

TIMIȘOARA: A MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-ETHNIC, MULTI-CONFESSIONAL AND TOLERANT COMMUNITY (TRADITION AND MODERNITY)

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Abstract

Sometimes there is nothing more important than local patriotism that makes you feel nothing compares to your city – not because you belong to the city but because it makes every inch on your body feel you belong to it no matter what. However, both time and people can change the history of a community where peace and understanding have become throughout the ages a brand difficult or impossible to create. The conceptual and evolutionary changes of the ethnic, cultural and confessional mixture brought by history, the cultural interferences achieved, human behaviour and emotions caused by all these factors in the name of unity in diversity and many other aspects have been subject to a 18-month research study carried out by a team of sociologists, psychologists, specialists in education, people interested in culture and art, politicians, historians, and anthropologists. This article deals with the research implementation strategy, the identified aspects and their value for the community in Timișoara, as well as the means used to leverage the results of the research in order to properly diagnose the current multicultural phenomenon within the “Little Vienna”.

Keywords: multicultural community, unity in diversity, cross-generation solidarity, community cohesion, tolerance, social welfare

Résumé

Parfois, il n'y a rien de plus important que le patriotisme local – qui te fait croire que rien ne peut se comparer avec ta ville – non parce qu'on lui appartient, mais parce qu'elle te fait sentir qu'on lui appartient malgré tout. Et pourtant, et le temps, et les gens peuvent changer l'histoire d'une communauté où la paix et l'entente sont devenues, avec le temps, une marque difficile voire impossible à créer. Les changements conceptuels et évolutifs du mélange ethnique, culturel et confessionnel produits par l'histoire, les interférences culturelles produites, le comportement humain et les émotions causées par tous ces facteurs au nom de l'unité dans la diversité et beaucoup d'autres aspects ont fait le sujet d'une étude qui a duré 18 mois et faite par une équipe de sociologues, psychologues, spécialistes en éducation gens intéressés par la culture et l'art, politiciens, historiens et anthropologues. Cet article concerne la stratégie d'implémentation de la recherche et de leur valeur pour la communauté de Timișoara, et des moyens utilisés pour valoriser les résultats

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de la recherche dans le diagnostic adéquat du phénomène multiculturel dans la „Petite Vienne”.

Mots-clés: communauté multiculturelle, unité dans la diversité, solidarité entre générations, cohésion de la communauté, tolérance, bien-être social.

Rezumat

Uneori nimic nu este mai important decât patriotismul local care te face să crezi că nimic nu se compara cu orașul tău – nu pentru că îi aparții ci pentru că te face să simți că fiecare centimetru îi aparține Totuși, atât timpul, cât și oamenii pot schimba istoria unei comunități în care pacea și înțelegerea au devenit, în timp, o marcă greu sau imposibil de creat. Schimbările conceptuale și evolutive ale amestecului etnic, cultural și confesional aduse de istorie, interferențele culturale produse, comportamentul uman și emoțiile cauzate de toți acești factori în numele unității în diversitate și multe alte aspecte au făcut subiectul unui studiu care a durat 18 luni și care a fost făcut de o echipă de sociologi, psihologi, specialiști în educație, oameni interesați de cultură și artă, politicieni, istorici și antropologi. Acest articol se ocupă de strategia de implementare a cercetării, de aspectele identificate și de valoarea lor pentru comunitatea din Timișoara, ca și de mijloacele utilizate pentru a valorifica rezultatele cercetării în diagnosticarea corespunzătoare a fenomenului multicultural din „Mica Vienă”.

Cuvinte cheie: comunitate multiculturală, unitate în diversitate, solidaritate între generații, coeziunea comunității, toleranță, bunăstare socială.

