

## Separate schools – a divided community: The role of the school in post-war social reconstruction

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The experiences of post-conflict societies show that they continue to live with communities that are deeply divided. In the city of Vukovar, Croatia, the ethnic division is evident in all aspects of social life, including the area of schooling. The children in Vukovar attend separate classes divided according to ethnicity, and the curriculum is provided either in the Croatian or in the Serbian language. In this way, the basic condition for normalization of the inter-group relations – contact – is discouraged. In order to examine more thoroughly what kind of education Vukovar children, their parents and their teachers want and how they see the possibility of children from different ethnic backgrounds attending the same schools, we conducted an explorative study, asking 718 pupils attending elementary and high schools, 953 of their parents and 113 teachers of Croatian and Serbian origin about their attitudes towards their present and future education. These attitudes were related with the measures of inter-ethnic relations: the type of inter-ethnic contacts and friendships and the tendency to discriminate against the out-group. This helped to identify social consequences that the present separated schooling has had on the interethnic attitudes and behaviors. The possibility of schools serving as an integrative social factor in the post-conflict society is discussed.

*Key words:* education, minority education, inter-ethnic relations, divided community

Education organized within a formal system of schooling is a basic tool by which society transmits knowledge, values and norms to the youth. By the same token the function of the school system is also to transmit national values, language, culture and identity of a particular nation-state. In this respect education has an integrative role in society, enabling the society and the state to reproduce itself (cf. Billig, 1995). Since multiethnicity is a feature of the majority of modern societies, in the last thirty years special attention has been devoted to the issue of how to organize effective education for children belonging to ethnic minorities and immigrant communities (Eldering & Kloprogge, 1989; Gallagher, 2004; Wilson, 2004; Vedder, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Nickmans, 2006).

There are two main approaches to the issue of minority education: assimilationist, stemming from the philosophy that an educated individual has better opportunities for social mobility; hence, minority education is motivated by an attempt to assimilate minority members into the mainstream society as soon as possible. This kind of schooling has been a living practice in the United States and in many European countries. Nevertheless, such an assimilationist approach has not produced the best results concerning the integration of minority groups into broader society. The other more recent approach to minority education - educational multiculturalism/interculturalism - aims to preserve the specificity of minority cultures by treating them as equally valuable and by encouraging the majority culture to get to know and accept the elements of minority cultures (Kymlicka, 1995; Man Ling Lee, 2005), which is the view that advocates integration of minority groups instead of assimilation. The intercultural approach to minority education (cf. Gundara, 2000) hinges on the rights of minorities to be educated in their own language, treating language as a vital tool for preserving the culture. On the other hand, the majority also has certain expectations from minority groups. By ensuring collective rights for ethnic groups, the majority expects social reciprocity – that minority group members embrace the culture they live in, working on their integration into the larger society.

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Although majority of work in multicultural school settings has been devoted to academic achievement of minority members rather than to issues of intergroup relations, it is clear that schools are a fertile ground for modeling patterns of social relations that exist in a certain society. Since the famous *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision more than fifty years ago, it has been widely hypothesized that school settings are an appropriate environment for improving interracial and inter-ethnic relations among peers (Schofield & Eurich-Fulcer, 2003; Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). The underlying assumption is simple: if children and adolescents have an opportunity to meet on an equal footing, there is an increased likelihood that they will get to know each other better and have a chance to become acquaintances and even friends. Allport's contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), Sherif's early studies at Robbers Cave (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) and more recent developments in related theoretical paradigms (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000) provide a possible theoretical framework for studying intergroup relations. However, the contact hypothesis, both in its earlier and the later version, predicts that mere contact is not a sufficient condition for successful relations (cf. Niens & Cairns, 2005). Under certain conditions (for example, in case of social inequality and major status differences between groups), group mixing may even have detrimental effects, as corroborated by Pettigrew's earlier work (1971) and works by other authors (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Group social differences clearly have an effect, even in the majority and minority dating preferences (Chen, Edwards, Young, & Greenberger, 2001). A more recent work further corroborates these findings. For example, Eitle and Eitle (2003) showed that increased school district segregation was negatively related to school violence, an association that was particularly strong when there was greater community inequality. An unstable society or a political context with a prolonged conflict between groups might also be "a wrong condition" for pursuing the doctrine of multiculturalism (Bekerman, 2004).

Nevertheless, there is a large body of research showing that the possibility of contact opens up the possibility of making friendships. DuBois and Hirsch (1990) reported that among children from integrated schools, 80% of both blacks and whites<sup>1</sup> declared having an other-race school friend, and more than 50% reported having a close other-race friend from school. These results clearly corroborated the assumption that the school can be considered a setting which provides an opportunity for making friendships with people from the out-group. Following the same line of study, results obtained in ethnically diverse schools (Howes & Wu, 1990) show that children engage in both cross-ethnic and same-ethnic friendships. However, the sit-

uation is not as optimistic when considering out-of-school settings. The same study (DuBois & Hirsch, 1990) showed that only about 25% of the participants report that they see a close other-race school friend outside the school. These results indicate that out-of-school inter-ethnic contacts are rare or less frequent than it might be expected, even when school settings enable children to get to know each other and make personal contacts. Without the exposure to the out-group experiences in the school, such contacts can only be less frequent, and opportunities to develop into intergroup meaningful relationships even fewer. Moreover, a development of the contact hypothesis has pointed out the importance of interpersonal intimacy in developing more favorable intergroup relations. For example, Pettigrew (1997) showed that out-group friendship predicted lower prejudice. The same study also found that having an out-group friend had a generalized positive effect on attitudes towards groups others than the friend was a member of. Furthermore, the extended contact hypothesis (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997) proposed positive association between knowledge of cross-group friendships and favorable intergroup attitudes. In four independent studies it was demonstrated that knowledge about an in-group member having a friend from an out-group could lead towards more positive intergroup attitudes (Wright et al., 1997).

Apart from having positive consequences in school settings, experiencing an ethnically mixed school environment might have long-term effects outside the school. For example, Braddock & McPartland (1989) showed that children who attended desegregated schools were, as adults, more likely to live and work in mixed neighborhoods, compared to children who went to segregated schools. Positive long-term effects of experiencing integrated schools have been documented in other conflict areas, especially when the school provides a unique (or the first) opportunity for meeting members of another community to people who would not otherwise have such an opportunity (Aboud & Levy, 2000; Montgomery, Fraser, McGlynn, Smith, & Gallagher, 2003).

