# Living in Post-war Communities

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Helle Schierbeck, Bjarne Solberg and Jonathan Dames have shared our enthusiasm at the time when the idea of a regional research into refugee and returnee population was only emerging.

Partner NGOs from the region – Human Rights Bureau in Tuzla, Dalmatian Solidarity Committee (DOS, offices in Split, Knin and Benkovac), Centre for Development, Tolerance and Activism (CRTA, