit in with the ingrained perception of the unemployed, which is largely held by those formally employed about them. “They have all the time in the world” is one of the basic ethic assessments about the unemployed. This is a stereotyped perception that was present in many structured narrations and interviews. As far as I could personally attest, it crops up even in narrations which do not explicitly show this attitude towards the unemployed. After all, the unemployed are “very busy” not only in terms of their involvement in different informal economy jobs, but also in terms of their “openness” to unexpected situations (e.g. an unexpected offer of a part-time job). This “openness” or “readiness” pertains to both men and women. It was women in particular who often changed the arranged time for the interview within this research, either to an earlier or

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<sup>45</sup> It is important to notice that this empathy does not extend to all social groups. Some are excluded on the basis of ethnicity, historical circumstances or stereotyping. The problem of heterogeneity of the unemployed population is further complicated when we consider the Roma, who are in a much more unfavourable (starting) position in comparison with any other social group (e.g. the poor, the socially excluded). It is not only the case when considering the poverty rates (Ofak et al. 2006:23) because “Roma population often has an extreme form” (ibid. 24) but also because the Roma are “one (...) of the rare groups which are most often blamed for their own poverty” (ibid.). The Roma are continuously blamed for their difficult financial and social status, as the culprits for their own destiny. In the following part of my paper I shall also point to a similar feeling of animosity and lack of empathy towards unemployed “Bosnians” (Bosnian Croats, who immigrated to Croatia during and after the Homeland War).

later time, because on a morning in question they were offered to clean curtains or do the shopping for an elderly person whom they were looking after or they were called to do office cleaning earlier than was previously planned. Also, for many interviewees unexpected situations were not connected with work but had to do with organising things at home. More specifically, one of my interviewees, age 57, long-term unemployed was living with a partially bed-ridden husband who was five years her senior. I went to see her on several occasions in an attempt to do the interview. Their home life “arrangements” were frequently changed. On one occasion a neighbour, who had been evicted due to family feuds and legal disputes, stayed with them for several months. The neighbour was staying in their house with a minor son free of charge. They shared the costs of coffee, cigarettes and took turns in bringing home lunch from a soup kitchen. A few months later, after the single mother resolved her housing issue (later she readily repeated that she succeeded because she “had connections”) and was given the right to use one of the so-called social housing flats by the city council, my interviewee had lodgers in one of the two rooms who also lived there for some months. Soon after the lodgers (with two small children) found a bigger flat to rent in the neighbourhood, my interviewee took in a homeless man for whom the Missionaries of Charity (a religious order established by Mother Teresa) were looking for a year’s accommodation due to their reduced accommodation capacity. They offered a monthly cost reimbursement in the amount of 500 HRK.

In each of these informal “arrangements”, although the person in question was very caring, there was also economic motivation on the part of my interviewee given that new lodgers participated to the extent of their ability in overheads, groceries and/or cigarettes costs. For example, the homeless man could not participate financially in an adequate way. Although the Missionaries of Charity gave him 500 HRK a month, which he was supposed to give to his hosts, he often spent the money on beer and cigarettes in the streets during the day. This was also the main reason for the disputes in the household but it was significantly lessened in light of the fact that he regularly helped in cleaning bulky waste from the garden, feeding the animals (dogs and cats) in the garden, chopping wood and lighting the fire or giving assistance in moving the interviewee’s husband who was partially bed-ridden and who owned the house. These and similar types of exchange of services were very often mentioned by my respondents. Although it

does not seem so on the surface, these service and goods transactions were not entirely “free”. Namely, they took time and energy (for planning, socialising – having morning coffee together, providing assistance), which is one of the reasons why the unemployed population tends to be “very busy”. This segment, in the form of a lack of money, is often unavoidable and most relevant to the unemployed. It is one of the “survival strategies”:

“Write this down! You live from moment to moment. There is no plan, it is impossible to have a plan for the future. I also do not think about the past. I adapt to everything that happens to me the way I feel like that day.”

Apart from social activities, the unemployed organise their time to a large extent according to their routine daily and monthly administrative obligations, i.e. regular monthly registration at the Croatian Employment Service, procuring monthly public transport pass, which used to be free of charge until recently, going to a soup kitchen for lunch, monthly registration with their social worker at the Centre for Social Welfare, having medical check ups (due to damaged health in some segment) or taking care of administrative tasks with the CES – pertaining to child support, child allowance or receiving a one-off assistance from the Centre for Social Welfare – and going to the post office to check the payments made to a current account at the bank (the account is used for pension payments for their dependants, partially bed-ridden, household members) etc. Then there is *queuing*: queuing for the monthly public transport pass, queuing for lunch at the soup kitchen. Also, there are many daily “tasks” on the agenda that take place even during unavoidable administrative tasks: checking the local rubbish bins for plastic bottles for which a recycling fee is paid.

