

## **PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE LOCAL RESPONSE TO THE ECONOMIC-CRISIS**

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The present economic crisis in Yugoslavia can be seen in terms of the falling rate of economic growth, increasing inflation, rising unemployment, high indebtedness of the country etc. It is considered here as a starting point for understanding various accompanying changes which can be interpreted within the characteristic patterns of responses of people to the crisis, particularly within local, urban and residential environment. On the basis of numerous observations, of aggregative and survey data, the following main types of local (residents') responses were identified: 1. Active response to the crisis, which includes both intensified involvement as a substitution for loss (additional work, self-help, mutual help etc.) as well as protest, revolt, aggressiveness (in the form of strikes of factory workers, intensified public criticism like open letters to newspapers, petitions). 2. Restrictive behaviour or adaptation to change (diminishing consumption, fewer children, lower-quality food, exchange of larger for smaller apartments etc.). 3. Destructive responses which can be exemplified by destructive social behaviour (youth delinquency in the neighbourhoods, theft in nearby fields, etc.) and by selfdestructive behaviour (alcoholism, mental illness, suicide). The theoretical interpretation considering micro changes within the macro context is provided from the point of view of the processes of individuation and socialization.

### **Introduction**

Yugoslav sociologists have recently been paying much attention to the economic and social crises which has followed a period of highly dynamic development of their country. Still, the discussions on this theme tend to be rather general, globalistic, and they are not sufficiently based on empirical research. With regard to how these changes have affected the everyday life of the people in the urban environment, there are few studies which go beyond scattered and fragmentary observation.

It is only within the last few years that some such studies have appeared, dealing with, for example, the consequences of the economic crisis on welfare (Svetlik, 1985); the quality of life of the urban population (Rus, et al., 1985; Seferagić, 1984); the housing poverty in the city — i.e. the slums in Belgrade (Bobić and Vujović, 1985); or with social policy and social correctives in the urban environment (Stritih, et al. 1986). Also comparative, international research on the fiscal crisis of the cities is in progress in Ljubljana (Jambrek, 1986). The Standing Conference of Towns and Communes of Yugoslavia organized a discussion on the »urban development in the conditions of economic stabilization« (**Razvoj gradova** . . . , 1984).

This text is a preliminary analysis which tends primarily to be open and sensitive to a wide variety of the responses to the crisis, rather than one focusing on the precise, quantitative examination and testing of specific hypotheses. It is in this sense that we will deal with the **phenomenology** of the responses to the crisis, which is complemented by potential theoretical generalizations. Thus, we will trace the process — from description to explanation.

Most of the information is based on interviews, on the responses from public opinion polls, direct observations, and secondary sources (statistics, documents) related to the City of Ljubljana, as well as to Slovenia or Yugoslavia.

We will focus first on the micro responses to the crisis situation, particularly within the urban residential environment. The urbanites are the ones who are the most affected by the general economic decline. Some typical patterns of their responses will be identified and interpreted within the broader context of macro-level processes of change and development.

The crisis situation is primarily considered in terms of its economic dimension and is taken as a starting point for the understanding of the changes in the everyday life within a local and residential environment. In the present Yugoslav situation, however, the crisis is not limited to the economic sphere. Sociologists have begun to speak about »social crisis« (Županov, 1984), which encompasses also the socio-political dimension. Finally, all of this is interrelated with the »ecological crisis«. These dimensions of the crisis situation sometimes contradict one another or produce their cumulative effect.

Some of the characteristic features of the economic crisis of Yugoslavia include the following changes. The annual growth rate in the period between 1961 and 1980 was approximately 6% but it fell to only 0,8% in the time from 1981 to 1987. Social product even decreased, (1987 for 1,1% and 1988 for approx. 2%). Real wages have been falling since 1979 and 1984 reached the level that Yugoslavia had nearly twenty years before. At the beginning of seventies Yugoslavia had a tolerable inflation of approximately 10%; 1983 it reached 40,8% (twice as high as in southern Europe and six times higher than in the Western Europe); 1987 it was 98% and 1988 even 252%. The export from Yugoslavia shows a lower rate of growth than either in the West — or East — European countries: 1987 Yugoslavia was the most indebted country in Europe. The unemployment increased from 7,7% at the beginning of seventies to 13,8% in 1987.

These changes can be seen also in the trend of the changes of the general evaluations of the standard of living, as revealed by the six public opinion polls on the basis of a representative sample for Slovenia (see table below).

How are people living?

