SANJA KALAPOŠ
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research
Zagreb, Zvonimirova 17

IS VOTING ENOUGH?
Or Being Young in the *Serious* Adult World[1]

Locating young people in a society, whether as individuals or a social group, seems to be a constantly current issue. For young people, youth is a process of defining themselves, of gaining independence, of getting adult and of becoming recognized as citizens. The paper is based on a number of oral accounts of the young people from Zagreb. It will show what do the young people think of their role in contemporary Croatian society, why they do or do not take part in political and other forms of public life, and whether they think their contributions to society count at all. The youth in the one-party system of former Yugoslavia were politically inactive, because there was no choice offered to young people, besides being either pro or contra; on the other hand, the youth in multi-party Croatian society are politically and socially more active because they are faced with a multy-party, democratic system. The author compares sociological youth research conduced in Zagreb during the late 1980s with her own fieldwork research.

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          Croatia

When do the young people start perceiving themselves as adults, and what factors influence their perception of themselves and of their role in a society -- these are some of the questions I shall address on the basis of both older research conducted by Croatian and other scholars and my own research conducted from November 1996 to September 1997 in

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Zagreb. I shall not view subcultural division within the category of young people; instead, I shall try to treat them as the members of a single age group. Some Croatian scholars approach the youth primarily as specific social state of the young part of the population. However, they emphasize that the members of young population are divided throughout the social strata because of their current position, as well as the position of their families, which determines their belonging to a certain sociocultural class -- that is, the age group of the young is as stratified as the society they live in (Obradović 1988:57, 85; Rimac 1988:89).[2]

Rimac (1988:90, 97-98) speaks of the criteria for being adult in different social settings, or, to rephrase it in anthropological terms, in different cultures and/or communities -- for the agricultural population it was mainly having completed the army service and getting married. The young couples were not economically independent, because they would usually not move away but live at either bride's or groom's parents' home. The working-class young people were considered adult after they had found a full time job and thus had become economically independent from their parents. The legal and political maturity were not taken into consideration for either group. The middle and higher classes imposed the most complicated requests upon their young -- social maturity was measured on the basis of proper education (at least twelve, more commonly sixteen years of education, that is, the university degree) and social status. Of course, Rimac made a rough generalization -- there are numerous differences and nuances on regional and narrower, local levels throughout Croatia when speaking of "traditional communities", but for the general argument this generalization can be considered accurate. Besides discussing when do the young people become adult, an important question to ask is also who are actually the young people we are talking about -- in my research, I am addressing primarily the middle class and upper middle class students from the city of Zagreb, that is, people between eighteen and twenty-six years of age.[3]

After having completed their education, young people were supposed to get included into their social and working communities and gain the social position similar to or higher than their families' position. Here the political and legal maturity also count. The urban communities

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[2] The non-English quotations were translated into English by the author.

[3] A lot has been written on the terms *young* and *youth* through the years; for concise overviews and discussion of the terms see, for example, Kalapoš (1996b) and Povrzanović (1984-1985).

tend to dismiss the traditional forms of gaining social maturity, which leads to the prolonged youth[4] and the desynchronization of different maturity criteria. Jones and Wallace (1992:4-8) argue that "young people are in a process of transition, in a changing society, so that much that may be observed about them one year (of their lives), may no longer be the case the next year of their lives, partly because they are growing up, and partly because their social context has changed (...) It was only in industrial societies (...) that young people faced an adjustment problem and could find themselves temporarily in a 'marginal world'. Basically, the problems experienced by young people were created by society, and were not intrinsic to the nature of youth itself"; older generations of anthropologists would perhaps view the *whole* period of youth as van Gennep's *rite de passage*. However, being adult in a contemporary urban setting such as, for example, Zagreb, is a complex and manifold concept that does not involve merely being eighteen years of age and thus being able to vote, but also gaining certain level of education, economic independence, emotional as well as sexual maturity and, finally, at least partial but often full social and political involvement in current issues. Jones and Wallace (1992:18) say that "the concept of citizenship implies a package of rights and responsibilities[5] for individuals in welfare capitalist societies which are implicitly transmitted with age. Youth can be seen as the period during which the transition to citizenship, that is, to full participation in society, occurs." Of course, as the society is structured, the access to the rights of citizenship are equally structured -- -- the changes at a social level reflect changes at an individual level too, but my argument is that -- although social stratification is an important factor of gaining adulthood -- the social and political systems as such are also very significant. Let me elaborate on that -- in his research dating from 1988, that is, from the period of one-party system in former Yugoslavia, Fanuko[6] (1988:149, 160) showed that the Croatian youth did not perceive