Introduction

Located at the crossroads between West and East, in a geographical area of soft climate and open areas allowing a wide range of economic and cultural advantages, Timișoara is the most important cultural centre in Western Romania due to its exceptional cultural inheritance. Despite the unbalances that could have endangered it (Babeți 2007), Timișoara has always focused on the authentic and steady life of its inhabitants, as any other respectable and respected community. A model of harmonious coexistence of 29 ethnic groups, the city on the Bega river also proved to be a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic area (Medeleț and Buruleanu 2004) forever connected to the values of European science and culture through avant-garde scientific and artistic popular and cultivated creations belonging to the Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Serbians and other minorities. Among the few Romanian cities that could be considered a brand (Neumann 2001), it is the result of the contribution of a series of geographical, social, cultural and human factors resulting from its geographical location, local history mainly modern one), and ethnic diversity that make it a cosmopolitan city whose inhabitants (Ilieșiu 2006), no matter how important, involve actively in different projects and activities “turning the city into a West European normal city” – which would be desirable for all Romanian towns and cities.

Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic tradition (Schuster von. 1999) have defined the civilisation of Timișoara turning into a propeller of social cohesion, of a specific identity and civilisation that is a feature of this city alone.

Together with other avant-garde cities of Europe, Timișoara has got noted for its remarkable first-time social and historical achievements: the municipal hospital considered the oldest building of the city (1745), street lamp lighting (1760), the first German newspaper in South-East Europe (1771), the first public loan library of the Habsburg Empire, of the Kingdom of Hungary and of all Romanian territories, known as Josef Klapka's Library (1815), street gas lighting (1855) – a first time for the Habsburg Empire, street electric lighting with 731 lamps (1884) – a first time for Europe, too, an ambulance station (1886) – a first time for Hungary and Romania, the electric tram (1899) – a first time for Romanian territories.

The victory against the Turks (1716) by Prince Eugene of Savoy – commander of the Austrian army who freed the city from the Turks and established an Austrian administration that would build schools (1718), a brewery (1718), modern fortifications (1723), the Bega Canal (1728-1758), cathedrals (1736), hospitals (1745), a theatre (1753), street lighting (1760) – shaped nowadays' identity of the city of Timișoara.

The inhabitants of Timișoara were second in Europe to travel by horse-driven trams in 1867 and they also enjoyed the first cinema hall in 1908 (Reuters).

The inhabitants of the area know well that living in Banat and, implicitly, in Timișoara, mean more than being just a Romanian, a German, a Hungarian, a Bulgarian, a Jew, a Roma, a Slovak, or a Serbian. Living together a life of joy and sorrow, no matter their ethnicity, relied on an existential pattern that they have made their own, observing it and being proud of it, harmonising their lives and being positive (Leșcu 2001), loving their language, accepting all religions wholeheartedly – Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Mosaic, Muslim (Hațegan 2006). In Timișoara, there are 3 Orthodox cathedrals, 3 synagogues, Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Piarist, Pentecostal, Adventist, Baptist, and Reformed churches. The Millennium Roman-Catholic Church, for instance, celebrates liturgies in Hungarian, German, and Romanian on a daily basis, liturgies in Italian every Saturday, and liturgies and other masses in Bulgarian also. The most prominent cult building is the Metropolitan Cathedral, inaugurated in 1946 in the presence of King Michael I (Vultur 2008), and decorated with paintings by Atanasie Demian and whose 7 bells were harmonised by the composer Sabin Drăgoi.

Back in 1919, R. W. Seton Watson (1919, p. 337) said “There is no other district in Europe with so many ethnic groups as in Banat.”

Mutual tolerance and a strong feeling of national appurtenance made the inhabitants of Timișoara preserve, and even safeguard their spiritual values and traditions (Neumann 2001), turning into true models for everybody due to their culture that has acted as a main factor of social cohesion.

In 1900, the Romanians represented about 10% of Timișoara's population (6,312 Romanians of the total 60,551 inhabitants); in 1930, they represented about 25% (25,207 Romanians of the total 102,390 inhabitants), while there were 33,162 Germans and 31,773 Hungarians; nowadays, 85% of the inhabitants are Romanians, while the minorities are much more diverse due to the presence of Asians, Italians, Muslims (Feneșan 2004), and less Germans and Hungarians. The reasons why the German community has massively emigrated, why the Jewish one dissipated, and why the Hungarian one moved to Szeged or Budapest are most complex, ranging from economic to political (i.e. ideological) ones. They were replaced little by little by inhabitants from the neighbouring localities (suburbs of Timișoara), areas (Maramureș, Oltenia, Moldova), and even by Asian and Italian immigrants.