All this requires a lot of time, organisational skills and energy, contrary to the general perception that the unemployed, since they “do not work”, have all the time and energy they want during the day. An unemployed 59-year-old woman has been doing unregistered work for more than 10 years, as has her husband. She usually did the cleaning while her husband did repair work ranging from house repairs and security work to distributing parcels and advertising material. She told me that they managed to buy a laptop for their daughter a few years before, which at the time had cost as

much as her two monthly salaries plus a few months' unregistered work that she did at three jobs:

“We [referring to her close family namely, herself, her husband and two daughters] have to ‘get by’ all the time, but this ‘lifestyle’ is exhausting. We were never without any means. For example, we recently bought a laptop for our younger daughter now that she is finishing secondary school. And we are both unemployed! I know it is no small thing. It cost about 5000 kuna. We used a debit card for the current account into which pensions are paid and we ended up deep in the red. But we do not spend money on going out. For example, my husband is not one of those who constantly go out. He goes out from time to time with his friends, but not often. I can see how some of his mates go out every day and whinge about not having money. But, this is because my husband has always got ‘some arrangement’ going. He works a little where there is work, construction etc. But it is exhausting. Sometimes he does not get paid so one year he gave me a used car, good as new, for my birthday because this man owed him for working on his house so they found the way to settle the bill. I almost passed out from shock! I could not believe it! (...) And then we sold it and somehow got the money again.”<sup>46</sup>

## SURVIVAL DISCOURSE

In Croatia there are “objective”<sup>47</sup> parameters and poverty indicators (Škare 1999) which can “measure” the economic and existential

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<sup>46</sup> In one of her papers Sanja Crnković-Pozaić writes about “workers and entrepreneurs in the shadow”, “working unemployed” as she puts it in the title of her paper. Relying on the existing CES statistical sources, where she was working at the time, and focusing on the group of self-employed, the author underlines the dual position of the formally unemployed who are employed in informal economy. Those who are formally unemployed (registered with CES) she writes, do various jobs in informal economy (not only as self-employed) and are in fact “working unemployed” (Crnković-Pozaić 2002).

<sup>47</sup> Marinko Škare, Croatian social economist, wrote about poverty indicators setting and measuring by using a methodology to calculate poverty threshold level considers the methodology satisfactory and “objective”. Primarily because of its potential to define “the necessary consumption” which is needed for fulfilling basic human needs and is expressed in the nutritive value of different foods (Škare 1999:289). What the author considers a

circumstances of a person or a household by using uniform, internationally recognised classifications. This is how we know that

“a person or a family (...) is experiencing economic deprivation if their disposable income is lower than the officially determined poverty threshold, that is to say the threshold of consumption needed to fulfil basic human needs.” (Škare 1999:280; Malenica 2007:117)

Poverty threshold for Croatia was calculated for the first time in 1963 “based on the Household Budget Survey” (Škare 1999:283–284). By means of an adequate methodology this indicator was then used to deduce further data about the total amount of the money needed “by a family (...) in order to secure a good life”<sup>48</sup> (Škare 1999:286).

“If we take the national poverty threshold as a starting point, then there are 8.4% poor persons in Croatia” (Malenica 2007:117), that is to say “approximately one in 22 citizens is experiencing absolute and one in 10 relative poverty” (ibid.). Poverty threshold and internationally recognized measuring standards exist and are defined according to certain parameters. Still, the quantitative, numerical indicators and the attempts to “measure” and quantify one’s (adverse) economic circumstances, are not the only possible methods of observation.<sup>49</sup>

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flaw in this methodology (and rightfully so according to my observations) is insufficient consideration of non-monetary aspects, which relate to “work satisfaction, enjoying free time and other so far immeasurable factors” (ibid.).

<sup>48</sup> Based on these calculations it is possible to monitor the necessary income (in USD) which a family of four needed per year in order to fulfil its basic needs in the period between 1963 and 1995 (“poverty threshold and purchase power in USD”) (see Škare 1999:285). The same author points out interesting information, i.e. “the highest poverty level was recorded (...) in 1972 and “the expansive rising trend in poverty rate and the number of households in poverty at the end of 1978 remained stable through the end of 1988” (ibid. 287). “A sharp increase in poverty rate [from 1990 to 1995] was due to war and destruction as well as transition difficulties in the economy which Croatia experienced” (ibid. 287-288). According to the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the official poverty threshold for Croatia is currently set at 20.000 HRK per year for a single person household and at 50,000 HRK for a household with two adults and two children. Source: *Croatia in Numbers*, Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2010, p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> For example, by posing a question: “What does it mean to be poor in Croatia?” sociologist Zoran Malenica suggests that there is a need for further empirical research

New economic systems, new relations and needs as well as changes at the labour market and high registered unemployment rates began to emerge in Croatia in the 1990s. Against this backdrop, numerous unemployed faced with diminished and restructured formal labour market attempted to use various “survival strategies”, both actually and symbolically, in order to compensate for the absence of formal jobs and the lack of all “manifested” and “latent” job functions which they used to have. Hence, this refers to persons who used to be employed and had a direct life experience of past employment and for whom employment is not just a principle or a life goal. Which strategies did these formerly employed and now unemployed persons rely on to respond to changes in macro economic situation in order to improve, keep and/or redefine their economic, social and symbolic position in their (long-term) unemployment situation? In the “garden of metaphors” (Gerc 1998:87), which are present in conversation and media discourse, a question: *how do “our people” manage to survive?* is often heard. Namely, how do the unemployed shape their daily factual, family and “working” life? These (rhetorical) questions are the basis for the colloquial discourse on “survival”.

