

Dunja Potočnik

HUMAN RIGHTS: THE TICKET TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC EUROPE

1. Introduction: Human rights development tendencies

The basic reason for regulating human rights is stated in a sentence by Isaiah Berlin (1978: 85): “It takes minimal rules to ensure the conditions of existence of human society.” A more systematic regulation of human rights began at the end of World War One, by regulating procedures concerning the soldiers and population of enemy states or conflicting parties. However, the individual as such, was still not the subject of interest of international law. It took the horrific consequences of World War Two to attract a new view on individual rights, which had become the subject of international care and were of the opinion, that a state that does not respect the rights of its own citizens represents a threat to the population of other states, and thus world peace (Jurišić, 1999: 75). The process that may be associated with the development and spreading of the human rights belief is best described as being a shift from basic needs toward basic rights. “The development of an international standard of protection of human rights, from the Second World War to today, was in most part characterized by efforts to limit the expertise of the state over the individual” (Jurišić, 1999: 77).

The concept of human rights includes the protection of citizens from the overly broad rights of the state. However, the problem of human rights growth, consequently, by definition, is occurring today. It can be said that basic human rights have weakened by the growth of interest compared to the situation in 1948 when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. There are numerous discussions on the definition of those rights. Some rights, labeled ‘negative rights’, are described by a ‘non-action zone’ and include those rights that the state should rarely involve itself in (such as the right to life and right to privacy). Other rights, known as ‘positive rights’, ensure the rights of individuals. For example, the right of children to an education. However, even though there is a differentiation between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ rights, there are situations where it is difficult to separate the two. Both ideas of freedom have their place and their shortcomings in the modern thoughts of human rights. According to the definition, each tolerant society must give freedom to the individual, that is, ‘negative freedom’. Politicians play a significant role in monitoring the actions of individuals so that they do not limit other individuals in their own freedom. Otherwise ‘negative freedom’ would quickly turn into anarchy (Berlin, 1978).

Originally limited to basic rights, the rights of individuals, through the parameters of their participation in the political life of the community and creation of a civil society, expanded to political and numerous civil rights (economic, social, cultural). The proliferation of rights is for the most part, along with the individual, related to collective rights, and the objects of legal protection are no longer only human beings, but nature and animals as well. Accordingly, this moment in time is known as the ‘human rights age’, and the ‘political culture of human rights’ as dominant characteristics of political culture of modern society (Baranović, Ilišin, 2004: 341) Analysts warn that such an expansion in the area of human rights, leads to their fragmentation and dispersion, which in turn contributes to the cheapening of those rights and weakens their real effectiveness (Kalanj, 1996: 58). On the other hand, the expansion of human rights is seen by the conservatives as a threat, because it nourishes the egotism of the individual, questioning his/her responsibility for their community. A. H. Birch even mentions “cultures obsessed by human rights”, such as, American society (Miller; Timpson; Lessnoff, 1996: 5). Still, the increased recognition of human rights through their protection on an international level is not simultaneously followed by progress in their opinion.

Globalization¹ is often stated as one of the factors of the human rights explosion. If we start with the assumption that the basic characteristics of the world we live in, are a change from the “normal” way of life,

¹ Globalization, in this research, is assumed to mean processes whose intensity has been on the increase in the last two decades: the movement of short-term foreign investments, long-term direct foreign investments, commerce on the global level with the policy to decrease its barriers, the increasing share of trans-national corporations in world produc-

globalization can be understood as a process of a change of interests, and the care humankind manifests towards its territory and its traditional constitution of the system of societies (Jurišić, 1999: 71). The globalization processes have led to the development of a global civil society and their new heroes. International non-government organizations that are active in the promotion and protection of human rights and that seem to occupy an increasingly important role in this sphere. The international level of the UN organizations, national and local stages, are in turn affecting the expansion of traditional human rights protection, their integration into domestic legislations and the development of international, regional and national actions for their protection (Dokmanović, 1997).

The new stage of globalization, based on new financial markets and global service markets on the rise, has been made possible by a strong development of new forms of communication and the development of faster and cheaper transportation. The removal of barriers in economy, commerce and transportation also led to an increase in the number of international agreements and conventions in this field, and, hence, to a development of international law focused on countermeasures of global linking of socially undesirable and adverse activities, such as international crime, international terrorism, trafficking of women and children, arms and the drug trade, all of which lead to the increased significance of internationally agreed action to protect human rights. "In the political sense, globalization alleviates the expansion of authority, politics and interest across existing, socially created, protective borders" (Jurišić, 1999: 71). By introducing international law, states transfer their expertise to international institutions and lose a part of their sovereignty, even though liberal democratic states are still independent protagonists in the global community of states (Skocpol, 1988).

However, the anticipation of the process of globalization as a trigger of significant positive, social, political and economic changes, has burst like a bubble. "The centers of power", that had expected to contribute to the positive effect of globalization have in the meantime failed in their respect for human rights, both on their own territory and on the territories of other countries (Havidan, 2004). Specifically, in the "beginning of the 1970s, the key problem became the issue of integrating the implementation of human rights into the entire notion of national security" (Jurišić, 1999: 79). For example, when speaking about American foreign policy, we may accept the opinion that the human rights issue has often been subjugated to a higher goal of American national security: once it was the fight against communism, today it is the war on terror. Another example that removes the legitimacy of the positive effect of globalization, can be found in Latin America, that has lately been experiencing another period of economic recession and the pauperization of the population, along with an increase in the violation of human rights.

The main pillars of globalization are linked to the communication process. The role of a modern communications system should, among other things, be focused on the spreading of information about human rights, and a systematic documenting of all the cases and their violation, aimed at preventing and sanctioning them. Due to the spread of poverty, most of the world's population still does not have access to the information necessary for preservation of their rights, which could be labeled as a kind of 'digital divide'. The current economic globalization is based on neo-liberalism and widens the gap between the rich and the poor. The promotion of market freedom and the free movement of capital, investments and goods, have created a 'market fundamentalism' that melts the sovereignty of national states and creates a suitable ground for conflict of all types. Economic prosperity has an instrumental role in the preservation of human rights, but it is a well known fact that its violation occurs in most cases, due to shortage in resources and the fight for dominance over those resources.

The renowned 1945 study by Karl Popper, *Open Society and Its Enemies* (published for the first time in Croatia in 1998), advocates the widest possible freedoms, as well as warns, that social institutions should be created for the protection of the economically weak. However, institutions themselves are rarely adequate, if they are not rooted in tradition. Respecting traditions is necessary to create a link that connects institutions with the intentions and value systems of individuals. Among the most important traditions are those that create a 'moral framework' in society and embody its innate sense for justice and decency. The level of morality it has reached, must be included (Popper, 2003). Croatia is, in a sociopolitical as well as economic sense, on the cusp of negotiations for accession into the European Union. Human rights are the basis of EU's axiology; their definition of social values² is in the Preamble of the EU Constitution. It states that member states be aware of

tion and trade, the global interdependence of production, the movement of people motivated by trade or search for employment and the development of new forms of communication.

² Kluckhohn gave a definition of values that, because it is so concise, is often accepted in sociological research: "Values are the explicit or implicit conception inherent in an individual and characteristic for a group of something desirable that

their responsibilities for the preservation of the principles of democracy and respect for human rights, in order to contribute to the preservation of world peace by joint efforts (*A Constitution for Europe*, 2004).

If we leave aside the fact that the protection of human rights is not at the stated level, even within the EU, Croatia needs to adjust its domestic legislation, as well as increase the awareness of its citizens regarding human rights. The belief and value systems of our youth are an important indicator of the trends in society. In the future, they will represent its backbone. The relationship of Croatian youth toward human rights is our prime interest, because of the accession negotiations with the EU, among other reasons, where positive validation of human rights is perceived as a 'ticket' into the Union.

Methodological explanations

The following results analysis is an attempt to clear up some aspects of the relationship of youth in Croatia towards human rights. The subject of this research, are their attitudes towards respecting particular human rights and the contribution of certain institutions, associations and significant individuals towards realizing human rights in Croatia. We understand that the perception of human rights, freedom and the respect for human rights in Croatia is part of political culture³. The youth are, as a social group, in the process of concept and attitude formation in all aspects of society, interesting for the analysis of the relationship toward human rights and freedoms.⁴ They are, therefore, at the center of this research. On a descriptive level their results are compared with the results of the research of adults and, where data is available, with the research of youth in Croatia from 1999 (Ilišin, Radin, 2002)

Human rights may be defined as basic rights and freedom, in which the government has a right to intervene (in some cases), such as their infraction by physical or legal subjects. The aims of such analysis of the relationship of youth toward human rights are conceived in such a way:

1. to determine how the young justify particular human rights and freedoms and how they assess the respect for human rights in Croatia and the contribution of different social protagonists to the respect of those rights,
2. to establish the changes taking place in the population of youth from 1999 to 2004, their perception of respect for human rights and the contribution of the observed protagonists,
3. to determine the similarities and differences between the young and the adult population in all the researched dimensions of the relationship toward human rights,
4. to establish the attributes and manner of differentiation among the young in their relationship toward the researched dimensions of human rights and freedoms.