Of course, it is not just any form of mixing students from different ethnic backgrounds that might result in establishing positive intergroup relations, even in a highly multicultural society. Schofield and Eurich-Fulcer (2003) point out that there is a body of empirical research proving that classical Allport's conditions are favorable circumstances for avoiding a common result of mere desegregation, i. e. "resegregation". Recent analyses of the long-term effects of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision corroborate this notion (Zirkel & Cantor, 2004). When the division in society is profound and cuts across every aspect of social life, as for example in the case of the division in Northern Ireland, public support for integrated schools is crucial (Cairns & Hewstone, 2002; Gallagher, 2004).

<sup>1</sup> Terminology used in the original paper.

*The socio-political context of minority education in Vukovar, Croatia*

Croatia has a long tradition of minority schooling. The Education Act specifies three types of minority schooling. The first type provides for establishing schools in which all subjects are taught in the language of a particular minority, with the Croatian language being just one of the school subjects. Some of the Croatian indigenous minorities practice this form of schooling (Italians in Istria, Hungarians in Eastern Slavonia). In the second type, the subjects relevant for minority cultural heritage are taught in their mother tongue, and the other school subjects (i.e. math and science) are taught in Croatian. In the third type, the whole standard curriculum is taught in Croatian language, but *additional classes* relevant for the minority cultural heritage are introduced in the minority's mother tongue.

The issue of minority education in Croatia has been particularly salient after the recent war. As a post-war and transitional country, which established its sovereignty after the breakdown of the multiethnic state of former Yugoslavia, Croatia has faced the challenge of organizing an education system for its minorities. The most demanding task was related to the education of the Serbian minority, which is the largest ethnic minority in the country (about 5 percent of the Croatian population; Croatian National Census, 2001). This is an extremely complex issue, given the history of the 1991-1995 war. This is especially true of the region of Eastern Croatia, and particularly the town of Vukovar that was peacefully re-integrated into the Croatian territory after four years of Serbian occupation. During this period most of the non-Serbian population was expelled and it was not until 1997 that the process of the return of the displaced populations to their homes was started. Before the war there were 29 ethnic groups living together in the Vukovar region. The two major ethnic groups were Croats (about 47%) and Serbs (about 32 %). According to the 2001 census, the same territory was populated by 57.5 % of Croats, and about 33% of Serbs (Croatian National Census, 2001).

In 1995, the minority education for Serbs became regulated by an agreement signed by the Croatian government and Serbian representatives, and supervised by the international community. Its purpose was to ensure the protection of Serbian minority rights, including education. Education was supposed to be an area where the former adversaries were expected to put aside their animosities and start working together in order to help the process of healing and social recovery. It is important to emphasize that the separated school system for the children of Serbian and Croatian origin is a consequence of the recent war; before the war all the children attended the same classes and were taught in the same language. However, after the war, the schools became divided on the basis of the language: for Serbian children the language of instruction became Serbian, and for Croatian children it became Croatian. The provisional

agreement was binding for five years, allowing for a period to negotiate various minority education options. Nevertheless, even five years after the expiration of the provisional agreement, the situation remains the same: Croatian and Serbian children still go to separated schools and are taught in their respective mother tongues. Until September 2006, children were separated even physically, in some cases attending classes in different buildings or at least in different half-day shifts. The decision to let the children share the same school buildings and attend the school in the same time was a step forward. However, they still do not attend the same classes; and segregation in schools and in out-school settings remains.

*The background of the present research*

Given high tensions between the Croatian majority and the Serbian minority and a very slow process of social reconstruction, the role of the school in post-war processes has been particularly important. The region of Vukovar suffered tremendous destruction, massive losses, atrocities and traumatization during the war. The atmosphere of mutual distrust and social division which does not encourage social contacts between members of different ethnic groups still prevails. In such an environment children do not have the opportunity to meet their peers from "the other side", not even in school. Although the school is not the only socializing agent, it is a major formative agent throughout the period of childhood and adolescence. By being divided in the schools (even before, in kindergartens) and not being encouraged to communicate beyond the ethnic lines, children build their identity primarily around the ethnicity since the early age. Social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) states that people value groups they belong to and use them as a source of their self-esteem. By evaluating the group they identify with more positively compared to an outgroup people maintain and enhance their self-worth. Constant and competitive social comparisons in the circumstances of divided society boost both the majority and minority identities in Vukovar schools, providing no space for a necessary condition for prejudice reduction – interpersonal encounters.

In order to examine what kind of education children, their parents and their teachers want and how they see the possibility of children of different ethnic background attending the same schools, we conducted an explorative study in Vukovar, by examining the subjects' attitudes towards the present and future education. Having in mind the Janus nature of minority education, which can promote integration and multiculturalism as well as lead to minority isolationism and social disintegration, we wanted to tap attitudes relevant in the school context and relate them to some aspects of minority-majority relations in the city. The study objectives were two-fold: firstly, to explore children's, parents' and teachers' attitudes towards education as such and, more

specifically, towards school and out-of-school integration of ethnic communities, towards multiculturalism and minority assimilation; and secondly, to explore intergroup relations by examining the nature of the participants' out-group relations and their readiness to discriminate against their out-group peers in various everyday situations. Drawing on the contact hypothesis and social identity theory, we assumed that children with no experience of harmonious inter-ethnic contacts would declare fewer intergroup friendships and show a greater tendency to discriminate against the out-group than adults in order to keep group boundaries more clear and distinctiveness between groups more apparent. By relating the relevant attitudes and behavioral indicators of intergroup relations we wanted to shed light on the links between different aspects of majority and minority relations in this highly divided community.

Regarding relations among attitudes and behavioral indicators of intergroup relations we predicted positive correlations between behavioral indicators of intergroup contact and inter-ethnic friendships, and attitudes towards school integration, out-of-school integration of ethnic communities, and multiculturalism. We also assume that for the ethnic majority there will be a negative correlation between behavioral indicators of contact and friendships and the attitudes towards assimilation of minorities. Following the contact hypothesis, the more open attitude of majority towards out-group enables majority member to get to know *the other*, realize his/her cultural distinctiveness, acknowledge it and appreciate it. This is also exactly what multicultural doctrine of intergroup contact would predict. The social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) would make a similar prediction, since majority group would not experience any major identity threat by contacting with minority members in more personalized way. For the minority groups we expect a positive relation between the measures of contact and attitudes towards assimilation. Looking for contacts with majority and having friends in majority group could weaken ties with one's own minority group and decrease the perception of a threat to own group identity through assimilation with the out-group. If minority member is faced with an accepting majority group (social identity theory would qualify this as non-threatening intergroup situation), s/he could accommodate and embrace majority culture as a part of her/his own identity. Here it is possible that the out-groups rather than in-groups are perceived as a resource one could rely on and thus adopt more assimilationist strategy (for a more elaborated discussion on resource mobilization theory and assimilationism see Moghaddam & Perreault, 2001). The question is if the minority member perceives this strategy as being more assimilationist or more integrative (cf. Berry, 2006).