“Even if impoverished or recently slightly marked by the confusion of the values scale in the Balkan area, the multi- and inter-cultural inhabitant of Banat still remains a credible model for a *Homo Europaeus* because he synthesises the ideals of a modern and post-modern world.” (Neumann)

The community of Timișoara (Cace 2007) lives far from exacerbated nationalism, from xenophobia, and from intolerance, and has preserved its multi-cultural flair, its ethnic diversity: living together in harmony makes Timișoara a European city. We can say that multiculturalism has been institutionalised here. It is only here that one has the privilege of seeing, hosted under the same roof, four different institutions: The Romanian Opera, The National Theatre, The German State Theatre, and The Csiky Gergely Hungarian State Theatre which deliver shows in Romanian, German and Hungarian; these institutions reflect the cultural identity of the most important ethnic groups of the city while trying to meet the need for beauty, sensitiveness, and civilisation of its inhabitants.

Multi- and inter-culturalism are a state of mind that is traceable in the local variant of the Romanian language, in the fact that true Banat inhabitants speak at least two languages, and in the fact that there are, in Timișoara, inscriptions in four different languages.

The architecture of the city is full of symbols marking the most important times in the city's history:

1. modern architecture is represented by the statue of the she-wolf with Romulus and Remus confirming the Latin origins of the Romanians (it was presented by Rome), the Metropolitan Cathedral, and the Opera House, symbol of the events of December 1989;
2. multicultural and Imperial architectures are represented by the Baroque palace of the Austrian administration (the Museum of Fine Arts), the Roman-Catholic Cathedral (the Dome) (17th century), a Serbian Orthodox Church, the building of the Serbian Bishopric, a synagogue, a German primary school (Nikolaus Lenau), and a monument dedicated to the Saint Trinity (similar to the one in Vienna) reminding of the pest in the 17th

century, all reunited in the Union Market, which, in its turn, reminds of the coming of the Romanian troops on August 3, 1919.

History has left its architectural marks from 1316 to the 15th century on the Hunyadi Castle which hosts, nowadays, the Banat's Museum of History, a fortification that reminds of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, together with the Corso (the promenade downtown), the Bega Canal, the Baroque buildings, the Jugendstil and the tram, the Art Nouveau buildings designed by Laszlo Szekely and built at the beginning of the 20th century: the Löffler, Szechenyi, Hilt & Vogel, Dauerbach, Merbl, Neuhausz, and Lloyd Palaces.

History has, thus, turned into a source of pride for the inhabitants of Timișoara, which they glorified whenever possible in writing in academic, artistic or religious environments (Țepelea 1975).

Undoubtedly, one of the sources of the pride of the people from Banat and Timisoara is the history of the “Austro-Hungarian Imperial heritage we use to identify with, because this Empire has left us everything that is of beauty in Timisoara – the Corso, the Bega Canal (just as important as the Danube is for Vienna, Bratislava, Belgrade and the Seine for Paris), the Baroque buildings and monuments, the Jugendstil and the trams.” Wherever you go, downtown Timisoara is full of history and emotion.

The statement of the British researcher Judy Batt from the University of Birmingham, who noted, in 2002, that “Banat has chosen to reinvent itself as a ‘multicultural’ and fundamentally ‘Central-European’ region (Bourdieu 1980) against the dominant trend of the Romanian nationalist discourse” can be fundamentally corrected by the statement according to which the “reinvention” of Banat is rather a rebuilding of the region as a “cultural” one, as a region of cultural *Miteinander* (‘living together’) (Ungureanu 2002) unlike the multicultural *Nebeneinander* (‘living one near the other’)“ (Vultur 2008).

Education also has a multi-cultural and inter-cultural character. Many of the high schools and colleges of the Timiș County bear the names of some personalities that have contributed to the prestige of school as a promoter of multiculturalism: Carmen Sylva, Constantin Diaconovici Loga, Coriolan Brediceanu, Emanuil Ungureanu, Nikolaus Lenau, Bartok Bela, Dositei Obradovici, Jean Louis Caldéron (Hațegan and Petroman 2008; Țârcovnicu 1978).