	Better today (than 5 years ago — %)	Worse today (than 5 years ago — %)	Approximately the same as 5 years ago — %)	Do Not Know (%)
1978	85.2	2.2	12.1	0.5
1980	73.3	7.2	18.0	1.5
1982	40.2	29.1	18.1	2.7
1983	21.0	51.8	14.4	2.7
1984	12.7	69.1	16.6	1.6
1986	15.4	60.1	22.3	1.3
1987	22.3	59.9	15.5	1.2
1988	16.8	66.7	15.0	1.5

From the polls of 1978 to 1988 we may observe the continuous increase of the proportion of the people who have perceived a decline in the standard of living; only the last poll departs from the previous trend. The obtained responses also confirm that the residents of the (large) urban settlements have experienced a relatively more intensive decline than those living in the smaller towns and rural areas. Those whose total income issues from the non-agricultural activities and those without any land relatively more often experience a worsening of their standard of living than the others.<sup>1</sup>

The rural and agricultural populations are both less vulnerable and have better possibilities to realize their »survival strategies«.<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of the numerous observations, we have identified the following types of local (residents') responses to the economic crisis:

### 1. Active responses to the crisis

1.1. **Intensified involvement** as a substitution for loss (additional work, self-help, mutual help, etc.);

1.2. **Protest, revolt, aggressiveness** (in the form of intensified public criticism: open letters to newspapers, petitions, strikes of factory workers).

2. **Restrictive behaviour or adaptation to change** (diminishing consumption, fewer children, lower-quality food, exchange of larger for smaller apartments).

<sup>1</sup> E.g. the inhabitants of the cities have worse conditions for raising children (also the birth rate is falling), it is more difficult for them to solve their housing problems, or to get a job, etc. Although the agricultural population has since the revolution had the most limited access to power, this has not precluded their advantageous position in the present crisis situation.

<sup>2</sup> This is especially relevant for Yugoslavia, where the process of industrialization (»deagrarianization«) was much more rapid than the process of urbanization. According to the statistics based on the 1981 Census, the urban population represented only 48% of the total population, while the non-agricultural population reached 71%. Also, the experiences from World War II (when the resistance movement was based on the direct supply within the rural areas) have had strong implications for today's policies and plans with regard to urban development. Under the influence of the economic crisis (as well as ecological considerations) we find a general (re)orientation away from the large cities in favour of the medium-sized and smaller urban settlements (see contributions in the journal *Komuna*, Belgrade, 1985, 1986).

### 3. Destructive responses

3.1. **Destructive social behaviour** (youth delinquency in the neighbourhood — demolishing public property, theft in nearby fields, etc.).

3.2. **Self-destructive behaviour** (alcoholism, mental illness, suicide, etc.).

This classification will be used as a structure of the presentation of the major part of the empirical material. However, the actual changes call attention to the need for still additional conceptualization. For example, the changes can be analyzed and interpreted

— from the point of view of cross-level shifts, like shifts of responsibility from the collective to the individual level and vice versa;

— in terms of functional transformation of spatio-social units, like change of the land use, e.g. from green, recreational space to cultivated land;

— in terms of (hierarchical) relationship of domination and subordination and social (in-)equality;

— considering the changes of values and policies, etc.

We will refer to these in the last section of the paper, where the theoretical implications of the noted phenomenology of changes will be explicated.

## 2. Active Response to the Crisis

2.1. The first of the three types of responses which may be identified within the wide variety of changes which are now in process at the local level and especially in the cities may be called **active response**. This is, however, still a very broad and heterogeneous category. Here we will focus primarily on the changes within the residential environment.

Instead of the former processes of specialization (division of labour), professionalization, institutionalization and socialization, we now also find the opposite tendencies. For example, the process of socialization of the functions of the family has not only slowed down but even seems to be (within certain limits) reversed. We could speak of de-socialization, deprofessionalization, de-institutionalization, and the like. It is here that we find the important basis for **revitalization** of the activities within the residential environment and within the individual households.

Economic crisis is closely linked to (be it the cause or the consequence of) the crisis of the institutionally provided services, which in the past made informal individual involvement superfluous or even undesirable. The declining economic resources revealed that the institutional provisions were too costly (to be acceptable, especially for the low income strata) and brought to the surface a radical reorientation towards **self-reliance, self-help, self-production, self-servicing**, etc. This is especially characteristic of the functional areas, such as child care, health care, social security and social assistance, education, culture and others, although it has become quite apparent also in the sphere of economic activities which go beyond the workplace to the sphere of the »informal economy«.