## METHOD

### *Participants*

The participants included 718 students of elementary and high schools (206 sixth graders with 54% from Croatian classes and 46% from Serbian classes; 221 eighth graders with 45% from Croatian classes and 55% from Serbian classes; and 291 high school students with 47% from Croatian classes and 53% from Serbian classes), 953 parents (483 Croats: 52% mothers and 48% fathers, and 470 Serbs: 53% mothers and 47% fathers) and 113 teachers (46% from the Croatian language program, and 40 % from the Serbian language program; the rest taught in both programs). The probability cluster sampling model was used, with all six and eight grades of elementary school and second grades of high school treated as clusters in all the schools where curriculum was provided in both Croatian and Serbian language (this was true for all the schools but one). In the following step the probability sample from all target classes was drawn. The sample was purposefully corrected by increasing the number of high school students attending the curriculum in the Serbian language at the Gymnasium school. This was done at the explicit demand of the Serbian community representatives because within the model of probability sampling, the Serbian Gymnasium class was simply not drawn from the basic pool of all schools and classes to be included in the research. Since Gymnasium students are usually better in their academic achievement, the Serbian minority representatives insisted that these students should have been included in the sample. However, no difference in any outcome variable was found when data were analyzed with and without respondents from this school. Hence it's sound to believe that this exception did not violate any important feature of the sampling model, which together with the sample size ensured high representative quality of the study. Namely, the sample included 25% of the elementary school population and almost 15% of the secondary school population in the town and a corresponding proportion of parents. The teachers in the sample were purposefully sampled because they taught the subjects relevant for the national heritage in the Croatian or the Serbian language (Croatian or Serbian, History, Geography, Music and Art).

### *Instruments and procedures*

*Attitudes towards education.* The factor analysis of 39 items common to all three subsamples (students, parents, and teachers) revealed seven factors that served to develop seven attitudinal scales. Since children's choice of schooling is predominantly influenced by their parents, it was justifiable to assume fairly similar dimensions underlying children's and parental attitudes towards education. Moreover, separate factor analyses done on students and parents

samples produced highly congruent structures.<sup>2</sup> Given the number of attitudinal items and a size of the teacher sample it was not warranted to perform a separate factor analysis on this sample data. Finally, our major goal was to have a number of functional (usable) and satisfactory reliable scales, which enable us to compare the attitudes of interests between samples. Therefore we decided to perform the factor analysis using data from all three samples. For the purpose of this article five scales of greatest relevance for the study objectives were used in further analyses. Inter-item reliability for each scale was calculated as Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ). Since scale reliabilities were similar for all samples, Cronbach's alphas calculated for the whole sample are given.

1. *Education as a means of achieving life values* (tapped by items such as: Quality education should teach me to think critically; Education will enable me to have greater influence in society.). The scale contained 7 items, with Cronbach's alpha of .75.
2. *School integration* (items such as: All children should be educated together, children should not be separated in separate classrooms based on their nationality; Serbian and Croatian children should go to school together, because they will get to know each other and make friends.). The scale consisted of 11 items, with  $\alpha = .90$ .
3. *Social integration of children out of school* (such as: I would not mind if my boyfriend/girlfriend was a Serb/Croat; My parents pay attention to the ethnicity of my friends.).<sup>3</sup> The scale contained 4 items, with  $\alpha = .71$ .
4. *Tolerance of diversity* (e.g. I would like to learn in school about the contribution of ethnic minorities to the history, science and culture of Croatia; Ethnic minorities enrich the culture of every nation.). This scale had 9 items with  $\alpha = .80$ .
5. *Assimilation of ethnic minorities* (e.g. Since schools are located in Croatia, all pupils should study in Croatian; The majority nation should determine the way education should be organized in a country.). This scale consisted of 3 items with  $\alpha = .76$ .

The responses were given on a four-point scale, without the neutral point, from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree"). Since scales included a different number of items, in order to make inter-scale comparisons easier, the result for each scale was computed as a sum of values divided by the number of items.

<sup>2</sup> Results of these analyses including all the items and factor loadings are available from the authors.

<sup>3</sup> The scale of the social integration of children out of school was not administered to teachers.

*Inter-ethnic contacts and friendships.* Participants were asked about the contacts they had with members of other ethnic groups. Their responses were coded from 1 (no contacts whatsoever), 2 (accidental contacts), 3 (acquaintances), to 4 (friends). They were also asked to indicate how many acquaintances and friends they had among members of other groups. The responses were coded as 1 (up to 10), 2 (between 11 and 50 friends), and 3 (more than 50 friends).

*The tendency for discrimination.* Participants were provided with descriptions of three everyday situations and asked if they would necessarily choose a member from their own group in such a situation in order to complete the task described. The total number of positive or negative responses was summed, with zero as the minimum result, and three as the maximum result. The inter-item reliability of this three-item scale was satisfactory in all the samples (in children sample  $\alpha = .76$ ; in parental sample  $\alpha = .91$ ; in teacher sample  $\alpha = .73$ ). An example including one description of an everyday situation for students and one for adults is given in Appendix A.

*Socio-demographic characteristics.* The questionnaire included a series of socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnic affiliation, residential status, place of birth of the participants and their parents, place of residence of the participants in the war period between 1991 and 1997, level of education (for parents), and the significance of religion in the life of the individual.

In the preparatory phase of the study, given the social sensitivity of the issues studied, considerable time and effort was put into explaining the objectives and methods of the study to all the stakeholders in the process of education. Sessions were held with representatives of educational authorities, representatives of the Serb ethnic minority, school principals and their deputies in the schools that participated in the study. The second round of meetings was held with parents from all the classes that were included in the sample. The research team provided detailed information about the study and answered the parents' questions. The parents were asked to give consent for their children to participate in the study, and were asked to participate in the study themselves. In total, 15 parents' meetings were held, with a high response rate (approximately 70%). A great majority of the parents gave consent on behalf of their children and agreed to participate in the study. In four cases (3 cases in the Croatian language curriculum classes, and 1 case in the Serbian language curriculum class) parents walked out of the meeting in protest, judging the whole research as senseless because "What is there to research when it is a fact that all children should attend Croatian language program classes?" or "This is one more attempt to assimilate the Serbs in Vukovar!" However, generally speaking, during these meetings the parents showed deep concern about life hardships and the economic future of their families.