The analysis starts with the hypothesis that states, there are differences among the youth regarding their attitudes about the desirable level of protection of human rights, as well as the perceived level of respect for human rights, the contribution of certain institutions and significant individuals to their understanding. In other words, we assume that the variation in attitudes about the respect for human rights among individuals, can be explained through the differences in their attributes. The attributes of youth in this case include gender, age, socio-professional status, father's education, education of the participant, regional status, permanent residence, religiousness and political party preferences.

The instrument contains several sets of variables that may be categorized into four basic groups:

affects the selection of appropriate manners, means and goals of action" (Kluckhohn: 1962: 388-433). It is important, as Kluckhohn remarks, to perceive the three elements of values – affective (values as the desirable), cognitive (values as conceptions) and connative (values as criteria for selection). Aside from the emotional, cognitive and voluntary aspects, culture, group and relationships of the individual toward culture and his/her place in the group, are also important for the definition of value. D. Pantić (1977: 277) offers a definition of values that represents a modification and expansion of the one given by Kluckhohn: "Values are relatively stable, general and hierarchically structured characteristics of an individual (disposition) and of groups (elements of social awareness), formed by the mutual effects of historic, current-social and individual factors, that due to desirability proscribed in such a way, focus the behavior of its bearers toward specific goals". "The expansion regarding Kluckhohn consists of treatment of values as relatively stable characteristics of individuals or groups, meaning they are more permanent and more difficult to change than, for example, attitudes, but they are also not fixed for good, but may change depending on certain influences" (Čulig, Fanuko, Jerbić, 1982: 24).

³ Political culture is defined as the relationship toward politics and the role of the individual in the political system (Šiber, 1998: 144).

⁴ The term human rights and the term human rights and freedoms are used as synonyms because we believe that human freedoms also represent a form of rights.

1. variables for determining the attributes of youth,
2. variables for determining the level of desirability in the protection of particular human rights,
3. variables for determining the perceived level of respect for human rights,
4. variables for determining the perceived contribution of certain institutions and significant individuals to the realization of human rights in Croatia.

With the help of bivariate analysis, that is, through the calculation of the significance of differences by using the λ -test, an analysis was conducted to determine the correlation of the perceived level of respect for human rights and all the other previously mentioned attributes of youth. Only the significant differences on a level of .0001 or less were interpreted. In line with the aims of the research, the comparative analysis is conducted on two levels: on the results of the research conducted of the population of young and adult participants in 2003, and of the results of the population of youth in researches conducted in 1999 and 2004. Factor analysis has also been conducted, and first level factors are stated and interpreted as a result. The yielded factors were submitted to variance analysis, in correlation to the general life, satisfaction and social attributes of youth. The differences significant on a level of .0001 and less were interpreted in this case too.

2. Acceptance of specific human rights and freedoms

Through the normative proclamation in international conventions and declarations, constitutions and state acts, as well as political parties' programs and numerous other documents, human rights became an institutional mechanism for the regulation of political, economic and cultural life in society, with a significant influence on the public and private life of the individual (Baranović, Ilišin, 2004: 342). In turn, if the individual does not wish to be left on the margins of society and categorized as a mere object, he/she must build a relationship of participation, toward different sectors of state power, as well as toward other citizens – entities. A democratic society demands a specific degree of political participation of all citizens. The youth are at the same time, those participating in the present, and the potential for the future, when they in turn will be the ones making the decisions.

The Croatian Constitution guarantees a wide band of civil freedom, economic, cultural and social rights, and is the basis for gaining their respect. However, an equally important element for the best possible implementation for the respect of human rights is the awareness of citizens about their rights and obligations when it comes to their personal freedom, as well as the freedom of others. Youth, as a ling just being formed in a specific social system, are one of the most important elements of a positive reception and application of basic postulates suggestions of human rights. However, in forming that awareness to citizens about the achieved and optimal level of protection of human rights, the periodical reports of international organizations are quite significant. For example, the Freedom House follows the progress or the regression of the election process, the civil society, media independence, governance and supremacy of the legal system and its independence, each year. The state of the categories is graded from 1 to 7, where 1 represents the highest level of democratic development, and 7 the lowest. In the most recent annual report of the Freedom House (*Freedom in the World 2004 Country Ratings – Croatia*) on countries in transition, Croatia received a total grade of 3.75 for the development of democracy in 2004, which indicates a certain improvement in comparison to the previous year, when it had achieved a 3.83 average. Progress was achieved in the election process through the passing of a new law during the presidential campaign, focusing on the increase of transparency in financing the campaign. In comparison to other Balkan countries, which Croatia is included in, it holds third place along with Serbia when it comes to the development of democracy, following Bulgaria and Romania which are in first and second place respectively.

Prior to the analysis of the acceptance of the chosen human rights and freedoms (a total of 16 among the young and elderly in Croatia), the relationship of participants toward human rights and freedoms as values, needs to once again be mentioned. Namely, in the chapter about political values, it has already been stated that the constitutional value 'respect for human rights' is considered to be of utmost importance by approximately 92% of the youth and 94% of the older participants (placing this value in second position, right after 'freedom'). At the same time, about 76% of the young participants and 80% of the older ones, believe that the Croatian Government should put most effort into 'realizing human rights and freedoms' (putting this political priority into fifth place on the ranking scale out of 19 political goals). The cited data undoubtedly indicate that human rights and freedoms represent one of the highest values for Croatian

citizens. Such a stance surely determines the relationship toward specific human rights and freedoms, as it influences the estimates on their state in Croatia.

The acceptance of individual human rights and freedoms (Table 1) has been investigated through the answers ‘should always be protected’, ‘depends on the situation’ and ‘I do not know’. We have decided to interpret only the answers in favor of unquestionable protection of the observed rights and freedoms.

Table 1: A comparative outline of the acceptance of certain human rights and freedoms (%)

Human rights and freedoms	Croatia 2004		Croatian students 1998/99 ⁵
	Youth	Adults	
Right to education	95.4	97.1	96.8
Right to work	94.6	97.4	95.1
Personal safety	91.6	95.6	94.8
Right to privacy	89.6	93.7	91.4
Social protection of the elderly and those at risk	89.6	95.1	94.9
Equality before the law	89.3	92.2	93.9
Rights of women	89.3	91.6	90.8
Right of ownership	85.9	91.5	86.2
Freedom of speech	80.4	81.4	84.3
Freedom of information	79.7	85.7	88.3
Freedom of opinion	76.1	82.2	80.4
Freedom of media	68.4	77.9	81.6
Cultural autonomy	66.7	71.2	-
Freedom of association	60.6	62.2	60.6
National minorities' rights	60.5	66.7	67.5
Right to asylum	44.1	52.2	-

It is interesting that in the acceptance of all the rights and freedoms, the students⁶ surveyed five years ago, are considerably closer to the adult participants today than the younger population. Based on the comparisons of data, it is easy to conclude that the unconditional protection of all the investigated rights, is most advocated by the adult participants, followed by students surveyed at the end of the last decade, and than the young population in our sample. The only exceptions are freedom of information, freedom of media and national minorities' rights, whose protection is advocated by students to a greater degree than the adult participants, which we will comment on later.

The young most of all accept the right to an education, the right to work, personal safety, the right to privacy, social protection of the elderly and those in need, equality before the law, the rights of women and the right of ownership, with answers averaging from 91.6 to 85.9%. Such a high acceptance of the right to an education is understandable, because it is the most important channel of social promotion, something the participants are obviously highly aware of. Aside from that, “in the wider sense, education is simply an aspect of socialization: it includes the gaining of knowledge and learning of skills. Intentionally or unintentionally, education often affects the creation of convictions and moral values” (Haralambos, Holborn, 2002: 774).

The right to work, as a continuation and a part of the right to an education, is warranted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 23: “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions at work and to receive protection from unemployment. Everyone, without discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the

⁵ The research was implemented on a sample of 870 students from the Universities of Zagreb and Split. The data has been taken from V. Vujčić (2001: 384).