2.2. Several sources indicate that welfare institutions are reducing the quantity and quality of their services. They are adapting to the crisis by the processes of **externalization** (shift of responsibility to others), **commercialization** (selling some of their services in order to procure additional income) and/or by increasing efficiency in their functioning (called »rationalization« in the research by Ivan Svetlik, et al., 1985).

Some of these changes also represent a challenge and offer a wider space for informal activities within the local communities. For example: »Many parents cannot afford child care in a day-care center, even though the costs are subsidized. Therefore they search for alternatives, such as baby-sitting, shift work of the mother and father or the help of relatives,<sup>3</sup> friends and neighbours. At the same time, the facilities of the day-care centers are increasingly being poorly utilized. In health care, home care is expected to gain a more important role. Instead of being hospitalized, some patients are attended by their relatives or neighbours, as well as by medical personnel from health centers. The data show that this type of service is gradually increasing« (Ibidem et al., 1985, pp. 25—32). Hospitalization periods, on the other hand, tend to be decreasing.

Furthermore, the institutional provisions for the aged have also not met the earlier expectations. Both in terms of the criteria of humanization as well as in terms of the economic criteria, they do not represent an optimal solution. Mostly, they have assumed the function of hospitals. In the present crisis situation the senior citizens' homes which are not located within the central area of the city try to reduce their costs by introducing various activities, such as cultivating land in the vicinity and providing some of their food themselves (an example of this may be found in the commune of Radeče). However, the large majority of the aged are confined to the home — residential environment and are in need of the »supporting structure«, where they assume some forms of help and self-help. Their standard of living is relatively low, not only because of the decline in their incomes (pensions), but also — at least for some of them — because they are unable to continue with their additional work at home and to take part in the informal reciprocal exchange of labour.

All dimensions of the present crisis — economic, ecological and political — affect also housing construction and the involvement of the inhabitants in solving their housing problems. Statistics reveal that the total housing construction at the global level (in Slovenia or Yugoslavia) is on the decline. Public opinion polls for Slovenia indicate that the »conditions to obtain an apartment« have worsened in the period between 1978 and 1988. The proportion of such responses has increased from 17.4% to 79.8%, as follows:

1978	1980	1982	1983	1984	1986	1987	1988
17.4%	28.9%	57.0%	63.7%	70.4%	71.8%	76.8%	79.8%

However, the relative share of the individually-built housing is on the increase, while the proportion of housing built within the framework of so-

<sup>3</sup> Instead of kindergarten, so-called »grandmother service« is also becoming popular. E.g. children are taken to their grandparents during the day, or grandparents may daily commute and join their young families with children. In the case where the grandparents come from another republic (with different cultural norms and level of development), it was observed that the process of adaptation of the entire family to the new environment tends to be prolonged. Traditional customs are preserved for a longer period of time.

cial (public) housing is on the decline. Such a trend is in direct opposition to the housing policy which favours public housing construction. The failure of this policy can be explained — at least to a large extent — precisely in terms of the restricted involvement of the interested citizens. This is one of the reasons for the fact that in Yugoslavia we find a disproportion between the relatively high investments and the comparatively low output (housing units built).

Prior to the present crisis, the »help« (public resources) and self-help were not interdependent. It appeared to be more in accordance with the general program of socialist development for individuals to be on the waiting list to obtain socially owned apartments than to become involved in private building. There was no incentive or guidance for self-help. Quite extensive individual building activities were present all along, although more in the sense of »despite all the restrictions« rather than as a legitimate part of the system or as a subject of urban planning. The crisis exposed and intensified the disproportions between the declining personal incomes and the increasing costs of housing construction.

The meaning of the »active response« to such contradictory tendencies may be seen in the following changes which have been recently taking place:

- a) in the extension of the work of the individual builders;
- b) in their financial participation, which became compulsory as a precondition to quality for a public loan;
- c) in the reactivation of housing cooperatives, which did not receive much public support in the past;
- d) in the extension of the informal network of reciprocal exchange of labour (services, material); and
- e) in the activation of the solidarity potential (among relatives, friends).

The research on the quality of life in Ljubljana (1984) revealed that one half (50.6%) of the owners of apartments and residential houses in Ljubljana obtained them by self-construction. Selfbuilders are most frequently found to be within the category of those having high school or vocational school levels of education. They are the best able to enter the network of reciprocal exchange of labour. Less frequently, self-builders belong to the categories of those with the highest and lowest levels of education (Rus, et al., 1985b; for the analysis for Hungary see: Sik, 1986).