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[4] Liesenfeld (1987) discusses the notion of remaining "forever young" in the contemporary Austrian society, employing examples such as the classic one in which the young Faust is about to sell his soul to Mephisto in order to prolong his youth, to the more recent ones: industrial production of youth, the cosmetic usage of youth for commercial purposes, banks and insurance companies encouraging people to join their youth programmes, and dating agencies providing their services to young people (who are increasingly older) for free.

[5] France's study (1998) of resposibilities that the youth are facing in order to gain their citizenship rights is a rare one addressing the issue.

[6] Due to the lack of anthropological youth research in Croatia, I am employing data received through research conducted by Croatian sociologists. However, we must be

themselves as fully grown up, and, more important, did not participate almost at all in current political and social events and debates. In his research on the systems of values of the young people from former Yugoslavia during the 1980s, Radin (1990:24) got matching results: the leading values were privacy, self-dependency and material position, leaving political involvement at number eight (of altogether eleven values); doing another research during the approximately the same period of time, he (1991:43-44) showed that of all the existing values, the students from Zagreb placed their political engagement on the very last place (the first five being honesty, love, knowledge, friendship and work). As he emphasizes, this hierarchy is understood as a stable range of options for the desirable social causes. In his research within the same project, Magdalenić (1991:67) showed that more than 10% of the Zagreb students were not willing to participate in a political engagement at all, while more than 24% have never even thought about it. The remaining number of young people ranges from the ones who would react only if they would personally be influenced by a problem, if they and their close family members, their friends, or the members of their generation were influenced, and only 25% would participate in a cause of general interest.

On the other hand, I have researched the middle and upper middle class student population from Zagreb, and their spontaneous political and social engagement in a cause of -- we can freely say -- general interest after having lived in a multy-party society for not longer than six years. The story begins back in 1983, when an independent student radio station called *Radio 101* was founded. Right from the beginning, it became very popular among the young people because of the latest music hits that were played,[7] along with the fresh approach to advertising and news; at the

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careful when using those figures, since their main method (see Radin 1988:15) was a questionnaire with closed type of questions. Although the anonymity of the young informants was guaranteed, the research method itself, offering a limited number of possible answers that could or could not coincide with one's opinion, may have influenced the outcome.

[7] It is not inexplicable that a radio station becomes so widely popular on the basis of the music it plays; describing the relationship between the young people and music, Frith (1987:45; 46) says that "it is well known that the youth are interested in music" and claims that "the full integration of pop music and youth culture took place during the 1950s; the integration was symbolically expressed through a new form of music, rock and roll, and a new group of young people, teddy boys". We can freely say that, since the 1950s, music has been an integrative part of teenage and adolescent years of the members of the European and American cultures. Furthermore, Muršič (1995:11; 21)

same time, it gained an image of the opposition to the one-party socialist system of that time due to its sharp presentation of current issues and critic view on the society, and thus became popular also among the adult audience. When discussing the relations of power in the contemporary Croatian society and therefore describing the role *Radio 101* used to have in the former system, Rihtman-Auguštin (1997:3) explains that "the programme was primarily made for young people (...) With their efforts to achieve a modern music programme, the Zagreb's old cosmopolitan spirit was evoked".[8] Keeping this image all along, the *101* journalists were the only ones who were brave enough to speak about the fall of communism in Eastern Europe before it actually happened, as well as to introduce the emerging opposition parties even a year before the first democratic (that is, multi-party) elections were held in former Yugoslavia. Today's Croatian president Tudman's first public appearance was in an interview on *Radio 101*. Doing all that was a big risk at the time. However, the first multi-party elections were held in spring 1990; one of the newly founded parties gained the electoral victory, Tudman became Croatian president, and *Radio 101* continued to broadcast its programme, being sharp, current and informative as ever. Through the course of time *Radio 101* became the number one radio station in the Zagreb metropolitan area, and some stations from other parts of Croatia transmitted parts of its programme regularly, so that *101* became widely known and extremely popular. The major TV stations and quality papers in Croatia are state-owned, so that *Radio 101*, weekly *Feral Tribune* (published in Split) and daily *Novi list* (published in Rijeka) became the only influential independent, non-governmental media in Croatia -- with the exceptions of few student and other low budget magazines with small circulation.