⁶ We are conservative in using the comparison of participants from our sample and those from the research implemented in 1998/99, due to the different nature of the samples. However, a comparison is useful as an illustration of certain durability in evaluating human rights and freedoms.

right to just and favorable payment, ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests.” This right is also guaranteed by the Constitution and legal acts of the Republic of Croatia, even though it is denied to a large portion of the population, not as much due to reasons that are within the limits of power of an individual person (not being ready to work), and more due to objective reasons coming from an unfavorable situation within the labor market. The process of transition defined as a transition from a planned, to a market economy in a global environment, assumes, among other things, the transition from a system that guarantees those employed a much higher security of employment into a system where the threat of losing a job is an integral part of the economic cycle. In Croatia, this has had an impact on the entire working population, most of all the young. To be more specific, the highest share of unemployment in Croatia (33.8%) includes citizens aged 15 to 24, while the 24 to 29 age group has a 12.7% unemployment rate (*Analitički bilten*, 2004).

The high ranking of personal safety is not surprising, because its endangerment brings into question the very existence of a human being. The somewhat lower ranking right to privacy is one of the basic human rights, but it may not be absolute, especially when public personas are in question. The right to privacy may be defined as an aspect of safety that defines the protection from, and the sanctioning of infiltrating the personal rights of individuals by the government, different corporations or other individuals. The new legislation on privacy requires the protection of data through technical solutions that allow individuals to use their right to privacy by insuring quality, confidentiality and information safety.

The social protection of the elderly and those at risk⁷ is a concept whose unconditional respect nine tenths of our participants advocate, and it is interesting to find that this right is supported by 6% more adults than young participants. As well as that, this is a right whose protection is supported by 5% more students than the young in general. This finding probably finds its roots at the higher level of awareness about the need for inter-generational solidarity in students and adults, who know that the harsh days of retirement are waiting for them or who have already retired. The social protection of the elderly and those at risk, built into the foundations of our legislation, have lately found more public support and assertion. When this is the case, it usually has to do with an appeal to the citizens conscience, who themselves might at a moment in their lives, find themselves in the position of these marginalized groups. The social protection of the elderly, those at risk and their social inclusion, is a litmus test of the sensibility of society, and an indicator of the progress of civilization. It is expressed through a distancing from pure survival and by an increase in the quality of life.

The argument of equality before the law draws its heritage from history, when its original intention was to avoid the arbitrary behavior of rulers in treating their subjects. The internalization of the rights to equality is one of the bases of socialization of an individual, in line with the principles of democracy. When equality before the law is mentioned, it often precedes the principle of gender equality. Judging by nine tenths of our participants, the rights of women should always be protected. This indicates that the Croatian public is sensitized to a satisfactory degree, of the problems towards gender inequality, following the trend in developed democratic societies. To be more specific, since the era of the suffragettes, there has been a significant shift in the protection and promotion of women's rights at international levels. As the most significant shift, the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, (CEDAW, 1979) – translated several years ago in Croatia (Šimunović, 2004). “The First Report of the Republic of Croatia to the Commission on Gender Equality, as well as its concluding recommendations, all indicates where we were in 1994 when the report was issued, and in 1998 when it was considered by the Commission. From then to now the progress has been clear. Starting with the inclusion of the constitutional principle of gender equality as one of the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia, the Gender Equality Act, the founding of the Office of the Croatian Gender Equality Ombudsperson and the Office for Gender Equality, to the Women's Network, a legislative and institutional governmental and non-governmental framework for the implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, has been set up” (Šimunović, 2004: 10).

The right to ownership is another right where the differences between the two age groups exceed 5%. The specified difference may be interpreted through the lack of knowledge on certain basic economic laws by the young, as well as through the situation in which a large number of those younger than 30 in Croatia, do not own private property such as, real-estate and thus give that right a lesser meaning than their adult counterparts do. In most transitional economies, privatization is still the central aspect of reform, which

⁷ This group of citizens includes both the elderly and disabled persons.

significantly influences the social stratification as an opportunity to gain what was once exclusively socially/state owned (Arriovich, Carruthers, 2004). The socioeconomic modernization of transitional societies, often carries with it harsh consequences for the society and mostly its members, due to its slower dynamic, compared to the 'modernization' of conscience and the way of life of some of its members (those involved in privatization crime). The essential task of an economy and policies in transition, is to renew the broken civilization trends (if there were any), which should have a positive influence on both the economic efficiency and the quality of human life. The tendencies of current economic (anti)development, were noticeable in the very beginning of its transition, because the government had opted for a mixture of statism and a free market economy. 'Conversion' or privatization did not achieve the "...three basic social goals: a) justice; b) the inflow of fresh capital from the Diaspora and from other countries, and c) the technological, ecological, economic and social development" (Letica, 1998: 25). Also, *Amnesty International Report 2005*, states that even though the Croatian authorities had claimed that it was going to reconstitute ownership to Serbian refugees, (they avoided doing so during the Homeland war until the end of 2004), the pace of return is still slow. Such a breach of the right to ownership directed at one part of the Croatian population is one of the greatest hurdles Croatia had to pass in the eyes of the international community.

The next level of rights when it comes to acceptance (from 80.4 to 66.7%) is occupied by freedom of speech, freedom of information, freedom of opinion, media freedom and cultural autonomy, all of which are advocated by the adult participants much more than the youth. When it comes to freedom of information and media, students seem to differ quite a lot in accepting their unconditional protection compared to other observed groups. This has to do with specific conditions of the socialization of students, who, due to the sheer number of social networks they are included in and their urban lifestyle and higher exposure to information, are a group, very inclined to freedom of media and information. Freedom of speech is often considered an integral element of modern democracies, and its key position is strengthened also by protection offered by international organizations, in a manner which was, for example, expressed in article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The implementation of the principles of freedom of speech varies from one country to another, it is not without limitations, states can punish (but not ban) certain harmful forms of expression. Also, people may hesitate to freely express their own opinions, not due to restrictions imposed by authorities, but due to pressures from the public. In other words, individuals can, by expressing their opinion, become the subjects of attack by their immediate community. To put it simply, freedom of speech is one of the fundamental human rights everyone can enjoy under the condition that there is a democracy and that human dignity is respected. However, it is at the same time, one of the 'most dangerous' rights (when it comes to the survival of non-democratic regimes), because it quite often signifies the wish for changing the existing situation.

For developed countries, freedom of information means the possibility of having access to contents based on free expression in written or some other form. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that everyone has a right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the right to free expression of opinion without the intervention of other persons/organizations, as well as to search, receive and distribute information and ideas through different media, regardless of borders. This principle is usually followed by a legislation that ensures different levels of freedom of scientific research, publicizing and publishing, as well as limitless access to information. Today, the media are a democratic arena offering new forms and possibilities of political communication, so each politically aware citizen, wishing to be acknowledged as a person by other individuals and organizations, can use it in everyday life. Freedom of information and freedom of media are fully intertwined, and most modern outlines of new media forms, assume the possibility that their users may participate in democratic activity. Thus, the data that 11% of youth, and 8% of adult participants are less inclined to freedom of media than to freedom of information, is surprising. This discrepancy may be interpreted by the fact that the media, as information gateways, often seem to abuse their position in servicing information that does not sit well with its citizens, as well as the insufficient awareness of citizens about the importance of media in a liberal and democratic system. Aside from domestic governmental organizations and state institutions, some international organizations have also developed criteria for grading the freedom of speech and media. For example, *Reporters without Borders* state the number of journalists that were killed, banished or abused, and the existence of a state monopoly over the media, the existence of self-censorship and the general dependence of media, as difficulties today's reporters have to deal with almost every day (*The 2003 Global Press Freedom World Tour*, 2004). Similar studies by Freedom House (*Freedom in the World 2004 Country Ratings*, 2004) contribute by giving general indicators of political and economic situations in every country, by determining the level of media independence and existence of freedom of expression in mind. Thus, the *Worldwide Press Freedom* index has been developed.

Each year *Reporters without Borders* give their estimate of media freedom in countries all over the world. The list is based on answers given by reporters, scientists, lawyers and human rights' fighters. As countries with the highest level of media independence in 2004, the report states Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Slovakia and Switzerland. On the other hand, countries with the lowest ranking freedom of media are Northern Korea, then Cuba, Burma (Myanmar), Turkmenistan, Eritrea, China, Vietnam, Nepal, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Croatia does not occupy a very high ranking on that list – 54th place. Such a result, when compared to our findings about the acceptance of freedom of speech, media and information, does not provide any reason for optimism.