Since „Austrians brought several ethnicities in Banat and taught us that diversity is good”, all they had to do was to promote it.

It is well known that a true inhabitant of Banat and of Timisoara appreciates ordered, wealthy life, certain value systems which he observes and applies, sumptuous clothes adorned by jewellery, good, gourmet food. He is also very proud of everything he owns: his house, which he tends with good taste and keeps clean and dominated by peace; a storeroom full of good fare which he enjoys to share with his neighbours and friends no matter their ethnicity or religion; Christmas time spent in the family around a table full of Christmas foods; his place

and role during the festivals and holidays (Easter, among others) and many other things. After all, doesn't Banat always rank first?

Methods

A team of researchers made up of sociologists, psychologists, experts in educational matters, people of culture and fine arts, politicians, historians, and anthropologists aged 25-60 of both sexes have investigated for 18 months multi-culturalism, inter-culturality, multi-confessional and tolerance within the community of Timisoara. Most team members involved as volunteers pushed by the desire to answer old questions raised by the conceptual changes resulted from the ethnic, cultural, and confessional melting pot of history, by the cultural interferences, by the human behaviour and emotions – focussing on unity in diversity and on the desire to promote welfare and psychic comfort.

For a good representation a proportionately stratified random sampling has been done comprising 10% of Timisoara's population (2011 Census), defining precisely the sample selection in order to avoid biases; the final reports have also undergone a comparative analysis against results obtained from the 2010 and 2011 investigations, both of which strictly followed the same parameters regarding population structure and percentages on the level of ethnicity, gender, age and education. This allowed the issuing of value judgements regarding the investigated matter, as well as the drawing of conclusions about some key aspects (percentage changes in population structure, migration towards rural areas, and the exodus into western countries).

Our goals were:

1. testing the way of thinking of the people from Timisoara about multi-ethnic and multi-confessional cultural interferences and convergences and about tolerance in Timisoara and Banat;
2. inventorying the most representative causes of multi-culturality perennity;
3. diagnosing multi-culturality properly within the community of Timisoara (also nicknamed the Small Vienna for its similarities to that great metropolis);
4. establishing the level of knowledge of history, arts, and development of the respondents;
5. identifying the differences in perception of multi-culturality among both young and elder people;
6. finding solutions for the propagation of good practices in the maintenance of positive relationships and of excellent mutual tolerance;
7. projecting forecasts regarding the percentage modifications in population structure caused by the emergence of some new ethnicities, the migration towards rural areas, and the exodus into western European countries;

8. establishing the type of school involvement in understanding, practicing, and promoting tolerant behaviour within multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-confessional communities.

The hypotheses whose viability we demonstrate below were the following:

1. No matter how much we insist on a rational approach of inter-culturality in Timisoara, its inhabitants will always exhibit emotional truths;
2. Time and social, political, and economic changes have altered the perception of Timisoara's inhabitants of inter-culturality, but Banat's new inter-culturality is a matter of accepting others' ethnicity within the community;
3. Carrying out inter-cultural educational activities within the community of Timisoara as part of the institutionally established curriculum will contribute to the understanding of how important it is to better known other communities and to strengthen social cohesion at local level.

In order to carry out our investigation, we used the methods of collecting and selecting information, of statistics-mathematics processing, and of graphical representation of the data.

As investigation tools, we used a questionnaire concerning inter-ethnic relationships and social life in Timisoara, items of social survey concerning the role of institutions in the inter-cultural education of Timisoara's inhabitants, a personalised interview, and an opinion survey on regional and local levels, face-to-face, over the telephone/CATI as well as online.

The respondents were selected from different environments, from different areas of the city; they had very different ages, and they were of both sexes; they had different occupations, and they were raised and trained either in Timisoara or in other areas of the country or abroad; they were simple passers-by or they were personalities whose existence was related to the community of Timisoara, as well as representatives of different institutions.