63.4% of the self-builders received help during the construction process from parents, other relatives or friends (in rural areas, this help is even more commonly widespread, and this figure amounts to more than 70%). Proportionally, the least help is received by the builders with higher levels of education. They are financially more independent and at the same time do not have the skills required for a reciprocal exchange of work (Ibid., p. 74).<sup>4</sup>

Another characteristic of the building activities in housing in the crisis situation is the increasing role played by adaptation and reconstruction of the existing structures, rather than the building of completely new ones. The

<sup>4</sup> If this interpretation is correct, then we are even here (in the case of relatives or friends) not dealing with the pure category of solidarity but also with barter economy.

declining real personal incomes and the extremely high inflation rate have restricted the possibilities for larger building activities. In this sense, the present economic crisis has contradictorily affected the involvement of the individuals concerned. On the one hand, it has prevented a significant proportion of the potential self-builders to even start with such activities. The goal appears to be either unattainable or too remote to motivate any initiation of concrete activity in that direction. Thus, they become immobilized and do not actualize even the limited resources and work potential at their disposal. For many potential builders the initial preconditions are not met: they do not obtain the location (building permit). This may be more a consequence of the scarcity of land (or at least of the conception concerning the land use) rather than a direct result of the economic crisis.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, once the elementary (pre)conditions are met, the builders must — with their limited financial means — even intensify their involvement in the informal network of reciprocal exchange and in the actualization of the latent solidarity potential.

The example of housing construction in the commune Vrhnika reveals the following trends, which indicate the changing proportions between the number of construction permits and the number of permits for housing adaptation, as follows:

Year	Number of Permits for New Constructions	Index	Number of Permits for Adaptations	Index
1981	135	100	196	100
1982	131	97	282	144
1983	95	70	298	152
1984	93	69	467	238
1985	81	60	534	272
1986	71	53	720	367
1987	50	37	500	255

2.4. Various activities related to the energy crisis have become widespread practice, including the shift from the use of fuel-oil back to the use of cheaper sources of heat — i.e., firewood and coal. This has initiated many activities in this area not required in the previous arrangement (which enabled — at least in the best instances — complete automation). These activities concern routine work directly related to the provision of heating as well as — especially in the present transitional period — the many rearrangements required to provide for the needed space (the building of wood-sheds, etc.). This in turn implies involvement concerning the administrative procedures, in order to obtain building permits or required loans, etc. Each of these activities involves also an extension of the network of contacts and dependencies both within and beyond the neighbourhood and the city. There occurs a kind of revitalization of the linkages of the residents to their places of origin in the rural areas, where they can find cheaper firewood as well as many agricultural products.

<sup>5</sup> In this regard the critical assessment of the existing situation reveals a certain rigidity and uniformity in the land use policy and regulations. The fear of scarcity of land leads to a kind of general blockade of building activity.

There is a whole range of different types and intensities of involvement of the urbanites in this matter: not only transportation, but sawing and storage as well; some by the unchopped wood or timber still standing in the forest and chop and process it themselves.

The most involved are those who even in such a case do not pay in cash but recompensate by additional work for the farmer. Within the residential neighbourhood there appears an increase in the circulation (exchange) of information relevant to the new situation.<sup>6</sup> Generally, these activities lead to more frequent cooperation as well as to higher frequency of conflicts among the neighbours.

2.5. The most visible form of additional work and of mass-involvement of residents within their housing environment is gardening (lot holders). It represents a spontaneous response to the declining standard of living, either legally or illegally (irrespective of the property rights or planning regulations), individually or collectively. It attracts especially lower income groups for whom it may represent an important source of relief to their family budget.<sup>7</sup> Although gardening has always been attractive also as a form of recreation, it has recently clearly become primarily a **utilitarian preoccupation**. As such, it is causing conflicts within neighbourhoods and communes; especially in cases where the lot holders occupy the green plots within the residential areas.

The citizens most often start or initiate gardening themselves, spontaneously. The official agencies tend to (re-)act with delay; either in providing the required land or other conditions, or by enforcing order and confronting the privatistic tendencies of the individuals.

### 3. Restrictive Responses

3.1. The phenomenology of the restrictive responses to the crisis situation is extremely rich at both the individual and collective (institutional) levels of analysis. Here we will limit ourselves to the exemplification of the first.