For the review of the events that happened in November 1996 I shall use the report by Zuber (1996:11), published in an independent

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emphasizes several times that rock music is the basic way of (not only musical) socialization of young people.

[8] "Having travelled through West European countries, the young people from Zagreb have heard what were supposed to be the latest hits playing on similar radio stations. Meanwhile, they have heard these songs three months ago on Radio 101. In such moments, they felt like citizens of the world, and the youth from other socialist countries were somehow jealous. They found it impossible that a radio station from a socialist country can criticize the government so sharply (...) During the war, the young 101-journalists have reported from the heaviest battlefields. They have shared the destiny of their citizens in good times as well as in bad" (Rihtman-Auguštin 1997:3-4).

student magazine called *Homo Volans*: the body called the Telecommunication Council was founded. Its members were supposed to review the proposals written by several radio stations and to give the broadcasting permit only to a single one; so, they decided that *Radio 101*, after thirteen years of broadcasting, cannot get the permit to continue its work, and instead gave the permit to a station that was still in its founding stage. It was on November 20, 1996. The news were broadcast on *Radio 101* around the noon the same day. Immediately after, the *101*'s phones and fax machines got completely mad -- hundreds and hundreds of calls, faxes and e-mail messages of support from citizens of Zagreb (and other parts of Croatia, as well as from abroad) were received, all of them claiming that they support *Radio 101* so much that they would do anything to keep it going. Only a couple of hours after the decision was made, Peter Galbraith, the American ambassador to Croatia, came to the *101* offices and offered support -- as he said, it was not merely a question of a single radio station; democracy and free media were at stake. Around 5 pm the State Department issued an official statement confirming Galbraith's opinion.

Together with all categories of Zagreb's citizens, another group of young people reacted in a firm and loud way -- Bad Blue Boys, the supporters of Zagreb's major football team. Introducing them, Prnjak (1997:36, 110-112) says that although the group supporting the team called "Dinamo" before the 1990s existed as long as the team itself, it was formally founded in summer 1986 under the name Bad Blue Boys -- -- however, the newly elected politicians, now in charge, decided that one of the best Croatian football teams cannot bear the name identical to a Russian or a Serbian team, and decided to change it. "Dinamo" first became "Hašk-Gradanski", the combination of the names of two pre- -WWII teams from Zagreb, and then it was renamed simply into "Croatia". Carrying the rich symbolism from the socialist period,[9] the

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[9] Football supporting was one of the few possible ways of expressing one's national identity in former Yugoslavia and this activity therefore played a significant role for the young people's identity construction: "Since my informers did not emphasize only their Zagreb, but also Croatian identity, it was important for them to attend the games of any of the Croatian football teams that played against any of the teams from any of the former Yugoslav republics, especially Serbia. (...) Of course, when the Croatian supporters went to other republics and insulted the hosts there (or vice versa, which happened on regular basis, i.e., much more often), they would very often end up in police stations where, besides having legal problems, they would often get beaten up. Nevertheless, they considered this kind of supporting to be their contribution to the solution of current political problems and a form of liberating their suppressed national