Of the 3286 respondents, 2152 were females and 1134 were males. As for the respondents' age, 233 were 14-17 years old (7.07%), 353 were 18-25 (10.73%), 853 were 25-30 (25.27%), 557 were 30-40 (16.95%), 626 were 40-50 (19.05%), 257 were 50-60 (7.83%) and 429 were over 60 (13.06%).

From the point of view of their field of activity, 21% worked in arts, 32% in industry, 12% in economy, 11% in trade, 17% in education, and 7% in services.

As far as their confession was concerned, 1760 were Orthodox (53.57%), 766 were Catholics (23.32%), 291 were Greek-Catholic (8.86%), 195 were Roman-Catholic (5.98%), 89 were Jews (2.72%), 63 were Reformed (1.94%), 56 were Adventists (1.71%), 40 were Baptists (1.24%), 20 were Pentecostals (0.62%), and 7 were Muslims (0.23%).

The respondents' area of origin was also of significance for us: 1486 were born, raised and trained in Timisoara (45.25%), 641 were from the Timiș County or from the neighbouring communes and villages (19.51%), 607 were from other areas of the country (18.50%), 188 were from other areas of the world (42 Italians, 20

Asians, 20 arabs, 14 hungarians, 14 Germans, 14 Moldovans, 12 Serbians, 11 Bulgarians, 10 Greeks, 10 Spaniards, 7 Belgians, 8 Czechs, 6 French people) (5.75%); 112 were personalities whose existence is linked to the community of Timisoara (3.42%) and 247 were just visiting Timisoara (7.54%). Of the total respondents, 170 were students (5.20%) and 86 were pupils (2.64%).

Results

The team of investigators made up of great admirers of the city they lovingly call the Small Vienna divided the intervention areas depending on the instruments they used to collect information. The questionnaires they applied contained 15 items and the interviews/surveys contained 8 items.

The questions of highest relevance for both us and our respondents were those concerning the characterisation of inter-culturality in Timisoara and the specific actions to point it out, the changes of its inhabitants' perception on the phenomenon, and multi-cultural education in the youth:

1. Define Timisoara's inter-culturality in a few words.
2. Enumerate some of the changes in the inhabitants' perception on inter-culturality.
3. Have you ever felt discriminated while living among Timisoara's inhabitants?
4. Do you think that Timisoara's spirit is dying?
5. Name a few cultural activities carried out in Timisoara these years.

Of the 3286 respondents, 298 gave partial answers (9.17%), while 71 did not answer written questions (2.17%). A number of 648 people participated in the survey (19.75%), of which 170 were students (26.37%) and 86 were pupils (13.38%).

Analysis of the table no. 1 gives us clues as to the homogeneity of the data collected and a measure of their spreading.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	N	Std. Deviation
“Define Timisoara’s inter-culturality in a few words”	3286	2.00797
<i>Have you ever felt discriminated against, marginalized in the period in which you lived in the middle of Timisoara?</i>	3286	.93176
<i>Who feel that you must deal with intercultural education of young people?</i>	3286	1.08697
Valid N (list wise)	3286	

Here are some of the answers the respondents gave to the item “**Define Timisoara’s inter-culturality in a few words**”, that confirmed the validity of our hypotheses:

1. Look around. It’s full of inscriptions in foreign languages; the streets bear the names of personalities from all over the world and from all the fields. (*similar answers 478*)
2. You take a tram and you hear speaking Romanian, German, Serbian, Hungarian, and everybody feels at home. (*similar answers 343*)
3. All those visiting this area of the country notice the special spirit of Timisoara’s inhabitants, an attitude one cannot find elsewhere. It’s like something is floating in the air. (*similar answers 409*)
4. You understand at once that Timisoara is special; its spirit makes you feel like any other by-passer. (*similar answers 359*)
5. Even if you are not willing to see how much the people of Timisoara love their city, it is impossible not to notice the flyers stuck on the buildings’ walls bearing the words “IUBESC TIMISOARA” or “I ♥ Timișoara”. (*similar answers 576*)
6. Have you ever been to a football match of the Politehnica Timisoara? The white-purple ones create a fantastic atmosphere and its supporters are proud to wear scarves, caps, and flags with the symbols of their favourite team, running on motorbikes carrying the team’s flag and are happy about it. Their victory is everybody’s victory despite the fact that the years of glory are long gone. (*similar answers 667*)
7. The flyers marked “100% from Banat” are something common on trams, trolleybuses, and buses, as are the posters, the banners, or the signs bearing “I love my city, I do not soil it”, “Don’t mess with the people of Timisoara”, “I am a citizen of Timisoara and it accepts me as I am” – and everybody thinks this is quite normal. It’s part of our everyday life! (*similar answers 454*)