A public opinion survey in Slovenia in 1988 reveals that 90% of the respondents have — more or less — had to restrict their consumption: a) Nearly one half of the population (48,2%) must very carefully economize with money and restrict themselves in purchasing of equipment, clothing and the like; b) 37,3% of them respond to the crisis with increasing thriftiness, although they limit themselves in less important items of consumption and grant themselves less luxury; c) 9,3% of them are not lacking anything and they do not have to restrict themselves; and finally, d) there are 4.2% of the respondents who are affected by the crisis so much that they have to greatly restrict themselves even in the purchasing of food, and they consider themselves to be living in poverty.

The survey also revealed the tendency of changing motivation for work since 1982; there is an increasing proportion of respondents who work »simply in order to survive«.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. where to obtain the wood, about possibilities of transportation; where to find a (reliable or less expensive) carpenter or bricklayer; what is the relevant information regarding heating systems, etc.

<sup>7</sup> 70% of the inhabitants of Slovenia are involved in gardening.

Other sources of information (statistics, reports of social workers, interviews with the office holders of various institutions, etc.) reveal a great variety of concrete forms of restrictive responses to the crisis situation.

3.2. On the issue of housing, residents show some reversed interests than in the past. For the first time, they are interested in **obtaining small(er) — apartments**. Until now, it was not common for tenants (having tenant's rights) to themselves offer to exchange their present larger apartment for a smaller one. In spite of the relatively low rentals, the falling personal incomes led them to the search for new ways of economizing. Also, construction companies found that larger apartments tend to remain empty.

The residents with lowest incomes who received the so-called »solidarity apartments« (without any individual financial participation) now find that they are not able to pay the rent. They restrict themselves in their actual use of the floor-space and take in sub-tenants (who often pay them much more than the amount of the total rent). Alternatively, they look for older and cheaper apartments and/or apply for subsidies to cover the rent. The number of such applications has increased in the past few years.

3.3. Restrictive response to the crisis is apparent also in the changes of the spatial mobility and spatial framework of everyday life. People generally spend more of their time within a confined local area and limit their mobility to more distant places. The role of the »time-cost distance« is changing: **costs** rather than time are becoming the primary consideration. Either existentially less necessary travel is renounced or distances of this kind of travel are reduced (spatial mobility). Commuters economize by creating a car-pools; instead of everyone using his personal car, three or four workers travel to work together.

During weekends people tend to stay at home more often than in the past, or they make excursions only in the vicinity. In Ljubljana it has been observed that the number of visitors to the nearby hills has significantly increased. Residents generally rely more on public transportation; a greater number ride bicycles or walk. An additional way of economizing for families with small children is that they take turns in taking each others' children on an outing — a hike, etc.

While an increasing proportion of inhabitants use public transportation rather than personal cars, even those who have cars tend to use the most economizing ones. In the crisis situation the car is losing its importance as a status symbol; its value is becoming a more utilitarian one.

3.4. Declining real personal incomes at a time when **energy costs** have increased has led to many changes in the residential environment. The reduction of heating costs concerns the tendency to

- reduce the number of rooms heated;
- keep the temperature at a lower level;
- reduce the period (season) of heating the apartments;
- assess the actual consumption of individual households within the apartment buildings.

In the wintertime residents restrict the use of the actual living-space, in order to economize on heating costs. This may mean less privacy (more distur-

bance) but also more contact among the family members.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, individual as well as institutional (policy) changes are reflected in the practice to generally have a lower temperature in the housing space (19°C) than was the standard in the past. The increasing burden of heating (or energy) costs has generated a pressure to more clearly assess the actual consumption of individual families within the **undifferentiated pool**, i.e. as in apartment buildings. In the neighbourhood of Savsko naselje in Ljubljana calorimeters were introduced, in order to make it possible to measure the actual consumption of individual household units. This act itself contributed to a 30% reduction of heat consumption! It is a further indication that undifferentiated collectivity (or rather aggregate) allows for a high level of irresponsible behaviour. Collective consumption holds a large potential for economization which can be realized only if the collectivity does not suppress the clear identity and role of the individuals. Similarly, there are non-utilized potentials when only individual units are considered but not their (potential) communalities.<sup>9</sup>

3.5. Consumer behaviour is changing as well. Consumers are more attentive to the differences in prices at a given time as well as to the (expected) fluctuation of prices over time. They are becoming more selective in their choice of where to buy, particularly with respect to larger items, and no longer buy at the nearest store, but even go to another place entirely, if necessary.

Generally, people buy smaller quantities. However, when they receive information — typically from an informal network of contacts — about a prospective increase in prices, they will purchase a large amount of commodities and store them at home.

3.6. The well established rights or generally accepted programs are not implemented under the pressures of the economic interests. A typical example is the night work of women. It appeared in the seventies that night work of women was almost eliminated (with the exception of the area of health); more recently, (in 1985) women in the textile industry have been involved in night work. The trade union expressed its consensus with regard to all the applications of work organizations intending to introduce night work for women.