name "Dinamo" was so beloved among Bad Blue Boys and the large part of the Zagreb population that they often organized protests in order for the team to regain its original name. Thus Bad Blue Boys, who are one of the strongest supporting groups in this part of the world, are at the same time the only supporting group without its team, pushed into an alternative position that cannot be compared with any other example (ibid. 108; 109-125; 259-260). The team's name stopped being an issue of the limited part of population and became an issue of free decision--making and democracy -- thus Bad Blue Boys thought they should react and support democracy every time it is endangered. They decided to organize a gathering as a support to *Radio 101*. Although it all happened very fast and the gathering was announced merely an hour before it was supposed to begin, five to six thousand people gathered in one of the small central squares in Zagreb. However, the whole problematic situation continued the next day, since the Telecommunication Council's decision has not been changed; a non-governmental organization called the Croatian Helsinki Committee (CHC) organized a huge support gathering in Zagreb's main square. Approximately 120,000 people, most of them young, came -- the square and the neighboring streets simply could not place more people. *Radio 101* asked people to bring candles with them, "to cast some light in this darkness", and asked people who supported them but were not able to attend the gathering to open their windows, to light the candles in them and to play their radios as loud as possible at 8 pm. The gathering started at 8 pm with a very symbolic sound -- the song that with time became sort of the *Leitmotif* of this station. People stood with lit candles in their hands, greeted popular journalists and DJs, together with other public figures who decided to come and give their support -- rock singers, writers, opposition politicians, etc., and held numerous signs in their hands, most of them with *101*'s slogan "We shall never surrender", or others, such as "I am *Radio 101*. Shut ME down!", "Telecommunication Council, Go Home!", etc. At the end of the gathering, the song banned from the state television and radio stations honoring the old football team's name "Dinamo" is played loudly. The majority are cheering and singing, some people are even crying. To make a long story short, the public reaction (writing letters to the government, signing petitions in the streets and via e-mail, sending faxes, etc.) lasted

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feelings" (Kalapoš 1996a:4). It is therefore quite understandable that the name that was at the time (and is nowadays as well) celebrated as one of rare symbols of belonging to the Croatian nation became so important.

for another couple of days, after which time the official politics realized that it was simply not possible to abolish *Radio 101* and, having no other choice, gave it a broadcasting permit; the first agreement was supposed to last until September, but the five-year contract was signed on 4th November, 1997.

On the one hand it was the first big and important test for the young Croatian democracy, but also for the young people, whom majority of youth researchers view as the carriers of a society's future; on the other hand, it showed how young people were able to change their attitude towards politics, public activities, standing up for what they think is important and believing in their role in a society in less then a decade. I have conducted eleven interviews with students from Zagreb (or students from other parts of Croatia studying in Zagreb); all of them, except a single one, supported *Radio 101*, went to at least one of the two gatherings, and believed that supporting *101* was the right thing to do and claimed they were ready to react again for another cause of general interest.

Boris, born in Zagreb in 1973, a music student, told me:[10]

> Well, what I can say is that it is not right that they attempted to take away the broadcasting permit... or that they didn't want to give it to them (...) The citizens reacted with a lot of solidarity, which is beautiful, I don't know who wasn't there (...) I walked through the first gathering, but I intentionally went to the second. Of course, I wanted to offer my support but I was also curious.

Zorica, born in Zagreb in 1978, a humanities student, said:

> I went to the both gatherings (...) Well, I went simply because... You know, I don't even listen to *Radio 101* because I don't listen to any radio at all, but I thought it was stupid not to have this station, because if those people have something to say, then let them say it (...) I do think my appearance made a difference. One-hundred per cent. I find it stupid when I ask people whether they went, and they answer, "no, why should I bother, I alone can't make a difference". I think that each person that comes carries some meaning.

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[10] These are some extracts from the interviews that were part of my research. All the informers are protected by changed names as their anonymity had to be guaranteed. The method was an open interview with loosely determined topics dealing with the contemporary Croatian society, politics and culture.