### Procedure

All questionnaires were completed anonymously and were administered in the native tongues of the participants. A Serbian language lector made sure that translation of the questionnaire for Serbian sample was in concordance with the standard Serbian language. The student questionnaires were administered in groups, during regular classes. In most classes, administration lasted a little under one school period (45 min), although in some lower grade classes it lasted a bit longer. During this period only a member of the research team was present, who was also able to provide individual explanations if any of the pupils asked for them. The researcher was a female of Croatian ethnic background. All students from both ethnic backgrounds had high proficiency in Croatian language; so the oral instructions were given in Croatian. However, all written instructions and questionnaires were in children's native tongue. Moreover, information relevant for the research process (for example, the day when parental questionnaires were supposed to be returned to school) was written on the school board in cyrillic letter.

Parent questionnaires were sent home through their children. The parents completed the questionnaires, sealed them into an envelope that was provided and returned them to the school in the same way, where the research team collected them. The parental response ratio was high, 80 percent of parents filled out the questionnaires.

Teacher questionnaires were given to school principals or their deputies, who distributed them to the teachers. After completing them, the teachers handed them in to the members of the research team in sealed envelopes.

## RESULTS

In all attitudinal scales higher scores indicate a more positive attitude towards the respective attitude object (i.e. showing preference for school integration, more support for social integration of children out of school, placing higher value on education, having a greater tolerance of diversity or a greater inclination for the assimilation of national minorities). The neutral point is 2.5, which means that scores higher than this may be interpreted as indicating a positive attitude, and scores below this point as indicating a negative attitude.

### *Attitudes towards various aspects of education*

While MANOVA with multiple dependent variables - attitudes towards *the value of education, school integration, and social integration, tolerance towards diversity, and attitudes towards minority assimilation* - seemed to be an appropriate analysis for examining the effects of majority/minority and participants' social role status (student, parent, teacher), we decided to conduct several univariate ANOVAs, for each

dependent variable separately. There are a few reasons for such decision. The first one is correlation among dependent variables. Since some authors (Weinfurt, 1995) emphasize a requirement of dependent variables being correlated in order to fulfill conditions for performing MANOVA, we have doubts about our results fulfilling this condition, having in mind sizes of the coefficients obtained. However, more serious objection for not performing MANOVA was a fact that the patterns of correlations were not the same in the majority and the minority samples. Finally, we could not include all five dependent variables in MANOVA, since one of them – attitudes towards social integration – was taken only in the samples of children and parents.

As for dependent behavioral measures – a tendency to discriminate and a measure of inter-group contacts and friendships - there was an additional argument for not performing MANOVA: these three variables are not at the same level of behavior: a tendency to discriminate is a measure of attitude, or a measure of behavioral intent, at best, while measures of cross-group contacts and friendships are reports of real behaviors.

Two way (majority/minority status x participants' social role) ANOVA was performed on the *value of education* scores, revealing significant main effect for majority/minority status  $F(1,1735) = 13.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.007$ . Majority scored higher ( $M = 3.61$ ) on the value of education scale than minority ( $M = 3.54$ ); however, an effect size of this difference is of no practical value. A significant main effect of the social role of the participants  $F(1,1735) = 8.67, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.01$  showed that parents ( $M = 3.59; SD = 0.46$ ) and students ( $M = 3.59; SD = 0.43$ ), not differing among themselves, ascribed more merits to the value of education than teachers did ( $M = 3.40; SD = 0.46$ ). Again, a caution is warranted – the effect size of this difference is negligible. A significant majority/minority status x social role interaction  $F(2,1735) = 3.38, p < .03, \eta^2 = 0.004$  (see Figure 1) indicates that value of education ascribed by minority or majority depends on the social role one has; however, here again a significance of this difference seems to be just a product of a sample size. Nevertheless, in Croatian sample there was no difference in how various groups of participants perceived the value of education – they all appreciated it greatly, while in Serbian sample teachers clearly differed from children and their parents.

Regarding *school integration* there was a significant main effect of majority/minority status  $F(1,1727) = 11.15, p < .01, \eta^2 = 0.006$ , with minority holding more positive attitudes towards school integration ( $M = 2.77; SD = 0.70$ ) than majority ( $M = 2.36; SD = 0.90$ ). Significant main effect of participant's social role status  $F(1,1727) = 77.64, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.082$  showed that teachers supported school integration most ( $M = 2.80; SD = 0.68$ ), then parents ( $M = 2.75; SD = 0.87$ ), and then children  $M = 2.29; SD = 0.72$ ). However, a significant majority/minority status x social role interaction  $F(2,1727) = 10.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.01$  indicated a different

Table 1  
Attitudes towards various aspects of education and minority education among students, parents and teachers<sup>4</sup>

Attitudes	Curriculum in the Croatian language						Curriculum in the Serbian language					
	Children		Parents		Teachers		Children		Parents		Teachers	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Value of education	3.64	0.395	3.60	0.453	3.51	0.380	3.54a	0.462	3.59a,b	0.446	3.27c	0.511
School integration	2.07a	0.722	2.51b	0.971	2.95c	0.744	2.50a	0.661	3.00b	0.669	2.64a,c	0.559
Social integration <sup>5</sup>	2.25	0.909	2.19	0.940			2.88a	0.753	2.98b	0.684		
Tolerance towards diversity	2.97a	0.620	3.21b	0.641	3.43b,c	0.499	3.31a	0.471	3.74b	0.330	3.80b,c	0.393
Assimilation of minor.	2.91a	0.821	3.39b	0.741	3.01a,c	0.698	1.73a	0.760	2.02b	0.904	1.51a, c	0.608

Note. Means in the same row with a different subscript differ at  $p < .05$  in the Scheffé posthoc comparison.

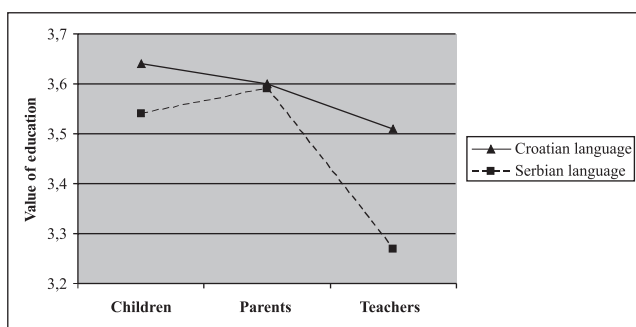


Figure 1. Attitudes towards value of education as a function of majority/minority and social role status

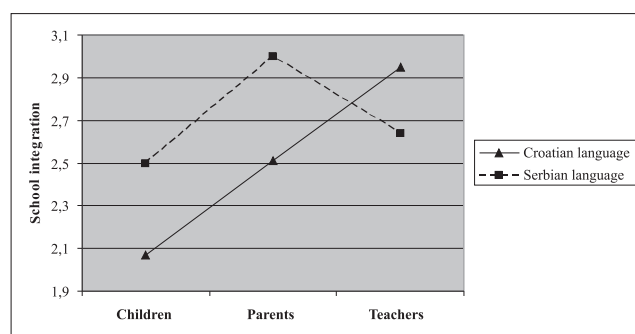


Figure 2. Attitudes towards school integration as a function of majority/minority and social role status

pattern of school integration depending on both factors (see Figure 2). In majority sample the higher a participant was on the hierarchy of social roles related to school the more positive his/her attitudes towards the school integration was. On the contrary, in minority sample this trend was true for the children and the parents, but not for the teachers: their attitude was neutral and more similar to children's than to parental.