Also health insurance benefits are not being fully utilized. Workers tend to reduce their absence from work even when they are entitled to health insurance compensation, in order to avoid reductions in their actual income.

Similarly, it has been observed that in the past few years employees have less often asserted their right to stay home when they have to care for a member of the family.

3.7. Generally, the conditions for »having and raising children« have been getting worse — according to the responses from the Slovene public opinion polls during the period 1978—1984 (with a small difference in 1986). The percentage of such responses changed as follows (Mlinar, 1986):

<sup>8</sup> Such sociologically interesting implications for the changing relations among the family members would be deserving of special research.

<sup>9</sup> There are certain well established patterns of individual consumption which persist without any question or even challenge within the crisis situation, although collective provision would greatly reduce the costs. In this sense, it is surprising that certain services like laundry are more individualized in Yugoslav cities than in Western, capitalistic countries.

1978	1980	1982	1983	1984	1986	1987	1988
8.7%	11.7%	29.2%	58.0%	73.8%	68.2%	67,6%	71,7%

This, at least to some extent, explains the falling birth rate (which is clearly shown in the statistical data for Ljubljana since 1980; see: **Pomembnejši kazalci** . . . 1984, p. 22) as another restrictive response to the economic crisis.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. Destructive Response to the Economic Crisis

As the third type of response to the economic crisis at the local level, and especially with regard to the residential environment, we have categorized the following three types of behaviour:

a) First, the acts by which the actor illegitimately obtains some benefit for himself at the expense of — more or less clearly identified — others.

b) The second kind of examples include the acts causing damage to others without producing any benefit to oneself (rage).

c) The third type of response to the economic crisis is reflected in the individual or collective behaviour which is basically self-destructive.<sup>11</sup>

The destructive response of the first type most directly reflects the declining availability of material goods. With a lower personal income, an increasing proportion of it is spent on food. Consumption of higher quality food is declining. Among the variety of alternative ways of providing food, which become more common during a time of crisis, we find also those which are directly or indirectly illegal. For example, it seems symptomatic that in the past few years we more frequently find previously almost unknown instances of theft — stealing of agricultural products in the fields in the vicinity of the urban settlements or within them. Farmers are complaining about their losses and about the lack of respect for their property and effort. They must consider what is it still worth planting in order not to lose their crop. The gardeners (lot holders) within the residential areas are even more exposed to theft.

While theft represents damage to specific individuals, there are other violations of the normative order and of the spatial organization of the residential environment which are in conflict with more general interests. We may again take gardening as an example of this. In spite of the favourable attitude<sup>12</sup> toward this form of self-help, such activity often involves the possession of some area of public land. In the commune Ljubljana-Moste, in 1985 a dispute arose between the opponents and the supporters of the gardeners within the residential areas. There were complaints of some of the citizens that gardeners were violating the established spatial and normative order, that they often illegally occupied public land and limited the open, green space available to the other residents. The complainants were demanding mo-

<sup>10</sup> Even the number of marriages is slightly declining; however, this may be due to the more frequent cases of informal living together of couples.

<sup>11</sup> Statistical data do not support the hypothesis of an overall increase of all kinds of crime in the period of economic depression. In spite of this, we may observe many symptomatic changes concerning all three types of responses. We will limit ourselves here to the exemplification of the phenomenology of the symptomatic changes; while more elaborate analysis and testing of hypotheses exceeds the purposes of this paper.

<sup>12</sup> Which is opposite to the prevailing official ideology in past decades.

re rigid control and intervention of the local government bodies responsible for this field of public interest. They were asking: »Where are the inspectors?« »Who is tolerating such privatistic behaviour?«, etc.

The acquisition of space at the expense of others is an accompanying issue of the building activities (additional room, storage space) within the existing neighbourhoods. Adaptations and reconstructions may directly affect neighbours; but more often they violate the site plan and the general housing design of the neighbourhood. This may involve

- the violation of public or private property;
- the functional change of the land use; and
- the violation of the aesthetic criteria.

In spite of the intensification of control, the changes of economic and ecological conditions exact many changes in the built environment as well. However, because of their mass character, the local authorities cannot cope with them. They do not have current information on the violations, nor are they willing to intervene with unpopular repressive acts. The tolerance towards violations is higher also because the (spatial) order itself may be questionable. Dynamic and regressive changes at present reveal the weakness, that is, the **static conception of the urban planning** itself. As such, it hardly provides for legitimate repression and confrontation with violations which are an expression of the pressing needs within the residential environment.