The global analysis of the responses provided by respondents to the question *Describe in a few words intercultural Timisoara* briefly playable in Table. 2

Table 2. “Define Timisoara’s inter-culturality in a few words”

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>inscriptions streets</i>	478	14.5	14.5	14.5
<i>different languages</i>	343	10.4	10.4	25.0
<i>spirit Timisoara</i>	409	12.4	12.4	37.4
<i>feeling solidarities</i>	359	10.9	10.9	48.4
Valid <i>city is loved</i>	576	17.5	17.5	65.9
<i>details identifying the football team</i>	667	20.3	20.3	86.2
<i>100% Banat flyers</i>	454	13.8	13.8	100.0
Total	3286	100.0	100.0	

And now, the answers to the item **“Enumerate some of the changes in the inhabitants’ perception on inter-culturality”**:

1. Well, it is no longer as it used to be, but my feelings are the same. Though I am 58, I still wait for Aunt Lara to bring me some of her Serbian *ceșnița* (‘walnut cake’), Erika to bring me nicely painted Easter eggs, or Amir, who lives on the 7th floor, to bring me a piece of his lamb stuffed with nuts and chick pea. I have decided to turn into a vivid memory of the happy atmosphere of our common celebrations, of the Easter’s Eve in front of the Cathedral, and of the New Year’s Eve in front of the Opera House, of the spring and fall festivals, of the concerts of folk music and modern music in front of the Opera House, or of the organ concerts at the Dome in the Union Square, if some day we lose the feeling. (*similar answers 543*)
2. The structure of the population has changed, but the spirit of the people is the same. Though the Romanians represent, nowadays, 85% of Timisoara’s population and despite the fact that the Germans have widely emigrated and the Jews have dissipated their marks are still visible and will always be. (*similar answers 850*)
3. I think that the turmoil caused by political instability, the decrease of the living standard, the increase of unemployment rate have resulted in a decrease of the level of tolerance in the inhabitants of Timisoara, and this is also obvious in educational institutions. (*similar answers 675*)
4. Well, I have to admit that there is no human balance, but even the heart of the Planet is unbalanced and Gaia, this living super-body that is Mother Earth should find the natural balance we all need because we, as human beings, are earth that feels, thinks, loves and venerates, no matter the ethnic group, the confession or the culture. (*similar answers 111*)
5. There are so many changes that we no longer recognize ourselves we sometimes (*similar responses similar answers 739*)
6. Mentality. And we have changed soul. Have we become cooler, more distant, and more indifferent? It would be a shame! (*similar answers 368*)

“Have you ever felt discriminated while living among Timisoara’s inhabitants?”

1. I have lived in Timisoara for 3 years now, and you cannot imagine how difficult it was for me to be alone and far from my own kinship. But I did not lose hope because I have found people willing to help me overcome despair. I expected to be ignored or excluded, but now we are just like a family together... (*similar answers 1419*)
2. I [Silvio Ascano, 23, a student in medicine] am from Genoa and I study medicine. I have never felt like treated differently from other colleagues. When we are together, I no longer consider myself a foreigner. (*similar answers 424*)

3. In my block of flats, there are 53 flats, and in 23 of them live mixed families. Interethnic marriages are pretty common here. We always joke when we say that our families are a synthesis of the best of three generations. Three of our children are to be married to members of other mixed families. (*similar answers 1443*)

Question “**Have you ever felt discriminated while living among Timisoara’s inhabitants?**” responses were grouped as follows:

Table 3: Have you ever felt discriminated against, marginalized in the period in which you lived in the middle of Timisoara?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no - friends	1419	43.2	43.2
	no - colleagues	434	13.2	56.4
	no - marriages	1433	43.6	100.0
	Total	3286	100.0	100.0

“Do you think that Timisoara’s spirit is dying?”