In the Croatian language program neither the students nor their parents expressed a positive attitude towards out-of-the school social integration ( $t(813) = 0.90, p > .10$ ). This attitude in the Serbian language program was positive both

among the students and the parents, although it was significantly more positive among the parents ( $t(830) = -2.13, p < .01$ ).

As for *tolerance towards diversity* there was a significant main effect of majority/minority status  $F(1,1724) = 106.57, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.058$ , with minority holding more positive attitudes towards diversity ( $M = 3.57$ ) than majority ( $M = 3.12$ ). The main effect of the social role status was also significant  $F(1,1724) = 97.90, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.102$ , showing the most positive attitudes of the teachers ( $M = 3.61; SD = 0.48$ ). They did not differ from the parents ( $M = 3.48; SD = 0.58$ ); however both adult groups differed from the children ( $M =$

<sup>4</sup>The data on 95 teachers who teach either in the Croatian language program (N=50) or in the Serbian language program (N=45) are specified. The results for the teachers who teach in both programs, 13 in total, have not been analyzed here. Five teachers did not specify which language program they teach in.

<sup>5</sup>Attitudes on social integration were not examined in the teacher sample.

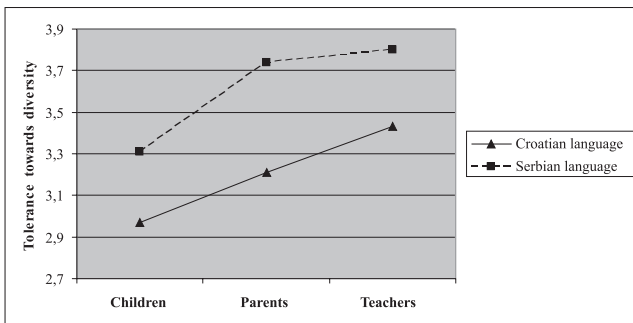


Figure 3. Attitudes on tolerance towards diversity as a function of majority/minority and social role status

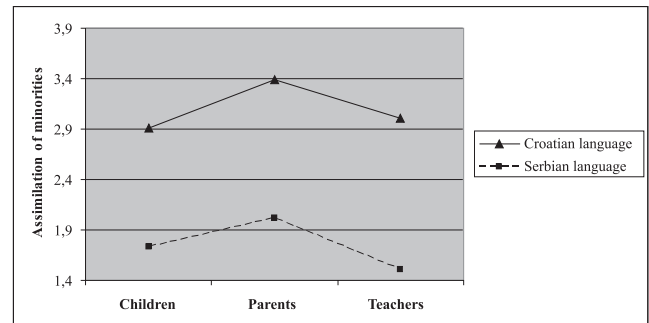


Figure 4. Attitudes towards assimilation of minorities as a function of majority/minority and social role status

3.14;  $SD = 0.47$ ). A significant majority/minority status x social role interaction  $F(2,1724) = 7.275, p < .01, \eta^2 = 0.008$  indicated differences in tolerance in ethnic samples, depending on their social roles (see Figure 3): adults showed more tolerant attitudes than children in both samples, however, minority adults seemed to be more alike in their attitudes than adult groups in the majority sample.

Differences in attitudes towards *assimilation of minorities* were also evident. A main effect of the majority/minority status  $F(1,1741) = 477.61, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.215$  revealed majority being more prone towards the assimilation ( $M = 3.14; SD = 0.80$ ) than minority ( $M = 1.87; SD = 0.85$ ), while the main effect of the social role status  $F(1,1741) = 49.99, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.054$  revealed parents holding most assimilationist view ( $M = 3.14; SD = 0.47$ ) and differing from both the teachers ( $M = 2.29; SD = 1.00$ ) and the children ( $M = 2.30; SD = 0.99$ ). No differences between teachers and children were found ( $p > .05$ ). Interaction effect of these two ( $F(2,1741) = 3.58, p < .05, \eta^2 = 0.004$ ) (see Figure 4) with post hoc comparisons showed that children and teachers held more similar attitudes in the both samples, while parents differed. However, while in minority sample the attitudes are clearly anti-assimilationist, in majority sample all the groups were prone to assimilation.

#### Inter-ethnic contacts and friendships

The results show that there was a minority-majority difference in how the groups perceived their relations, both in terms of the degree of closeness and in terms of the number of intergroup friendships (Table 2, Figure 5). There was also a clear trend in both ethnic samples for older participants to declare a greater degree of closeness with the out-group and having more friends in the out-group. Two-way ANOVAs with majority/minority and social role status were performed on the contacts between ethnic groups and number of interethnic friendship as dependent variables. As for *mutual contacts*, two main effects and their interaction were

significant. Majority reported having less close contact with the minority ( $M = 2.72; SD = 1.08$  vs.  $M = 3.30; SD = 0.92, F(1,1673) = 45.92, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.027$ ). Closer contacts were reported by teachers ( $M = 3.22; SD = 0.84$ ), and by parents ( $M = 3.13; SD = 0.97$ ) who did not differ among themselves ( $p > .05$ ); however both adult samples differed from the children ( $M = 2.84; SD = 1.12$ ),  $F(1,1673) = 20.55, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.024$ . Interaction of the two main factors was also significant  $F(2,1673) = 4.19, p < .05, \eta^2 = 0.005$ , showing a pattern of closer relationships as a function of the social role and majority/minority. While in minority sample there is a clear difference in contacts depending on whether a participant was a child or an adult, with adults reporting more out-group contacts, in majority sample it was not the same if the adult was a parent or a teacher: children and parental tendencies are more similar, showing no difference in out-group contacts, but teachers reported more contact than children.

There was a weak significant main effect of the majority/minority status on the measure of the *number of friends*  $F(1,1024) = 3.98, p < .05, \eta^2 = 0.004$ , showing that minority had more majority friends ( $M = 1.53; SD = 0.72$ ), than majority had minority friends ( $M = 1.41; SD = 0.70$ ). A significant main effect of the social role revealed  $F(1,1024) = 19.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.036$  parents having more friends ( $M = 1.61; SD = 0.77$ ) than children ( $M = 1.31; SD = 0.59$ ). Teachers ( $M = 1.53; SD = 0.73$ ) did not differ from either parents or children ( $p > .05$ ). No significant interaction was found ( $F(1,1024) = 2.19, p > .05$ ).