Further, it was observed that there is increasing theft in the self-service supermarkets<sup>13</sup> and in the apartment buildings. Residents are undertaking additional measures to protect their storage room space (i.e. cellars), cars, bicycles, etc.

Directly linked to the present economic situation is the practice of storing the goods for which there is no assurance of regular supply or — as has been mentioned already — for which there has been at least gossip about a probable price increase. This does not only change the function of part of the available space (now needed for storage) but also leads to direct violation of **safety regulations**, e.g. when storing gasoline in the garages, or within houses (in cellars) and the like.

Limited or irregular supply of some commodities tends to be related to the government to regulate the foreign trade (priority of export to diminish foreign debts). Similarly, there are limited possibilities for certain categories of employment, etc. In such situations, we find a reinforcement of irregular and illegal ways and means to achieve the desired good. The public opinion poll for Slovenia in 1986 indicates a general perception of the citizens of the increasing role of informal connections (corruption) in providing mutual benefits regardless of the legal order.

The second type of response — damage to others without benefit (rage) — cannot be so directly linked to and explained in terms of the present economic crisis. Behaviour of this kind appears in various forms of aggression toward other residents or toward public goods. Here we find some classical forms of youth delinquency<sup>14</sup> in the residential environments. This includes

<sup>13</sup> In Ljubljana and other urban settlements; *Naša skupnost*, No. 1, Ljubljana, January 15, 1985.

<sup>14</sup> Statistical data for Slovenia show a rapid increase of the youth delinquency from 1981, when the number of offences was 825, to 1984, when it reached 1,297; there was some decline in 1985, coinciding also with the lower intensity of some other problems, as revealed in the public opinion poll in 1986.

demolishing public facilities and private property, as well as fights in public places, etc. The latter tend to be associated with conflicts between the autochthonous population and the immigrants (from other republics).

It is only indirectly and hypothetically that we can relate the observed forms of destructive behaviour to the economic crisis, as for instance: a) additional work which involves an increasing portion of the inhabitants is being associated (by social workers and local activists) to the reduced care and attention which parents pay to their children; b) withdrawal of the children from kindergartens (because of the inability to pay the costs); c) increasing unemployment, which primarily affects young people who miss the opportunities for creative involvement, etc.

As the third type of destructive response, we have considered several forms of self-destructive behaviour. Various sources reveal, for instance, increasing personal tensions; there are indications of a higher level of neurosis, aggressiveness and of psychological problems in general. There was a need to extend the counselling activity in the schools. The number of visitors to psychiatrists and frequency of mental illnesses during the past few years show a tendency to be increasing. Alcoholism, suicides and the divorce rate tend to be (although not consistently) increasing as well. There are various form of apathy, etc. However the connection of these phenomena with the economic crisis was not clearly established yet.

## 5. Micro Changes Within the Macro Context: Individuation and Socialization

How can the observed changes be interpreted within the broader context of developmental processes? We conceive development as a contradictory process (a unity of opposites) of individuation and socialization. The increase in autonomy at the lower levels of development tends to diminish the inter-connectedness of the actors and vice versa. However, such incompatibility is diminishing, which in the long run leads to the qualitative transformation of this relationship (as it seems to be developing with the new »information revolution«). A step further on the one side will not be a limitation but rather an incentive for the movement ahead on the other side. This would denote the process of overcoming the basic social contradictions.

Such a notion of development can be used as a criterion to evaluate and interpret the concrete changes.<sup>15</sup> It encompasses four patterns of change. The first — the increasing autonomy within extending association — represents a prototype of development.

Autonomy	Association
1. high, increasing	high, increasing
2. high, increasing	low, decreasing
3. low, decreasing	high, increasing
4. low, decreasing	low, decreasing

<sup>15</sup> Sociological analysis of a crisis cannot fulfill its task if it limits itself to the indicators like declining income, inflation, foreign debts, etc. It has to reveal the meaning of these changes in terms of the basic dimensions of the paradigm of social development.

Special attention must be given to the identification of the second pattern: **autonomy with isolation** (separation, restricted association).<sup>16</sup> For instance, as a response to uncertainty and irregularity of the supply of certain commodities, we find a stronger tendency towards **individual accumulation**, which has typical features of **privatization**. Various forms of economizing also assume at least temporary accumulation, excluded from the market. Furthermore, seizing some land (open space) within a neighbourhood for exclusive private use (e.g. gardening) indicates the same kind of situation.