On our scale, freedom of opinion is placed between freedom of information and freedom of the media, with a 6% difference between the youth and the adults in Croatia. There are two key segments of freedom of opinion as an element of civil freedoms: the conscience's objection to serving in the military and the freedom of religious beliefs and performing religious ceremonies. The objection of conscience campaign has resulted in the legislative regulation of the right to serve in the military as a civilian. The second stated segment of the freedom of opinion – religious freedom – may be summed up as follows: no religious community may be more privileged than the other, for it would be contrary to the constitutional principle of equality, and each one should be ensured unlimited and autonomous activity. Hence, the right and freedom of ones beliefs (and non-beliefs) are among basic human rights and freedoms, springing from the very nature and dignity of each human being as an individual.

Cultural autonomy also enters into the normative definition of a free society. Modern developed countries are multicultural. Each larger French town has an Arabian community, each German town a Turkish one, and each town in England has Indian or Pakistani communities in it. Today the value of cultural activity for the purpose of raising social and economic vitality and sustainable development of smaller societies and communities is recognized in the key documents of UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Legal studies generally define autonomy as the right to local self-government, comprising two types: regional autonomy or right to limited sovereignty over a specific territory marked with clear borderlines, and cultural autonomy, as a non-territorial type of self-government linked to the reproduction of a group culture. One must have in mind, though, that today's relationship between national culture and the globally proclaimed multiculturalism, does not spring only from the cultural hegemony of the developed, but also from the internal habits created through the tradition of cultural statism and conformity. Culture, which was in the function of the politics of emancipation and set-up of national states, soon becomes dysfunctional (Cvjetičanin, Katunarić, 1998: 22), by copying the hegemonious treatment of minorities from their 'large' neighbors. Our young participants seem to advocate the right to cultural autonomy a little less. Unfortunately, we do not have data on the acceptance of cultural autonomy by students from 1998/1999, but we may assume that their results would have been somewhat higher than those obtained by the youth in our sample.

Freedom of association and national minorities' rights are ranked at the bottom of our scale, even though they are accepted by most participants. Freedom of association relates to both the economic sphere, where it is covered by economic rights, and to the freedom of association at civil society level. Civil society does not exist as an integral entity within the global society, but as a mosaic of forms and elements that may only *post-hoc*, for purposes of analysis, be recognized as a whole. The basic characteristics of civil association are the lack of belonging to the sphere of economic life, that is, a non-profit orientation, and an autonomous position regarding the state. Freedom of association defined in such a way, offers a base for a positive relationship of the state, the economic and the civil spheres of society, without which, neither state nor society may be considered free.

Today's political context of the relationship toward minorities may be interpreted through the manner in which Croatia left Yugoslavia, followed by a rhetoric which was from the very beginning extremely nationalist. The political party that before and during the Homeland war expressed most convincingly this nationalist rhetoric was the Croatian Democratic Union. The ideology that came onto the scene in 1990 ('thousand-year dreams of a nation'), had very successfully replaced the previous one ('the historic interests of the working class'). At the core of the need for such a change laid, among other things, the search for national identity. Croatian citizens had then, strongly identified with national symbolism, strongly supported by the 'revolution of symbols' (Pusić, 1992) that was in place at the time. "Modern states are, as a rule, states as representatives of a community of citizens (civil states) and at the same time a reflection of national identity (national states). The concept of national states often only has declaratory value. In democratic countries it gives no special rights to the nation whose national identity is expressed in the state" (Caratan, 1998: 22). The primary role of patriotism is the integration of citizens into the state. The irrational form of

patriotism – nationalism – prevents the fulfillment of this role at the very beginning, because it institutes a division among the citizens. The state should provide protection to minorities as a collective, because members of the minority suffer discrimination precisely because they are members of a minority community, so it would be hypocritical to claim that they have the same rights as all the other citizens, unless there is a statement in the constitution that encompasses the particular minority rights (Caratan, 1998). However, the dominance of a nationalist ideology was not an exclusively Croatian characteristic, because the events of the previous decade have shown that this ideology is present in most other post-socialist countries whose constitution of a pluralist democracy is slow in pace (Pogany, 1995). “In Croatia’s case, a great role in the protection of ethnicity and ethnical homogenization belonged to the war conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia that Croatia was involved in, while waiting for five years to realize its sovereignty of the whole territory. Thus, it is, in principle, presumed that the political awareness of the youth was formed under the influence of its value framework and the liberal-democratic and nationalistic ideology” (Baranović, Ilišin, 2004: 343). This situation has reflected on the attitudes of citizens, who advocate the rights of national minorities in two thirds of cases, most of all the students, then the adults, with an insignificantly lower result, and finally the young participants with a 7% smaller acceptance compared to the student population. Such a trend imposes a conclusion about the necessity for affirmative action and programs for the protection of human and minority rights, especially through the education system as one of the most important agents of socialization.

The right to asylum⁸, by its low level of acceptance, contrasts all the other rights: the youth accept it in 44.1% of cases and the adults in 52.2% of cases, and it would be interesting to have an insight into the attitudes of students, but that right was not included in the 1998/1999 research. These findings could be disappointing when it comes to the prognosis of the democratic development of Croatian society. At international level, in spite of the differences, the basis of refugee treatment is linked to the rule that each state must ensure the possibility of seeking asylum, and those seeking it, may not be coerced into returning to their country of origin. However, everyday politics offers ample evidence in order to state that the rights of those seeking asylum are constantly endangered, something that does not discriminate the developed democratic countries from the countries that asylum seekers come from. It is not rare to find the practice of retaining asylum seekers in holding centers in some countries, where living conditions are not much different from those in prison. Sometimes they are also sentenced to prison sentences under criminal charges. Instead of creating a supportive environment in which individuals would not feel pressured or threatened, an environment similar to the one those individuals have escaped from is often created. However, some alternative approaches have already been tested: for example, monitoring if the asylum seeker fits into community life, accommodating entire families and temporary forms of asylum. It was shown that it is most important to ensure conditions becoming of a human life to asylum seekers, with special emphasis on personal freedom (Mollica, Silove, Steel, 2001).

In further analysis we were interested in the structuring of particular human rights and freedoms, so they were subjected to factor analysis (Table 2), yielding three factors (with a total variance of 52.0%) as well as a variance analysis.

⁸ International law considers refugees to be persons outside of their state of residence; with well founded fear of persecution due to their race, religious belief, nationality, membership of certain social groups or political attitudes; and they cannot or will not put themselves under protection of the state they had fled from, or return to that state, for fear of persecution. Among those demanding refugee status, there are sometimes asylum seekers, whose main attribute as refugees is one related to political or religious reasons.

Table 2: The factor structure of certain human rights and freedoms

Rights and freedoms	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Right to work	.782		
Right to an education	.712		
Right to privacy	.667		
Personal safety	.639		
Equality before the law	.590		
Social protection of elderly and those at risk	.589	.352	
Right to ownership	.580		
Rights of women	.552		
National minority rights		.785	
Cultural autonomy		.693	
Right to asylum		.692	
Freedom of opinion		.660	
Freedom of speech			.726
Freedom of media			.694
Freedom of association			.642
Freedom of information			.642
<i>% of common variance</i>	<i>22.4</i>	<i>15.8</i>	<i>13.8</i>

The first factor – *individual rights* – is constituted by classic values of equality and respect for individual rights and freedoms. If the generally high acceptance of individual rights and freedoms with the absence of differentiation among the youth is observed together, it can be said that there is a high consensus among the youth in accepting most of the basic human rights.

The second factor – *cultural-political rights* – is made up of national minority rights, cultural autonomy, right to asylum and freedom of opinion. The youth have again proven to be very homogenous, even though not to a degree found in the other two factors: the variance analysis has indicated differences in this factor only when it comes to the education of participants (F-ratio=6.32). Differences are directed in a clear line – participants that have (not) finished primary school, as well as those with vocational secondary education, are under-averagely inclined to this dimension, and other participants are average. This finding clearly points to the significant effects of socialization and the importance of including human rights into the education system. This interpretation of results may also be considered as an appeal to official institutions in order to start a public awareness campaign on the stated rights. Otherwise, Croatian society will be very slow in reaching the countries of the Western civilization circle that truly cherish the spirit of multiculturalism. For now, only the Scandinavian countries really belong to that circle of countries, even though multiculturalism is a proclaimed principle in all the significant charters and laws in the European space.