#### The tendency for discrimination

The last ANOVA analysis on discrimination as a dependent variable revealed two significant main effects and a significant interaction. There was a difference between majority ( $M = 1.22; SD = 1.26$ ) and minority ( $M = 0.45; SD = 0.90$ ) in their tendency to discriminate against the other group ( $F(1,1701) = 70.98, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.04$ ). There was also a significant main affect of the social role status ( $F(1,1701)$



Table 2  
Relations with out-group members: means and standard deviation

Indicators of inter-group relations	Curriculum in the Croatian language						Curriculum in the Serbian language					
	Children		Parents		Teachers		Children		Parents		Teachers	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Degree of contact	2.61a	1.15	2.77a,b	1.03	3.02b,c	0.82	3.05a	1.05	3.49b	0.75	3.44b,c	0.81
Number of friends	1.31a	0.62	1.50b	0.75	1.41a,b	0.68	1.31a	0.56	1.68b	0.78	1.63a,b	0.76
Tendency to discriminate	1.53a	1.17	1.06b	1.29	0.60c	0.95	0.92a	1.10	0.13b	0.53	0.02b,c	0.37

Note: Means in the same row with a different subscript differ at  $p < 0.05$  in the Scheffé posthoc comparison

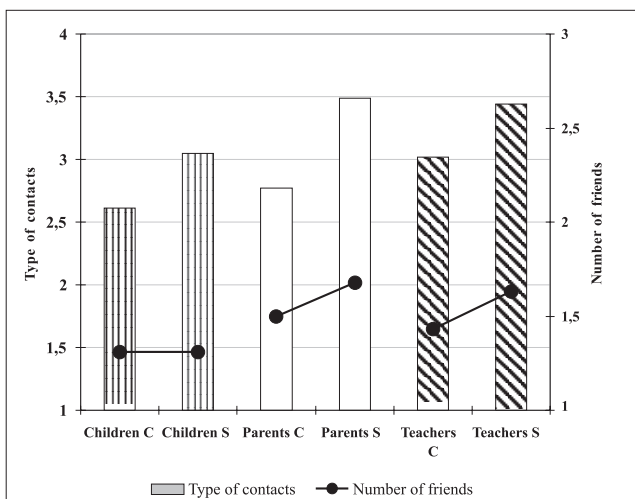


Figure 5. Type of contacts with out-group members from none (1) to friendly (4) and the number of out-group friends, from up to 10 (1) to more than 50 (3). "C" stands for Croats, and "S" for Serbs.

= 82.88,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.089$ ), showing children being more prone to discriminate ( $M = 1.21$ ;  $SD = 1.17$ ) than parents ( $M = 0.59$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ) and teachers ( $M = 0.36$ ;  $SD = 0.77$ ). Post hoc comparison found no difference between parents and teachers ( $p > .05$ ). A weak but significant interaction was found ( $F(2,1701) = 5.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.007$ ), revealing a consistent decline of the tendency to discriminate in majority sample, going from children, parents to teachers, while in minority sample adults simply discriminate less and with no differences among themselves.

#### Correlations between attitudinal measures and behavioral indicators of intergroup relations

Correlation analysis between attitudes towards various aspects of schooling and behavioral measures of intergroup contact and friendships was done in each subsample and for each of the ethnic groups separately. In general, this analysis corroborates the expectation about positive relations between measures of intergroup contacts and friendships with in-school and-out-of school integration and attitudes towards tolerance.

A general pattern of associations was similar in both ethnic samples: the more out-group contacts the participants had, the more positive their attitudes towards social and school integration and tolerance were. In the majority sample the similar pattern of correlations was found between attitudinal measures and the number of out-group friends. However, in the minority sample the measure of friendship was only weakly related to the attitudes towards school integration, and only so in the student sample. There were also significant correlations between the number of out-group friends and social integration in the minority subsamples of students and parents. While measure of out-group contact was negatively related to assimilation in the majority students and parental samples, there was a positive association between these measures in the students and parental minority samples.

The measure of discrimination was strongly related to attitudinal measures in the majority subsamples: negatively with the in-school and out-of-school integration, and with the tolerant attitudes, and positively with the assimilationist attitudes. The same pattern of correlations between discrimination and attitudes towards integration was found in the minority sample; however, here it was no link between discrimination and the attitudes towards assimilation.

Table 3  
Correlations between attitudes towards various aspects of schooling and behavioural measures of inter-group relations in the samples of students (NCro=345; NSer=373), parents (NCro=483; NSer=470) and teachers (NCro=50; NSer=45) in both language program

	Curriculum in the Croatian language						Curriculum in the Serbian language							
	No. of friends	Discrim	Value of educat.	School integra-tion	Social-integ	Tolerance	Assim	No. of friends	Discrim	Value of educat	School integra-tion	Social-integ	Tolerance	Assim
Contacts	Students	.21**	-.55**	-.04	.53**	.46**	.39**	-.15**	-.38**	.01	.37**	.37**	.15**	.20**
	Parents	.14*	-.52**	-.11*	.61**	.60**	.48**	-.24**	-.24**	.08	.32**	.30**	.14**	.26**
	Teachers	-.27	-.41**	.06	.52**	-	.50**	-.09	-.23	.15	.26	-	.25	-.01
No. of friends	Students		-.27**	-.17*	.32**	.30**	.23**	-.31**	-.13*	.04	.22**	.15*	.08	.02
	Parents		-.14*	-.01	.32**	.30**	.21**	-.14*	.05	-.03	.10	.11*	.01	.21**
	Teachers		-.17	.01	.08	-	-.11	-.01	-.22	.09	.05		.09	.06
Discrim.	Students			.17**	-.71**	-.63**	-.58**	.28**		-.02	-.42**	-.44**	-.36**	-.06
	Parents			.15**	-.67**	-.61**	-.62**	.27**		-.04	-.26**	-.14**	-.38**	-.06
	Teachers			-.23	-.68**	-	-.58**	.36*		-.16	-.24	-	.04	-.15
Value of educat.	Students				-.21**	-.18**	.03	.09		.05	.05	.06	.33**	.03
	Parents				-.03	-.07	.10*	.11*		.11*	.11*	.13**	.24**	.11*
	Teachers				.03	-	.04	.04		.07	.07	-	.18	-.31*
School integra-tion	Students					.65**	.63**	-.20**			.50**	.50**	.40**	.35**
	Parents					.80**	.67**	-.28**			.63**	.63**	.32**	.46**
	Teachers						.65**	-.13					.14	.27
Social integra-tion	Students						.48**	-.19**					.27**	.11*
	Parents						.62**	-.33**					.29**	.35**
	Teachers													
Tolerance	Students							-.14*						.07
	Parents							-.19**						.01
	Teachers							-.13						-.45**

Note.\*\* p<.01; \* p<.05.