The concept of “survival strategies” is used in contemporary sociology and cultural anthropology literature (Italo 2004; Bridger and Pine 1998; Procoli 2004; Kideckel 2008), but can also be found in the official documents of large international financial organisations, like the World Bank, and their different financial funds (*coping strategies, survival activities*)<sup>50</sup> as well as in the daily colloquial usage.

The expression contains a vague term – “survival”. It is used without examination, especially in colloquial discourse, (similar to “ordinary”

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which would move away from relying on collective “impressionist insights” which are prevalent at the moment (Malenica 2007:118) for example, the one about the “Croatian society (...) being polarised into a small number of those who are rich and powerful – the elite and the huge majority of “the disenfranchised and the powerless...” (ibid. 232). I agree with Malenica but unlike him, I consider the “impressionist” insights, as Malenica calls them, potent research material, potential contents and material to be studied and not something to be overcome in research.

<sup>50</sup> Source: <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/Sectors/ECSPE/2E4EDE543787A0C085256A940073F4E4?OpenDocument> (21/10/2011).

people which was discussed earlier), and refers to (self) perception, self (evaluation), subjective self (assessment) of the economic situation. The term “survival” implies some kind of economic and existential insufficiency. However, although it is not used as such it very often just a metaphor. In a nutshell, there is a wide range of financial and other circumstances in which a person can end up and still claim to be “surviving”<sup>51</sup>. In the conversational discourse it is used in offering pointed, rhetorical conclusions to emotionally charged discussions about daily political topics at home or in a café. It is most often used as an interpretation for one’s (own) poor financial circumstances that are taken to be a standard occurrence for (every) “ordinary” person in Croatia. At the same time, they represent an “anomaly” (it *should not be so*) and a “normality” (this is how *it normally is*). In addition, the motif of “survival” is often used in conversational discourse together with the implicit motif of “limits of endurance” with which “the myth on social bomb” is connected (Županov 1995:110). Sociologists review it critically and in a deconstructive manner as “a general prejudice” (ibid.) about the limits of collective endurance which “the ‘little man’ believes, thinking that ‘sliding into misery and poverty cannot last forever and that it must reach a boundary where a kind of ‘a big bang’ will take place” and bring about “a significant improvement in the position of the little man” (ibid.). In the research this view continuously crops up in the interviewees’ testimonies and they almost without exception conclude their testimonies by general formulations, valorisations and projections about the future, such as: “things will get better” or ““these people’<sup>52</sup> may rebel one day”. This is by no means a firm conviction. It is at the same time an omnipresent buzzword, a rhetoric and “a narrative strategy”<sup>53</sup>. However, it often occurs

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<sup>51</sup> Scientific literature mentions the principle of vagueness and ambiguity here and there. It is in this sense (factual or metaphorical) that some authors use the term “survival”. When literature dealing with economic and social strategies within different contexts (e.g. Ott 2002) explicitly interprets informal economy as “a phenomenon necessary for survival” (Ott 2002:3), it is not entirely clear to which extent it occurs (if at all). Perhaps the author herself (unconsciously) succumbs to the narrative matrices of everyday discourse.

<sup>52</sup> This relates to “ordinary” people, who are perceived as victims.

<sup>53</sup> Respondents use it when the conversation takes a turn towards their personal circumstances, which especially affect them, and they try to detach or auto-censor themselves by trivialising their trouble, or deflating its extent in the form of a view (or rhetoric) about some probable future improvement.



as an instrument for *status quo* on different levels, inter alia for maintaining the dominant “*pessimistic perspective*” in values and in the narrations (Đordano 2001:130).

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

On the basis of a cultural analysis the paper points out several qualitative and discursive aspects of unemployment and informal economy in Croatia. It begins by discussing the unemployed as a heterogeneous population which continuously ensures its “survival” outside of the formal systems (which is at the same time a strong criticism of the formal systems). It looks at the ways in which the formally unemployed persons achieve their economic, symbolic and social integrity largely through informal social networks and informal economy. It points to the metaphors and ambiguity in integral elements of public discourse about the unemployed and unemployment (i.e. “ordinary people” and “survival strategies”). It analyses and uncovers various discursive, narrative and symbolic elements of unemployment and informal economy by way of which it becomes evident that “survival” and “ordinary people” are an omnipresent motif in narrations as well as a metaphor. As it was shown, on this level unemployment and informal economy prove to be a complex socio-cultural phenomena which require subtle critical thinking and positioning, primarily in line with the deeply rooted personal and collective attitudes and dominant perceptions of unemployment, the unemployed and the informal economy.

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