The third factor – labeled freedom of speech, information and association – belongs to the domain of civil society development. Through it, the outside observers find it easiest to determine the position of a particular society on the scale of democratic potential. In this context, we can say that all the groups of youth agree when it comes to this dimension of human rights and freedoms.

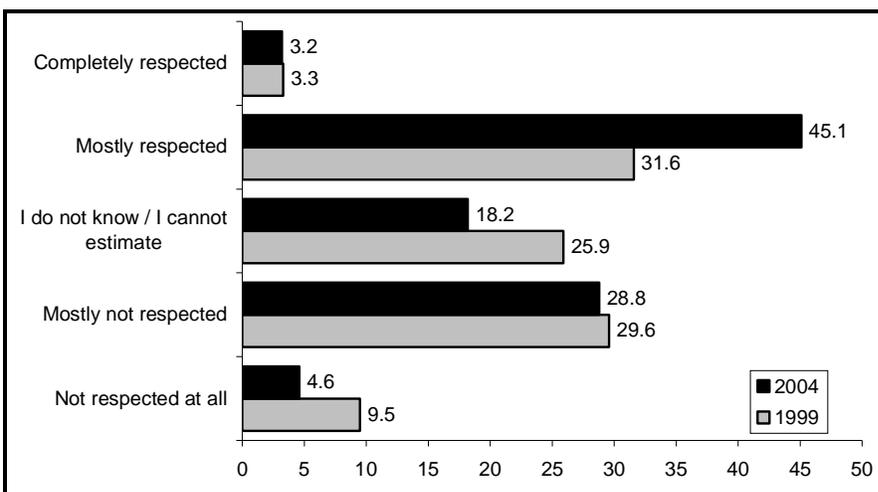
3. The perception of respect for human rights in Croatia

A politically conscious individual who is aware of his/her state and civil laws and obligations, takes responsibility for the state and development of the community he/she lives in, as well as cares for his/her own existence, taking into account the interests of other individuals and the entire community. The development of a democratic political culture is especially important for transitional countries, which is accented when it comes to youth that, both as an integral part of modern society and as an exponent of the future, take responsibility for a democratic social development (Baranović, Ilišin, 2004: 343). Putnam (1993) emphasizes the importance of participation in socio-political processes in society in order to ensure the social capital, which will enable the development and preservation of the democratic potential of the entire society.

The sociopolitical context of integrating youth into modern Croatian society, is marked by post-war and transitional problems that led to a neglect of youth as a specific group, and caused the maintenance and transfer of prejudice, discrimination and patterns of violent behavior within it. Even though the situation has improved in the last several years, the manifestations of xenophobia, violence, racism and discrimination based on different attributes (religion, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation and other) are still notable in society. This environment inevitably affects the formation of attitudes and values of youth. Young people are very often under pressure of latent, and sometimes explicit violence, prejudice and stereo-types, that they cannot or do not know how to tackle affirmatively or adequately (Bačić and others, 2004: 69).

In this segment of analysis we will limit ourselves to the assessment of youth about the respect towards human rights and freedoms in Croatia in 1999 and 2004. Graph 1 gives an overview of the distribution of answers of youth to the question about the perceived level of respect for human rights in Croatia at the two stated points in time.

Graph 1: The comparative overview of the perception of respect for human rights and freedoms in Croatia – youth 1999 and 2004 (%)

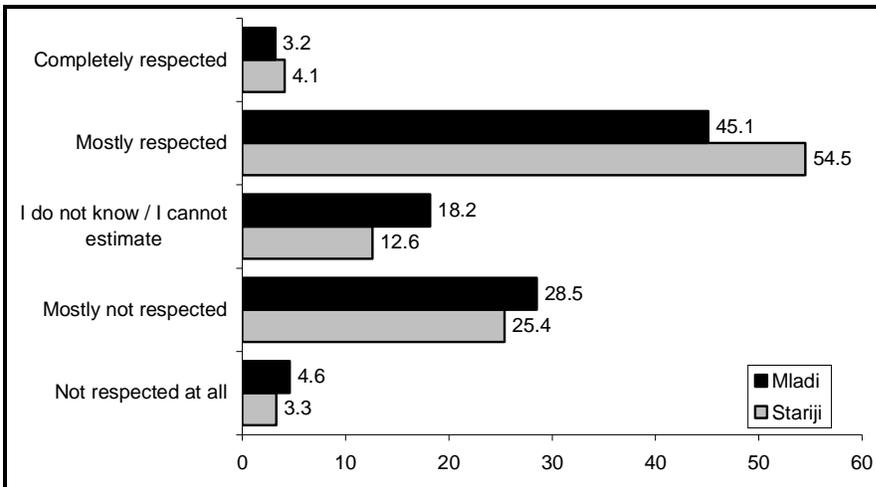


Compared to 1999, in 2004 there is a noticeable difference in all the categories of answers, aside from those regarding ‘mostly not respected’ and ‘completely respected’. The percentage of youth that believes that human rights in Croatia are not respected at all, was under 10% in 1999, only to fall under 5% in 2004. There is an interesting distribution of answers in the remaining three categories. Our neutral category (I do not know/ I cannot estimate) has assembled about 7% less participants than in 1999. This is a positive trend, but of very limited reach. To be more specific, the percentage of undecided participants is still close to 20%, indicative of an insufficient knowledge of the youth about human rights and/or their lack of interest in the issue. This can be illustrated with the data that only 6% of the youth participate in the activities of an organization dealing with human rights’ protection, which was the subject of a more detailed analysis in the preceding chapter of this study. However, we may conclude that a higher level of engagement and a better structuring of certain factors of socialization may in an organized manner, contribute to the increase in the democratic potential of youth, especially the education system that has, for now, shown a minimum preoccupation with education about human rights⁹. According to the assessment of the young participants, school has a significant influence on the development of their opinions about humanity and society: it holds third position, preceded only by family and friends, and followed by the Church and television, that are also considered to be relatively influential agents of socialization (Baranović, 2000: 15). Those that believe that human rights are mostly respected, have witnessed an increase of 13%, raising their percentage to almost 50%. Through an insight into the existing data, we notice that the highest increase occurred in the two opposed categories – with the participants that consider human rights to be mostly respected and those that believe they are mostly not respected.

Graph 2 contains a comparative outline of the distribution of answers of the youth and adult populations regarding the perceived level of respect for human rights in 2004.

⁹ In Croatian public schools, the human rights program, even though it has been written (*The National Program of Education for Human Rights*, 1999.), is performed only experimentally in a part of secondary schools.

Graph 2: Perception of respect for human rights and freedoms in Croatia – youth 1999 and 2004 (%)



The first conclusion that arises is the higher level of criticism of youth. Specifically, even though the number of youth and adults that are at opposing poles of this scale (answers ‘not respected at all’ and ‘completely respected’), as well as the inclination to the answer ‘mostly not respected’ is approximately the same (the differences range from +/-4%), a higher number of adults believe that human rights are respected. However, the influence of age is more noticeable with undecided participants: there are approximately 5% more undecided participants among the youth that can be ascribed to the higher knowledge of legal regulations and the social situation of adult participants. Although, it is interesting that this assumed higher competence of adult participants swings in favor of the attitude about the prevailing respect for human rights: 9% more adults than youth express their agreement with the prevailing respect for human rights, that is, the adult participants have already crossed the 50% threshold, even though the youth are not significantly far from it.

In the analysis of respect for human rights and freedoms, we are interested in the distribution of responses of youth considering its attributes (Table 3). To simplify the interpretation of results we have merged the answers ‘mostly not respected’ and ‘not respected at all’, as well as ‘mostly respected’ and ‘completely respected’.

Out of the nine independent variables used, only three demonstrate a statistically significant influence on the perception of respect for human rights and freedoms. They are gender, regional status and party affiliation. Gender turned out to be the least influential variable ($\chi^2=21.543$): both genders express a similar indecisiveness in their assessment of respect for human rights – more than a third of the members of each gender. However, women state that there is disrespect for human rights more often, that is, they are more critical than men. On the other hand, men are more inclined to assess that there is a prevailing respect for human rights, and their total number exceeds 50%. Such gender differences may be interpreted by the still existent higher social marginalization of women, and a wider spectrum of their rights that are being breached, which is why they, even when their rights are not endangered directly, are more sensitive to the violation of human rights.