In both majority and minority samples there were positive associations between the measures of integration and tolerance. However, relations among these attitudes and assimilation were reversed between the majority and the minority samples: assimilationist attitudes were negatively related with integration and tolerance in the majority sample, while in the minority sample school and social integration were positively related with assimilationist attitudes.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to explore how students, their parents and teachers in Vukovar assess various aspects of education in the context of complex community inter-ethnic relations, where the ethnically segregated schools are a major reflection of divisions. The second purpose of the study was to relate these attitudes with behavioral indicators of intergroup relations, operationalized with a nature of intergroup contact and friendships. It could have been assumed that segregated schooling might further limit social relations between the two ethnic groups, especially among children, as indicated by attitudes and behaviors towards the out-groups.

It was found that the participants from both ethnic groups and subsamples value education as a vehicle for achieving important life values. They saw education as an important means of achieving success in life, and this was equally true for students, their parents and teachers. Although clearly positive, the attitudes towards the value of education of the Serbian teachers were the lowest in the sample. We assume that their attitudes reflected economic hardships and the lower standard that the teachers in Serbian schools faced in comparison to Croatian teachers (Čorkalo & Ajduković, 2003) in terms of more evident lack of resources, teaching materials and poor conditions of school buildings they work in. There were also highly positive attitudes towards cultural diversity, more so in the minority than in the majority group, reflecting possibly a pervasive difference in advocating multiculturalism or assimilation as strategies for arranging minority-majority relations within the society (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a). While majority position is more often assimilationist, striving to create a more homogenous society, minority position is more often multicultural, advocating a more diverse society, which enables ethnic groups to maintain their cultural distinctiveness and specific heritage. In this view, variations in promoting diversity/assimilation attitudes in majority and minority groups could be seen as a strategy for dealing with identity threat (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a) especially when social context is complex and burdened with identity salience. It is worth noting that although the attitudes towards diversity were positive in all subsamples, they were the least positive among children. One cannot help asking if the reluctance to appreciate cultural diversity in a multiethnic community is a foreseeable consequence of the segregated schooling and other forms

of social division that are the conditions under which these children have been socialized.

The attitude towards minority assimilation is the area of most serious dispute between the minority and the majority. While the attitudes of the majority group are clearly assimilatory, the attitudes of the minority group are quite the opposite. In a community divided along the ethnic lines, such discrepancy is an indicator of the need to work on multiculturalism issues, having in mind the balance between ethnic and national identity (cf. Korostelina, 2003), or the balance between subgroup and superordinate identity (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b). In the process of social reconstruction of a fragmented community, the most sensitive issue is how to improve the sense of community without threatening the feelings of value and uniqueness of each group. The models of intergroup relations in multicultural societies have identified two key factors which determine the nature of relationships between groups: one is the maintenance and development of ethnic uniqueness and cultural identity, and the other is the desirability of inter-ethnic contacts and the values of inclusion in the wider social community (Berry, 2006; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a). Although the classical contact paradigm proved to be efficient in many intergroup settings, much work has been done since, in order to clarify the role of other factors that go beyond the ideal contact conditions (e. g. Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b; Schofield & Hausman, 2004; Dixon, Durrheim & Tredoux, 2005; Vedder, et al., 2006). One of the factors that certainly call a more vigor attention of the researchers is the importance of the minority understanding of causes and consequences of societal inequalities and everyday difficulties minority members face when interacting with the *majority owned* society. An intended isolation from or an intensive interaction with the majority may result as a consequence of specific concepts that the minority members may have and meanings they ascribe to the interaction with the majority. A recent analysis of British Muslims' perceptions of intergroup relations in Britain and implications they may have for social change highlighted this issue (Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins, 2006).

Our findings indicate an important difference between the minority and the majority with regard to intergroup contacts and attitudes. While more out-group contact is related to more tolerant attitudes towards cultural diversity in both groups, the pattern is different when looking at relationship between contacts and attitudes towards assimilation. For the majority this association is negative, corroborating our assumption that in the majority sample more contact would be related with anti-assimilationist attitudes, since the contact would provide an opportunity for acknowledgement and acceptance of the minority group culture. For the majority this acceptance means respect for diversity. However, for the minority the acceptance of the majority culture as indicated by a number of contacts means more favorable attitudes to-

wards assimilation. If this correlation is caused by the greater awareness among minority members that immersion in the dominant culture produces more benefits for an individual or by some other factor is not possible to answer within a present research design; however, it could be a promising avenue for future research. It also would be worthwhile to learn more about the correlation patterns in the minority and majority samples by looking at the underlying assumptions and interpretations of current inter-community relation and societal arrangements that exist within community and the wider society. This kind of analysis should go beyond quantitative measures of number of contacts and attitudinal items estimations. In this respect we agree with Dixon and colleagues (2005) who called for more participant-wise measures of contacts which would take into account participants' constructions and meanings they attach to such a contact.

When considering the concept of multiculturalism, the situation in the town of Vukovar and the neighboring areas is not a typical one. The Serbs settled in Croatia hundreds of years ago and the inter-ethnic relations in Vukovar were good until 1991 and the outbreak of war that led to the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. The Croat-Serb relations among the people living in the town today need to be reshaped in such a way that full integration into the wider society (where the Croats are the majority) is accomplished by the minority group (the Serbs), while at the same time the minority group cultural heritage is preserved. If organized wisely, schools have the potential to contribute to this goal (McGlynn, Niens, Cairns, & Hewstone, 2004). In this process, positive attitudes towards diversity can be an important asset providing a cognitive framework for organizing intergroup attitudes. Research conducted in peaceful but highly multicultural settings show that adults can see diversity as a potential for adolescents, and as a strength for promoting positive racial relations (Onyekwuluje, 2000). Teachers as transmitters of not only knowledge but also of ethnic norms and values have a special role in promoting multiculturalism versus ethnic isolationism. For example, Smith and Tyler (1996) showed that authority figures, like teachers in school, could have an important role in transmitting ideas on group pride and respect.