1. Ni, it’s impossible! We needed so much time to learn to live together accepting each other and respecting each other, communicating and handing over this way of thinking and acting to our children. Banat’s spirit cannot be mistaken. I am confident there is no other community in Europe as ours – I mean, over 300 years old. (*similar answers 1002*)
2. I am going to be 85 next August, but I miss my walks with beautiful girls on the Corso, my travels along the Bega Canal and my talks with Hermine, my first love. During my short walks that make me content I wonder if somebody remembers me as I remember Leopold Wegenstein, a famous organ builder, architects Lipót Baumhorn or Martin Gemeinhardt, or Wilhelm Mühle’ gardens. Maybe we should call some streets after them as a reminder. (*similar answers 363*)
3. I think it must be hard to see how that way of living, working and feeling together which built a model is on its way to **rarefying**. How to react to the upset of locals when they see that the city centre with its imposing buildings full of history is now taken over by the Roma and the underground commerce by the Arabs? (*similar answers 551*);
4. It’s up to us to not let it die! A good leader would know how to gather its people around to conserve the spirit of this metropolis. (*similar answers 726*);

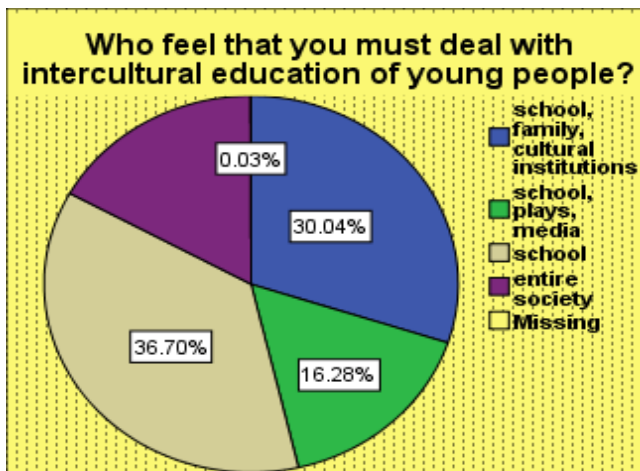
“Who should take care of the intercultural education of young people?”

1. Definitely, school, but not exclusively. Family, cultural institutions, art institutions and everybody else. Before all, to make us able to accept ourselves, to respect each other and to love each other, we need to know

each other. Education plays an important role here. Let us try and be European citizens. (*similar answers 987*)

2. School, play, mass-media undoubtedly play an essential role in promoting interculturality; its principles should be always present in both curricula and the ethos of the educational institutions(*similar answers 535*)
3. Since school promotes cooperation between pupils from different social, ethnic, and religious groups, thus generating cooperation and tolerance, it becomes an area of interculturality. It will always facilitate the passage from close (ethnocentric) communities to open society. (*similar answers 334*)
4. Intercultural education, no matter where it occurs, supports social integration of the minority groups peacefully, without being forced to give up its own identity and taking into account different lifestyles. It adapts to everybody's needs and interests and school is good at doing this. (*similar answers 384*)
5. School taught me that interculturality means respect for differences, and interculturality in educational approaches means doing things in a different way. (*similar answers 266*)
6. The entire society should make sure the youths will learn to be more tolerant, more independent and develop their communication skills. (*similar answers 556*)
7. I remember the first intercultural exchanges in school. My child got involved in a knowledge and inter-knowledge programme with pupils from France, Hungary, Poland and Turkey. It was worth it because behavioural changes were obvious and long-lasting. (*similar answers 224*)

Below are shown answers to the question “**Who should take care of the intercultural education of young people?**”



Conclusions

As a process going on at the crossroads between cultures and without being a goal *per se*, but susceptible of becoming one when unnatural alterations or improper behaviour are obvious at this level of cultural clash, interculturality involves “understanding, appreciation and valorisation of one’s own culture plus respect based on genuine information and on curiosity for the culture of the other.”