Stjepan, born in Dubrovnik in 1972, a humanities student:

> I have always liked this Radio, since 1992, when I came to Zagreb.
> I don't know. I liked it very much then. Its style, very relaxed, with
> information. Objective information. Very objective. Open doors
> for everyone, also for those with whom they don't agree. Generally
> speaking, I respect it a lot and I believe it a great deal. I consider
> every little piece of information given by *101* to be more valuable
> than information given by any other source of information. (...) I
> don't think they're leftist, I think that there are lots of media that
> could learn from them. I can say I was shocked when they tried to
> ban it. And that gathering, that took place, I also attended it, it
> could have been very damaging for the Croatian politics, especially
> for foreign affairs. (...) However, I think that this gathering had to
> be held, however risky for our state, because it would be much
> worse if this station was shut down. (...) It seemed like the right
> thing to do, to go there (...), to give my support. I have been
> listening to them for six years and I haven't given them a nickel.
> Then, these people needed some help. And they have been giving
> me something for six years, so I have understood it as a sort of
> obligation to go there.

The majority believes that democracy in Croatia[11] is not as developed as
it should be, but at the same time they do not tend to be too critic,
ascribing the lack of democracy to several facts: (1) the fact that
democracy exists only six or seven years, which is too short a period for it
to fully develop, (2) the fact that people leading the society were born,
educated and lived large parts of their lives in a one-party socialist
system and thus did not have a chance to learn and appreciate
democracy, and (3) the fact that we had a war going on and that attention
had to be paid to more existential issues -- like, surviving.

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[11] The term *democracy* has been (over)used by the media and the public rhetorics in
general, and its meaning has therefore lost some of its original features and gained
several new aspects. When talking about *democracy* in everyday life (and in the sense
my informers understood the word), people most usually use it as a synonym for *multy-
-party system* (as opposed to the former one, in which there was only one party),
freedom of speech, media and decision-making, leaving the administrative aspects,
such as "government by the people or their elected representatives; a political or social
unit governed ultimately by all its members; the practice or spirit of social equality or
a social condition of classlessness and equality" (Collins Dictionary of the English
Language 1989:411) at the end of the line.

An extract from the conversation with Boris:

> S.K.: Do you think we achieved democracy?
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> Boris: Not full democracy, that's for sure. I don't think so. I think it is still not possible to... that is, you cannot say your full opinion about someone or something, and especially not everywhere. Especially not in some public journals, in media, and so.

Iva, born in Zagreb in 1972, an economics student:

> I think that democracy won't come to us for a long time. We have lived in democracy for seven or eight years, and I think that democracy has to be created and worked on during a much, much longer period of time. (...) Well, democracy is democracy. I think that it still does not function here. Democracy is when one votes for something, and when giving a person the right to vote, to respect this right. For starters. (...) Everyone should try to make a difference starting with themselves, and something will be changed throughout the years, because if everyone gives up, it will remain like this for good. And I think that a lot of time should pass before something changes.

However, they think that now it is a high time to start paying attention to the culture of democracy -- no matter whether they are supporters of the elected or an opposition party, they all think that free speech and free media are basics of a democratic society, and they see themselves as introducers of new, democratic way of thinking. Similar results concerning youth and their political involvement were gained in another research in the southern Croatian region of Dalmatia -- Leburić and Tomić-Koludrović (1996:972-973) write that although the war slowed down the processes of the development of legal state, autonomous public opinion and civil society, it accelerated the processes of change of socio--cultural position of the young people, having abolished the traditional forms of the youth -- whatever the term *traditional* may apply to. The interesting point is the role youth ascribe to themselves -- as Jones and Wallace (1992:22-23) write, the young people in Great Britain are introduced into the already existing social and political life and learn how to fit in it,[12] however, my informants consider themselves to be the ones

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[12] The same point is made by France (1998:104-105): "... what is being suggested here is that participation is related to young people's conformity to society norms. To be a 'good citizen' it is necessary to accept the status quo and learn the responsibilities associated with it".

from whom the rest of society has to learn. Although, objectively speaking, they are not in charge, they do not have either the power or the economic independence, they are very confident about their role.