Inter-ethnic tensions in Vukovar are still strong and palpable, clearly evident in the attitudes towards social integration of children, and in the attitudes towards school integration. Although the students from the minority group and their parents hold moderately positive attitudes towards integration of children outside the school, the students' attitudes are less positive than their parents'. The majority group holds negative attitudes towards social integration out of school, with no difference between the students and parents. Parental attitudes towards school integration are more positive than towards social integration; however, here we have to deal with more negative attitudes of the children: Croatian children hold clearly negative attitudes while the Serbs are neutral; Croatian parents are neutral, while Serbian

parents have a positive attitude. Croatian teachers support school integration, while Serbian teachers are more neutral. With their more neutral attitudes towards school integration Serbian teachers maybe express concerns for their own professional position and future in mixed schools. Having in mind their prominent role in shaping children's attitudes and behaviors, the teachers' position, and especially minority teachers' position should be a matter of careful and wise management. It is obvious that different participants in the educational process have different attitudes towards school integration, and this should be taken into account when using the school as a resource in the process of community healing and social reconstruction. What our data clearly show is that the students' attitudes are the most negative, suggesting that living in a complex social environment, which constantly sends signals to keep the two ethnic groups apart, clearly has an effect on the children who are raised in such a social environment. It is very likely that that the children's attitudes only mirror what they believe to be the "politically correct" attitudes of their social environments.

Another important set of differences between the two ethnic groups was found in the perceived intergroup relations, reported as types of contacts, number of out-group friends, and the tendency to discriminate against out-group peers. The measure of intergroup friendships shows that they are more exceptions than a rule – all the samples reported having only a small number of out-group friends. These findings are in accordance with other studies showing that many ethnically mixed societies function as settings with many ethnic islands where intergroup communication is "... occasional, fleeting and superficial" (Dixon, et al., 2005, pp. 699). As for our results, it seems that the two findings need to be emphasized and explained. First, the adults assess intergroup relations as being better than the children do: adults perceive their out-group relations as friendlier, they report having more friends and they are less ready to discriminate against the other ethnic group. The same trend holds for both ethnic groups.

The other finding reflects the complexity of intergroup relations in this divided community. This is well illustrated by the results for the students: those from the minority group estimate that their relations with the majority are closer than reported by their peers from the majority group. However, both sides declare *exactly the same* small number of out-group friends. Children in both groups report having fewer contacts with members of the other group than the adults. The same between-group differences in perception were found in the parents and teachers: the Serbs perceive that they have more contacts with Croats and that these contacts are closer than reported by the Croats. This disparity in how the two groups perceive their mutual relations raises the question of who socializes with whom and what the truth about the nature of intergroup relations in Vukovar really is. Having worked in this divided community for a long time (Ajdukovic & Corkalo, 2004; Corkalo et al., 2004: Freed-

man et al., 2004) we would say that both sides are telling the truth; however, they see it differently. Two psychological explanations seem plausible. There is a certain degree of closeness between Croats and Serbs, some of the old friendships have been preserved and some new friends have been made (Ajdukovic & Corkalo, 2004). It is possible that within the Croatian community there is still a feeling of unease about admitting that they have contacts with “the other side”, since there is strong social pressure not to do so after having been severely victimized during the war. This is why it is possible that Croats perceive their relations with Serbs as more superficial than they really are. On the other hand, it is possible that the members of the Serbian community overestimate their relatively superficial contacts with Croats, since it gives them the impression that their social world is not mono-ethnic and that they are more integrated into the broader community. These two hypotheses require further research.

The present study epitomizes some of the complexities of social relations in the community that is recovering from the war and is divided along ethnic lines. While not causal in design, our study strongly indicates potentially detrimental effects of social division on children’s inter-ethnic attitudes and relations. The data show that children are the least supportive of joint education and of social integration out of school, and are most ready to discriminate against their peers from the other ethnic group. They do not have the experience of the ethnically non-segregated town, which Vukovar used to be before the outbreak of the war in 1991. Children have adopted the standard of community segregation on ethnic principles since the earliest age. While we do not claim that school segregation has created negative out-group attitudes and behaviors among children, we certainly argue that the kind of schooling that has been organized in the region does not encourage children to cross the ethnic lines. By keeping the children apart in schools, without possibilities for getting to know and making friendships with others, and also missing an opportunity to observe that their in-groups have the out-group friends, an important precondition for development of positive intergroup contact and tolerance is lacking, as suggested by the extended contact hypothesis (Wright et al., 1997; Liebkind & McAllister, 1997). Along the same line, the correlational analysis suggestively shows a moderate negative association between out-group contacts and discrimination. The same correlational pattern has been observed for the measures of number of friends and discrimination.

Discrimination was negatively correlated with the attitudes towards integration, both in school and out of school, and with the tolerance towards diversity. In the majority group a greater tendency to discriminate against the out-groups was positively related to the preference for assimilation. In this case discrimination could reflect the majority’s position that it is not willing to tolerate differences and the only way out for the minority members is to assimilate in

order to be accepted. In terms of the in-group projection model (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999; Waldzus & Mummendey, 2004) one would say that in-group attributes are understood by the majority as being more prototypical for the inclusive category and hence minority should assimilate in order to reach a favorable degree of prototypically as majority defines it. No such pattern in the minority group was found, probably reflecting differences in specific social experiences and goals that the two groups have. These results are also indicative for the analysis of differences in majority-minority perspectives when it comes to definition of identity, inclusiveness and strategies that operate in maintaining group relations within a community (see Verkuyten, 2005). In general, the correlational patterns in the majority samples are more consistent and the coefficients are generally higher. It seems that the analyzed sets of attitudes are better formed and connected in a more coherent way in the majority sample. What are the underlying dimensions of those attitudes and whether these dimensions are different for the majority and the minority is to be found out in future research.

Although not without limitations, this study avoids some of the methodological flaws related to the studies that looked at the connection between schooling of ethnically diverse communities and their intergroup relations (cf. Schofield & Eurich-Fulcer, 2003). Our measures of discrimination did not force the participants to prefer a member of the other group over in-group members; they were asked if they would prefer an in-group member even when the economy of effort and rational choice would be to choose an out-group. The self-selection bias has also been prevented: the sample was probabilistic, drawn from the whole population of schools in the town of Vukovar, and including about 25% of the student population. Last but not least, rather than being concerned that the sensitivity of the issues raised by the research would provoke intensive emotional responses and maybe even conflict, this study lead to a dialog between the two communities, serving as a starting point for organizing a two-day conference about possible solutions on how to organize schooling in this highly divided community in order to satisfy the legitimate needs of both ethnic communities (Ajduković & Čorkalo, 2003). The process of school integration is still ahead and it calls for careful monitoring in order to accomplish a major task of the school – to serve the best interests of children, as individuals and community members.

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*Appendix A*

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Examples of descriptions of everyday situations that the participants were exposed to when deciding if they would prefer their in-group member.

A description for adults:

If I owned a grocery store and a Croat and a Serb were waiting for service, I would first serve the Croat/Serb even if he/she were not the first to come into the shop, for my own reasons.

YES      NO

A description for children:

If the teacher asked me to help one of two students who were absent from school by taking homework to them, I would choose to take the homework to the Croat/Serb even if the other student lived closer to my home.

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