Regional status seems to be the most important attribute that discriminates against the youth, in the direction of a more positive evaluation in Central Croatia and in the City of Zagreb; two thirds of the inhabitants of Central Croatia and one half of those from Zagreb, believe that human rights are completely or mostly respected. The data range around 40 percent in other regions and the lowest percentage can be found in Istria and Primorje. The City of Zagreb, Istria and Primorje as well as Central Croatia are interesting regarding another matter – the smallest number of undecided participants ranges from 23.8% in Dalmatia to 18.2% in Northern Croatia. This information might serve as an indicator of emphasized needs for investment in democratic and human rights education, in the counties with the highest percentages of undecided participants. As for the inclination toward a more critical evaluation of the human rights' condition in Croatia, the most criticism can be found in Istria and Primorje with 40%, followed by Northern and Eastern Croatia, the City of Zagreb and Dalmatia with approximately 30 percent. While the least participants that answered human rights are mostly not respected or not respected at all, live in Central Croatia. This direction

of influence of regional status to the attitudes regarding the level of respect for human rights and freedoms is a reflection of developmental tendencies in certain regions, as well as experiences in the respect for the observed rights and freedoms.

Table 3: The perception of respect for human rights and freedoms regarding the attributes of youth (%)

Attributes of youth	Mostly or not respected at all	I cannot estimate	Mostly or completely respected
<i>Gender</i>	$\chi^2=21.54$		
Female	34.3	21.8	43.9
Male	32.6	14.8	52.6
<i>Regional status</i>	$\chi^2=36.04$		
Northern Croatia	35.4	18.2	46.4
Central Croatia	22.7	15.1	62.2
Istria and Primorje	41.2	15.2	43.6
Eastern Croatia	33.1	20.1	46.9
Dalmatia	30.9	23.8	45.3
Zagreb	34.2	13.4	52.4
<i>Party affiliation</i>	$\chi^2=33.78$		
HDZ	24.7	21.7	53.5
HNS	36.0	12.2	51.8
HSP	27.6	17.9	54.5
HSS	40.4	12.8	46.8
SDP	38.1	14.2	47.7
Undecided	35.1	20.3	44.6
TOTAL	33.4	18.2	48.4

There is a clear connection between ideology and party preference as one of the main determinants of political attitudes and clear indicators of the relationship toward human rights. According to our results, party identification follows regional status when it comes to the strength of its influence. In our case it means that the most critical, are participants sympathizing with HSS, then SDP, HNS and the politically undecided. The least criticism was expressed by participants inclined toward HDZ and HSP. One of the possible conclusions is that we can compare the declared goals of political parties, to the attitudes of their sympathizers. In this context, it would mean that HDZ, as the party in power, is less inclined to criticize its own treatment of human rights, while HSP is a party that traditionally does not have much space in its program for human rights protection, especially regarding cultural autonomy and national minority rights. The distribution of participants that are not certain, according to parties, provides a wider image, portraying a higher level of uncertainty of participants inclined toward HDZ and those who are politically undecided. The least uncertain participants are sympathizers of HNS and SDP that are once again grouped into a single category. One of the possible reasons for this grouping can be found in the civil option the two latter parties advocate, and thus the option their sympathizers are inclined to as well. The third option, signifying the respect for human rights, is the one mostly chosen by sympathizers of HDZ and HSP, and they are joined by participants inclined toward HNS. On the other hand, the participants more inclined to HSS, SDP and the undecided opinion, respect human rights and freedoms in Croatia somewhat less.

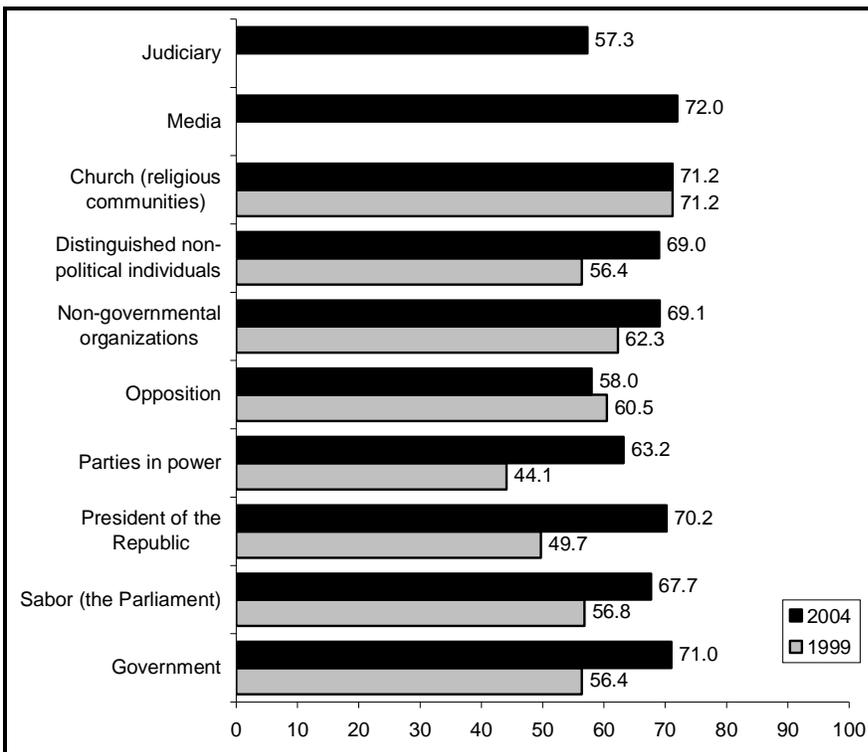
If we sum up the stated tendencies, we may conclude that the ability of assessment and a higher criticism toward the status of human rights is related to the attributes indicative of the female population, the general left-wing ideological-political orientation, and in the region of Istria and Primorje. On the other side, the most benevolent attitude belongs to the inhabitants of Central Croatia and the City of Zagreb. The general comparison of the distribution of answers, leads to the conclusion, that there has been an improvement in the perception of respect for human rights and freedoms among the youth in the five years since the 1999 research. Compared to the adult participants, the youth in 2004 express a greater criticism toward the existing respect for human rights and freedoms, which are encouraging findings because youth are the link toward the future respect for human rights, and where respect for human rights and freedoms are concerned, criticism is never redundant.

4. Perception of contributions to the protection of human rights

After investigating the perception of the degree of respect for human rights and freedoms, we will focus on the factors of their promotion. This research is observed through a prism of both institutional and individual contributions. Institutions are represented by members of legislative, executive and judicial powers, non-governmental organizations, the Church and the media, while individuals are present as distinguished non-political persona. Out of the initial scale consisting of options ‘contributes a lot’ to ‘does not contribute at all’, we have portrayed and interpreted the combined answers ‘contributes a lot’ and ‘mostly contributes’.

We will first look at the tendencies in perception of the said factors of promotion of human rights and freedoms in Croatia, of the population of youth in 1999 and 2004 (Graph 3).

Graph 3: The ranking scale of estimated contribution of institutions, associations and significant individuals to the realization of human rights in Croatia – youth 1999 and 2004 (%)



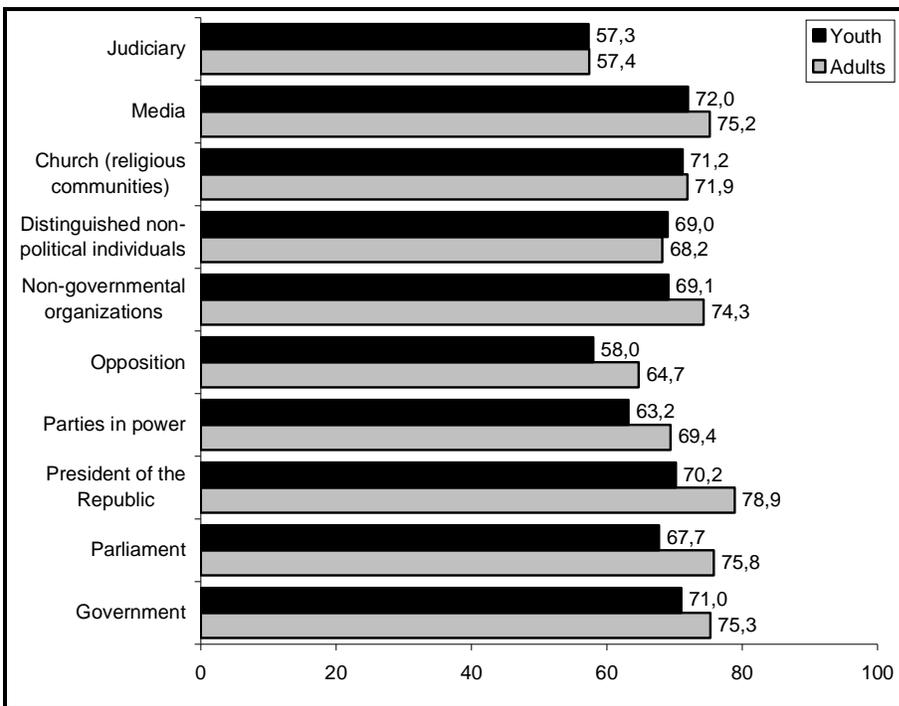
For most protagonists, most of the youth estimate that they completely or mostly contribute to the realization of human rights in Croatia. Compared to 1999, there has been an increase in all the observed categories, except for the opposition that experienced a decrease, and the Church (religious communities), which remained on the same level. We cannot speak of differences regarding the media and the judicial system, because there is no data from 1999.