Of course, besides the political systems as such (which can sometimes even be too general or too vague to grasp), there are other factors that influence the formation of the youth's attitudes, the main of which are family and school education. Let me mention some of the authors dealing with those aspects; for example, Jones and Wallace (1992:21; 70; 93) claim that "in the case of young people, as with women, the process of economic emancipation has to be enacted first of all within the family of origin, though, emancipation within the family has only limited recognition in the outside world. (...) Informal relationships within families provide an immediate context within which transitions to adulthood are shaped. (...) The process of leaving home takes place at the junction between the public and private worlds of young people -- in leaving home they are leaving the private world of family relations and encountering the public world and formal relations of housing markets, labour markets, and other adult institutions. The changes occur at the heart of the transition from dependent child to independent adult".

Bohler (1997:136) argues that the contemporary families with their modern education and bringing-up methods, not only tolerate but also encourage the formation of independent youth culture. It is certainly true that, with the abolishing of the patriarchal role of the *pater familias*, the children are given greater amounts of freedom in many instances, from making decisions concerning their schooling, profession and life-choices to their free time and other interests. It inevitably leads to the more intense participation of the young people in the issues of the wider social magnitude, as well as to the increasing awareness of their role and importance.[13]

There is another fine example of influencing youth and forming desired types of personalities through family -- and more significantly -- -- school and social up-bringing: Schleicher and Fielhauer (1987:71; 74; 75) write about the "red youth" in Währing, a Viennese neighbourhood which was, during the studied period of time (that is, between 1918 and 1934), a traditional bourgeois part of town. This social structure affected

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[13] Although it may seem that the youth are viewed as a *single organism* in this paper, one must keep in mind that this category of population is as differentiated as -- or even more than -- any other. Not only the social status of their parents (as well as their own) apply, but there is a complex and sometimes even non-definable subcultural division.

the social relations and the political milieu in different ways. However, the working class children were educated in accordance with two prominent social theories of the time, the first being Max Adler's concept of "der Neue Mensch" (the New Man), who should be "filled with the working class spirit and serve as a weapon for the revolutionary class battle", and the second being Otto Felix Kanitz's new rules and suggestions for the socialist up-bringing and cultural movement, that included solidarity and class awareness. These theories have, through the youth organizations that were active at the time, increased the class awareness and behaviour of the youth "even in bourgeois Währing" (ibid. 82).

There have not been any organized social, educational or up-bringing methods to create a new type of the "Croatian youth" so far, except for the discussions of democracy that often take place in all types of media -- TV, newspapers and radio stations, in the state-owned ones, as well as in the independent. A lot of broadcasting time and newspapers' pages have been devoted to emphasizing the fact that Croatia has become "a free and democratic country that guarantees equal rights for all of its citizens". I have therefore asked my informants whether they feel somehow discriminated because of their age when it comes to the participation in public debates and gaining citizenship as such and whether they feel they are given the same rights as the adult members of the society. Here are some of the answers:

Ivan, born in Split in 1973, a B.A.:

No, you don't have less rights, you just have to work hard to become someone.

Boris:

Well, no. I don't know what to say. Well, at least in everyday life I haven't noticed [the lack of rights based on his age, author's note]. And as far as institutionalized life is concerned, I have always the same rights, no matter whether I'm twenty or fifty.

The change of political system can, therefore, be viewed as the main contributor to the change of the young people's attitudes: in the former one-party system, it was only possible to be either *pro* or *contra* -- and if someone was *contra*, they usually stayed inactive; in multi-party systems, there are a lot of options to choose from and all sorts of different opinions can be expressed. Radin (1990:26-27, 57) explains the political inactivity of the young people during the 1980s the same way: he argues that politics

offered young people sheer agreement with the current situation without offering anything back for their potential involvement -- including the participation in the decision-making.

Let me sum up the conclusion observations: my informants, the students living in Zagreb, have confirmed both through their active participation in a cause of general interest and through interviews that were a part of my research, that they do believe in the importance of their role in the existing form of democracy (although they mostly agree that it is not the level they would like to have), as well as in the future life of the Croatian state. While they are not completely satisfied with today's democracy, the majority of them view the survival of *Radio 101* as a very positive thing and as a sign that democratic thought is not as underdeveloped as they first thought. Also, contrary to the results presented by some other scholars,[14] they do not consider themselves as underprivileged or discriminated because of their young age.