It is the desirable result of the inner process of self-adjustment of the multicultural community.

This is why intercultural education will have to develop *a pedagogy of the human relationship of a certain type: an education that allows pupils to relate, at any time, to the others, that provides the pupils with the ways of diversifying references, of living the different cultural ways of their environment in full legitimacy.*

The performed activities, the survey and interview answers, the small group, online or telephone discussions, the small outpours of heart coming from subjects of all ages and both sexes confirmed to us that the most important objectives set have been attained.

Testing the Timisoara inhabitants’ way of thinking with regard to the phenomenon of multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and tolerant cultural interferences and convergence, it has been found that 85% of them have a positive thinking, they accept and respect otherness and collaborate without discrimination. But, as every rule has its exceptions, there are 15% of opposing or differing opinions.

The difference in perceiving the multicultural phenomenon is very obvious between the younger and the elderly populations. The former consider this as being a normal thing and they won’t even put it on their list of problems, while others think multiculturalism means glory.

The most efficient solutions in perpetuating good practices were considered to be those social, lucrative, leisure, instructional activities which utilize techniques of mutual knowledge and awareness, valorizing all ethnicities, the ones organized by schools and other nongovernmental institutions, as well as the scientific and artistic presentations made in national theatres, philharmonics, opera houses, puppet theaters, which all help in knowing and understanding ourselves and others.

The forecasts regarding the percentage modifications in population structure caused by the emergence of new ethnicities, the migration towards rural areas, and the exodus into western European countries have all been real, and they referred to the Italian and Arab groups, to the city inhabitants who slowly moved to the countryside or left to work in other geographical regions.

Our investigation shows that the Timisoara model springs from a harmonious diversity that starts from the multicultural to interculturality, turning this citadel

into a city of multiculturalism and tolerance in which ethnic diversity, active ageing, and intergenerational solidarity are an honouring visit card.

The responses to our questionnaires and interviews (which we have presented above selectively) show the validity of Hypothesis No. 1, “No matter how much we insist on a rational approach of inter-culturality in Timisoara, its inhabitants will always exhibit emotional truths.” No matter their capacity, the people from Timisoara have always “thought” with their hearts and will keep doing so.

The people from Banat have always known to enjoy what they have and, no matter how many changes occur in their lives, their level of acceptability and tolerance will be their European passport.

Thus, Hypothesis No. 2 is also validated: “Time and social, political, and economic changes have altered the perception of Timisoara’s inhabitants of inter-culturality, but Banat’s inter-culturality is a matter of accepting others’ ethnicity within the community”

Most respondents have pointed out that school, play, mass-media undoubtedly play a crucial role in promoting interculturality: its principles should always belong to the curricula and the ethos of educational institutions, and intercultural education activities should aim at strengthening the ties between school and community, on the one hand, and civil society, on the other hand, and better communication between school and local authorities – the only way youths will understand that interculturality is respect for the differences and interculturalism as an educational approach is doing things differently, but together.

Intercultural exchanges between schools in the European area, the existence of newspapers, magazines, books in widely-circulated languages and in minority languages, activities organised by the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara, theatre festivals, musical festivals, fine arts festivals, activities meant to promote and safeguard old architectural elements, celebrating personalities of the city and their impact on the population also validate Hypothesis No. 3, “Carrying out inter-cultural educational activities within the community of Timisoara as part of the institutionally=established curriculum will contribute to the understanding of how important it is to better known other communities and to strengthen social cohesion at local level.”

Timisoara is a multicultural, tolerant city, and its cultural area has always been a European cultural area.

The harmonious, positive coexistence of the Romanians and of the minorities – Germans, Hungarians, Serbians, Bulgarians, Romani, Slovaks, Arabs, of the Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Mosaic religions, and the plurilinguism of the inhabitants of the region make this European area a model worth following as an example of good practices, of cohabitation and cultural interference. To do so, we all need to be positive, to assume responsibilities, to turn towards effective, immediate, reasonable, cooperative solutions, to get more involved socially; we also need more smiles and respect, more sensitiveness.

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