The youth, in 2004 ascribed the highest contribution to the protection of human rights to the media, the Church (that is, religious communities), the Government and the President of the Republic. Following them are the Parliament, the distinguished non-political individuals, non-governmental organizations and parties in power. It shows that the contribution of the opposition and the judiciary is perceived least by the youth. Both categories should be, and are defined as, the basis of a ‘healthy’ democratic political concept. The proactive role of the opposition is a necessary condition for the existence of a democratic and pluralistic political process. To put it simply, the opposition should play a role of *checks and balances* in political life. Specifically, decisions and processes may spin out of control without it, endangering the rights of minorities, due to the dominance of the majority (the party in power). It seems needless to emphasize the role of the judiciary, and the perceived low level of its contribution in the preservation of human rights and freedoms points to possibly perilous tendencies for the basis of a free society.

The changes in perception, occurring after five years, point to an improved protection of human rights and freedoms in Croatia, or at least to an increased number of participants that have the impression that improvement has taken place. As was already mentioned, the youth in 1999 have expressed a significantly lower level of trust in the abilities of most observed protagonists than in 2004. The most significant increase occurred with the President of the Republic and the parties in power – from the last position they held in 1999, they are now close to the top. At first glance, the result that there was an increase in the opinion that parties in power contributed to the protection of human rights is puzzling, because HDZ was in power both in 1999 and in 2004. We can assume that the political convergence of HDZ towards more liberal values, has led to a better perception of the contribution of that party to the development of human rights. However, it might also be a reflection of the experiences from the time when a coalition of a five party coalition was in power (to the end of 2003) when there was a significant democratization of social and political life. At the same time, an increase in the validation of the contribution of the President of the Republic is undoubtedly the consequence of the personal changes at the head of state, where the acting president, S. Mesić, is perceived by the youth, to be a more devoted protector of human rights and freedoms in Croatia than his predecessor, F. Tudman. On the other hand, the weaker results of the opposition are surprising. It would seem that the opposition-position seesaw has consequently reduced the significance of the opposition by the transfer of a higher contribution to the parties in power.

After an insight into the assessment of the contribution of institutions, associations and significant individuals of the youth population from 1999 and 2004, we will look at the differences between the youth and the adult participants in 2004 (Graph 4).

Graph 4: The ranking scale of estimated contribution of institutions, associations and significant individuals to the realization of human rights in Croatia – youth and adults (%)



We have already established that adult participants believe, to a higher degree, that human rights and freedoms in Croatia are respected, and it is the same regarding the perception of the contribution of institutions, associations and significant individuals to rights and freedoms. It is apparent that all the differences between the youth and the adults are within a +/- 4-10% range, with the emphasis being on the differences in the case of the Parliament, the President of the Republic, non-governmental organizations and the opposition. These generational differences may be the consequence of a higher level of trust that adults seem to have toward political institutions, as well as non-governmental associations whose activities are also politically colored.

As we were interested in the possible structuring of youth, according to their perception of the contribution of certain institutions and associations to the contribution of human rights in Croatia, we have conducted a factor analysis, the results of which are portrayed in Table 4. The factor analysis has yielded

three latent structures (factors) that interpret 66.4% of the total variance, within which the second and third factors have an almost identical variance percentage, while the first factor has gathered as much as the previous two have together.

Table 4: The factor structures of the evaluation of contribution by institutions, associations and significant individuals to the realization of human rights and freedoms in Croatia

Positive contribution	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Sabor (Parliament)	.869		
Government	.868		
Parties in power	.805		
President of the Republic	.663		.328
Opposition	.635		.422
Church (religious communities)		.753	
The media		.696	
Judiciary/ Croatian legal system	.476	.611	
Non-governmental organization			.832
Distinguished non-political individuals		.326	.773
<i>% of common variance</i>	<i>33.0</i>	<i>16.8</i>	<i>16.6</i>

The first factor was labeled *political institutions* due to the nature of the institutions it includes. The most saturated items in this factor are the Parliament, the Government and parties in power, while the President of the Republic and the opposition, have a lower level of saturation. This type of factor structure is a reflection of both the basic principles of the way parliamentary democracies work, and the day-to-day political situation in Croatia. Specifically, an almost equal saturation of the Parliament and the Government springs from the position that the legislative and executive powers have in the political process. It is equally understandable that the significance of the parties in power follows the Parliament and the Government, as well as the ranking of the President of the Republic behind those institutions, but preceding the opposition as a protagonist that, in Croatian political conditions, still has a limited influence.

The second factor is quite non-systematic and not so easily interpreted; which is why it was labeled *sacral, judicial and media institutions*. The judiciary and the media are clearly corrective institutions of the nomenclature in power, but the Church does not fit in at first glance. On the other hand, if we recall that the Church is also a sort of corrective institution, due to its referral to conscience, especially considering that it, as well as religiousness, are often still the light-motives of everyday life and politics, we arrive at a different perspective that with some limitations, allows for the Church to be put side by side with the media and the judicial system.

Even though the last factor – civil sector – gathered an almost identical percentage of the common variance compared to the previous factor, it differs from it both by its homogeneity and simple interpretability. To be more specific, the third factor consists only of non-governmental organizations and distinguished non-political individuals that are often associated by their very nature. Even if distinguished non-political individuals are not directly related to non-governmental organizations, they do advocate very similar aims in the perception of an average citizen.

We were interested in the attributes that differ the youth in its acceptance of the three yielded factors, so we conducted a variance analysis, the results of which are in Table 5.

The acceptance of political institutions (factor 1) as those that contribute to the protection of human rights varies only in regard to the regional status. Thus, the population of Northern Croatia, Istria and Primorje seems to be under-averagely inclined to appreciate the contribution of political institutions, while Central Croatia and the City of Zagreb note an above-average inclination. Eastern Croatia and Dalmatia are positioned in the center of this dimension, with an average inclination to asses that political institutions are a significant factor in the improvement of the state of human rights. The fact that only the variable of regional status achieved a statistically significant influence on the political institutions dimension is intriguing, while, for example, party preferences ‘failed’ in this case, even though they had been confirmed by numerous research studies to be a significant indicator of the relationship toward political institutions. We may conclude that the youth population is relatively homogenous, aside from the differences in regional status as an indicator of developmental-cultural

differences, in the case of their relationship toward the contribution of political institutions to the realization of human rights and freedoms in Croatia.

Religiousness, regional status, the father's education and party affiliation affected the inclination toward sacral, judicial and media institutions (factor 2). In line with this dimension's name, religiousness is the strongest predictor, which is easily explained due to the saturation of one part of public life with religious elements, where the "religious orientation has the strongest influence on the choice of party in a Catholic and countries with a mixture of confessions" (Vujčić, 2001: 329). Seen in total, this dimension had an above average attraction to participants whose fathers had not finished their primary education, the inhabitants of Eastern Croatia and Dalmatia, religious participants and sympathizers of HDZ and HSP. Contemplating the attributes of those that have an average inclination to this factor, we reach a profile of youth whose fathers have a vocational degree, are inhabitants of Northern or Central Croatia and sympathizers of HSS or are politically undecided. On the opposing pole from those with whose advocating this dimension is above average, are the youth, whose fathers have an academic education, who live in Istria, Primorje and the City of Zagreb, who are religiously undecided or not religious at all, and are inclined to HNS and SDP when it comes to political preference. The profile of those that are inclined to this factor below average is somewhat distinctive, if we take into consideration that the factor also consists of certain sacral elements. But difficulties arise when we contemplate the link with the media and the judiciary. The lack of trust in the judicial system by the previously described participants is easily explained by a number of scandals in that system, as well as by its low effectiveness, causing numerous cases to remain unsolved for years. However, when it comes to the media as protagonists in the contribution to human rights' protection, higher education and non-religiousness should also signal a higher democratic potential, linked to trust in the media, which of course changes in conditions where the media are not free. We have already stated that Croatia was in 54th place in 2004 when it comes to freedom of the media (*Freedom in the World 2004 Country Ratings*, 2004), which does not give a great basis for these participants to trust the great contribution of the Croatian Media to the protection of human rights and freedoms.