A further example of such changes in the context of economic crisis is the selling of apartments in social ownership to the interested tenants. This is a very visible shift from social to private (individual) ownership. However, there is the much more common but less visible form of privatization of public housing. We here mean the general immobilization which can be observed in the very limited exchange of apartments among the tenants and finally also in the legal provision of inheritance of the tenant's rights. Public enterprises cannot revoke apartments from employees who have more than a ten-year record of employment. Also, low housing rentals, which do not cover the costs of the reproduction of the public housing stock represents a form of private appropriation at the expense of long term interests. This enables a higher level of consumption.<sup>17</sup> Residents of the higher income categories (who actually have the easiest access to the socially owned apartments) benefit the most; they can transfer their financial means to the (in Yugoslavia very characteristic) construction of privately owned weekend (vacation) homes (see also: Vujović, 1986). Thus, we may perceive these shifts:

- a) from the social to the individual (private), as well as
- b) from the sphere of production to the sphere of consumption.

The tendency toward privatization is based on very different grounds. Before the crisis, it was present in the excessive consumption accompanying low housing rental. But it also appears among the measures undertaken (or tolerated) in order to overcome the crisis.

In practice, it is not clearly distinguished when the increasing role (autonomy) of the individual subjects represents a correction of the previous excessive institutionalization (contributing to their self-actualization) and when it represents a form of de-socialization. We indicate the important distinction between **privatization** which can be defined in terms of high autonomy and low association on the one hand, and **individuation** which involves both high (increasing) autonomy as well as high association, on the other. Only the second can open the way out of the present crisis.

The predominant conception of (socialist) development in Yugoslavia — and elsewhere — tended to equate it with the process of socialization. And socialization again was mostly understood as being synonymous with the process of institutionalization. The question of (individual) autonomy and of the contradictory nature of development was not of primary concern. »Hyper-institutionalization« created an illusionary expectation that the »system« can

<sup>16</sup> Such a binary language clearly represents a simplification which does not fully correspond to the reality.

<sup>17</sup> Until recently, the expenses for housing in the family budget of the inhabitants in the largest cities of Yugoslavia amounted to only 5% of the total monthly income. See: *Razvoj gradova*. . . 1984.

solve the problems without (fully) involving the individuals. While waiting for society to provide, for example, public housing, the inhabitants were demobilized and their needs were not met for an extended period of time. Although the institutional provision of child care did not fulfill the actual needs for decades, the inhabitants were at the same time discouraged or prevented to rely on the informal arrangements within their neighbourhood. Formal, institutional functioning did not provide room for complementary spontaneous involvement in the form of self-help. Voluntary work within the welfare system was marginalized, both in terms of ideological criteria as well as from the point of view of newly arising »professionals« (like social workers), who did not well establish their own identity.

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## FENOMENOLOGIJA LOKALNIH ODGOVORA NA EKONOMSKU KRIZU

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Sadašnju ekonomsku krizu u Jugoslaviji možemo promatrati s obzirom na pad stope ekonomskog rasta, povećavanje inflacije, nezaposlenosti, visoku zaduženost zemlje itd. Prihvaćamo je kao polazišnu točku za razumijevanje različitih pratećih promjena koje se mogu tumačiti karakterističnom strukturom odgovora ljudi na krizu, posebno u lokalnoj, urbanoj i rezidencijalnoj okolini. Na temelju brojnih opažanja, prikupljanja primarnih podataka i anketiranja, razlikujemo slijedeće glavne tipove odgovora lokalne populacije: 1. Aktivni odgovor na krizu, koji uključuje pojačane napore kao nadomjestak za gubitke (dopunski rad, samopomoć, uzajamnu pomoć, itd.), kao i proteste, pobunu, agresivnost (u obliku štrajkova tvorničkih radnika, pojačane javne kritike poput pisama čitalaca novinama, peticije). 2. Restriktivno ponašanje, odnosno adaptacija na promjenu (smanjenje potrošnje, smanjenje broja djece, pogoršanje ishrane, orijentacija na manje stanove itd.). 3. Destruktivni odgovori, čiji su primjeri destruktivno društveno ponašanje (delinkventno ponašanje omladine u susjedstvu, krađe na okolnim poljima itd.) i samodestruktivno ponašanje (alkoholizam, mentalna oboljenja, samoubistva). Zbivanje mikro promjena unutar makro konteksta teorijski se interpretira sa stajališta procesa individuacije i socijalizacije.

(prevela Sanja **Vrhovec-Vučemilović**)