So, as we have seen, a group of football supporters presented itself as a democratic force that cannot be ignored, and the young people in general spontaneously took part in a public argument and thus proved that their attitudes and way of thinking have radically changed with the change of the political system, and that now they are a group of citizens that cannot be overlooked.

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[14] For example, when discussing the attitude of young Russians towards nationalism, Markowitz (1997:8-9) argues that "Their [that is, teenagers'; author's note] passive non-involvement reflects precisely the path that they believe is most appropriate for Russia's stabilization and development. Kids talk about politics all the time. But they take no action for they are vividly aware of their impotence and direct their energies elsewhere -- into music, sports, studies, into themselves. (...) In addition, they know from the messages they receive in school and from their parents that they are powerless in Russia's mass society, and rather than fight a losing battle, they turn inward to their interests and outward to international (read: Western consumer) youth culture." However, her paper's presentation of the Russian political and public lives makes it clear that we can hardly compare them with the Croatian ones.

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JE LI GLASANJE DOVOLJNO?
Ili biti mlad u *ozbiljnom* svijetu odraslih

SAŽETAK

Rad se bavi određenjem mladih, kao i raspravljanjem o samom odrastanju, koje podrazumijeva društveno i političko prihvaćanje, kao i odgovornosti. Autorica tvrdi da su mladi u jednostranačkom sustavu bivše Jugoslavije bili uglavnom politički neaktivni, budući da nisu mogli birati izvan kategorija *za* i *protiv*; s druge strane, mladi su u suvremenom višestranačkom hrvatskom društvu politički i društveno mnogo aktivniji, jer žive u demokratskoj sredini koja omogućuje izražavanje svih nijansi mišljenja između tih dviju oprečnih kategorija. Kako bi mogla argumentirati tu tvrdnju, autorica navodi rezultate brojnih (u nedostatku etnoloških) socioloških istraživanja mlade urbane zagrebačke populacije s kraja osamdesetih ili početka devedesetih godina, kad su mladi politiku i politički angažman stavljali na posljednja mjesta ljestvica svojih vrijednosti, iako istodobno upozorava na moguće generalizacije ili nepreciznosti do kojih neminovno dolazi u upitnici zatvorena tipa, u kojoj je na svako pitanje ponuđen određen broj odgovora koji se mogu, ali i ne moraju podudarati s ispitanikovim istinskim mišljenjem, za razliku od metode otvorena razgovora s okvirno određenim temama kakve je sama provodila u svojim istraživanjima od studenog 1996. do rujna 1997. godine.

Osim na spomenute razgovore, autorica se referira na burne i etnološki zanimljive događaje koji su se odvijali nakon što je u studenome 1996. godine Vijeće za telekomunikacije odbilo dodijeliti koncesiju za emitiranje programa popularnome zagrebačkom *Radiju 101*. Ta je stanica veliku popularnost stekla ponajprije svojim glazbenim programom koji je pratio najnovija svjetska zbivanja glazbene industrije, suvremenim i neformalnim pristupom reklami, zagrebačkim dijalektom kojim govore voditelji te objektivnim prezentiranjem vijesti. Nakon što je odluka priopćena, građani Zagreba (ali i drugih dijelova Hrvatske, kao i iz inozemstva) promptno su reagirali šaljući faksove, poruke elektronskom poštom i pisma podrške, izražavajući podršku telefonom, te sudjelujući na barem jednome od dva skupa podrške što su bili — jedan istoga dana, a drugi sljedećega — organizirani na središnjim zagrebačkim trgovima. Nakon vremenski kratkog ali intenzivnog reagiranja građana i dugotrajnog pregovaranja, *Radio 101* je početkom studenoga 1997. godine potpisao petogodišnji ugovor o koncesiji.

Budući da je većina kazivača sudjelovala na barem jednom skupu podrške i da vjeruju da su kao pojedinci zaslužni za dobivenu koncesiju, zanimljivo je promatrati kakvu si ulogu u javnom životu pripisuju mladi u Hrvatskoj u usporedbi sa svojim vršnjacima u zemljama s višestoljetnom demokratskom tradicijom. Zapadni autori