The third latent dimension (civil sector) influenced by all the observed attributes of youth aside from regional status, are in the following order: education, age, party preference, religiousness, socio-professional status and education of the participant's father. The opinion that the civil sector is an important factor in improving the state of human rights and freedoms in Croatia is expressed above averagely by older participants (25-29 years of age), students, youth whose fathers have a higher or academic degree, and who themselves have the same level of education, those undecided when it comes to religion, and voters of HNS. All these attributes indicate a higher democratic potential of participants inclined toward this factor. The other extreme is occupied by the youngest participants (15-19 years of age), unemployed, fathers who have some primary education, and who have themselves finished primary school or vocational school, as well as being sympathizers of HDZ and HSP. Education was once again shown as a strong indicator of the relationship toward the civil sector, when it comes to the degree of its influence: ascribing merit to the civil sector increases with the level of education. Equally, the perception of the effects of the civil sector grows with age, belonging to liberal political options, religious non-denomination and the father's education. These attributes point to a higher democratic potential of participants inclined to perceive the civil sector as a factor contributing to the respect of human rights in contemporary Croatia..

Table 5: The differences among the youth in the acceptance of the factors of contribution by institutions, associations and significant individuals to the realization of human rights and freedoms in Croatia

Attributes of youth	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
<i>Age</i>			<i>F-ratio=12.73</i>
15 – 19 years			–
20 – 24 years			0
25 – 29 years			+
<i>Socio-professional status</i>			<i>F-ratio =8.90</i>
Employed			0
Unemployed			–
Pupils			0
Students			+
<i>Father's education</i>		<i>F-ratio =5.95</i>	<i>F-ratio =6.17</i>
Primary school		+	–
Vocational school		0	0
High school		0	0
College, university		–	+
<i>Education</i>			<i>F-ratio =14.28</i>
Primary school			–
Vocational school			–
High school			0
College, university			+
<i>Regional status</i>	<i>F-ratio =10.66</i>	<i>F-ratio =6.65</i>	
Northern Croatia	–	0	
Central Croatia	+	0	
Istria and Primorje	–	–	
Eastern Croatia	0	+	
Dalmatia	0	+	
Zagreb	+	–	
<i>Religiousness</i>		<i>F-ratio =49.46</i>	<i>F-ratio =9.51</i>
Religious		+	0
Undecided		–	0
Not religious		–	+
<i>Party affiliation</i>		<i>F-ratio =5.57</i>	<i>F-ratio =10.62</i>
HDZ*		+	–
HNS		–	+
HSP		+	–
HSS		0	0
SDP		–	0
Undecided		0	0

Legend: – below common average; 0 within common average; + above common average

The youth are only at the beginning of their life and work cycle when they, as individuals, become aware of the necessity of mechanisms systems for the protection of human rights and freedoms. To what degree their political awareness will be realized, depends, not only on the primary agents of socialization, but, to a great degree, on the institutions that create and implement everyday policies. Adding up all the previously stated findings we conclude that the recognizable effectiveness of certain institutions, associations and individuals when it comes to improving human rights and freedoms in Croatia, is influenced not only by their objective effects, but by the democratic potential of youth – that is education – and their inclinations toward specific political options.

5. Conclusion

It is possible to efficiently implement the systematic proclamation of human rights on a global scale that began in 1948, with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and in our times, among other places, expressed by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (*United Nations Millennium Development Goals by the Year 2015*, 2000), only through an orientation of the governments of certain states on the areas of education, preservation of health and an increase of income levels. Countries must construct partnerships on a global level, not to determine political and economic agendas so much, but to promote and protect human rights. The polarity between rights-freedoms and rights-claims has made relative the “original greatness of human rights, but at the same time, it has expanded the area of their types and meanings, and increased the social mass of those interested in the rights of life. It has made them an instrument of the developmental and social dynamic of the industrial society, through an argument of great clashes between democracy and totalitarianism, of the developed and undeveloped, etc.” (Kalanj, 1996: 50). These tendencies are exacerbated by globalization, even though, seen as an ideal-type, globalization is meant to imply an ever widening implementation of the hypothesis of human rights, that is, their universality. However, we are unfortunately, witnesses of constant deviations in the process of their protection.

“Institutions are necessary but not enough. They need to be filled with content, used for the improvement of all sectors of human rights. This content and this path will lead Croatia toward the European Union and its high standards in eliminating discrimination” (Šimunović, 2004: 10). Modern thoughts on the development of human rights move in the direction of linking social development with increasing the protection of human rights – the emphasis is on prevention (instead of late intervention), social participation, activities of self-organization and self-help, promotion of autonomy and development of social skills, and need for greater transparency of public policies. In this context, it is very important to work on affirmation, promotion and implementation of values and ideas of civil society, of the culture of non-violence and tolerance, human rights, dialogue, cooperation and trust, as well as awareness-raising about the opportunities for social change. It is also very important to inform and stimulate the youth to get engaged, to question and educate themselves on those values and opportunities of work and life based on them, in order to propel them forward and contribute to the realization of positive shifts in society. Youth in our analysis are perceived as a link, just being formed in a specific social system, thus making it one of the most important elements of a positive reception and implementation of the basic postulates of human rights.

The results of the research on validating specific human rights and freedoms, indicate that the greatest number of young persons accept the right to an education, right to work, personal security, right to privacy, social protection of the elderly and those at risk, equality before the law, rights of women and ownership rights. The comparison of acceptance of the observed human rights and freedoms of the population of youth and adults in Croatia, demonstrates that adults accept most rights to a higher degree than the youth, which can be interpreted through their better social integration. The analysis has shown that the preference of Croatian youth for certain human rights and freedoms is not conditioned by their observed socio-demographic and socio-structural attributes, aside from education, which points to the significance of the education system as an agent in improving the condition of human rights.

Approximately one third of youth participants, were not satisfied with the respect for human rights in Croatia today as well as five years ago, while the number of those undecided has decreased, which can probably be attributed to the positive effect of public campaigns and some changes occurring during that period of time. There has been an increase from 1999 to 2004 in the number of youth who believe that human rights in Croatia are mostly or completely respected. The youth, compared to adults, express a higher level of criticism toward the existing degree of respect for human rights and freedoms. The results of analysis according to the social attributes of youth, demonstrate that the capability of assessment and higher criticism for the status of human rights in Croatia, is related to living in more economically prosperous regions, as well as the left-wing ideological-political orientation and female gender.

Through an insight into the assessment of the contribution of institutions, associations and distinguished individuals by the youth population in 1999 and 2004, we have determined that today's generation of youth perceives to a greater degree, the contribution of all institutions, associations and significant individuals (except for the opposition) to the protection of human rights and freedoms in Croatia. To be more precise, most young people assess that all the protagonists completely or partially contribute to the realization of human rights in the country. There has been a significant increase regarding the perception of the contribution of the highest institutions of power compared to 1999. The adults differ from the youth by

emphasizing the contribution of all the observed protagonists even more. Regional status, religiousness, the father's education and political party affiliation, notably affect the perception of the contribution of the observed protagonists of the realization of human rights in Croatia.

Summarily, our analysis indicates that the youth accept human rights and freedoms decidedly, when they are discussed on a level of principles, but that there is a certain disharmony where specific rights and practices in Croatia are concerned, which can partially be interpreted as their insufficient competence regarding certain elements of social and political processes. As human rights and freedoms constitute universally accepted international standards and criteria of democracy in the modern world and its institutions today, the relationship of youth toward them, represents an indication of its social awareness and a precondition for its democratic activity. Even though the level of acceptance of human rights and freedoms as values seems to be high, there is wavering, indicating a need for additional engagement of some agents of socialization, especially the education system and the political protagonists. Freedom and human rights in Croatia are normatively regulated and are given to the individual at birth. However, freedom is not just a right, but a permanent mission, put before each young person, making all the difference for those that manage to gain entry into the world of active citizens, capable of making good their own, and others resources in the best possible way, thus contributing to the development of the world we live in. The first step in this ambitious plight is for the youth to contribute as much as possible to the democratization of Croatia, which would prepare them, as well as the country, for joining the united Europe.

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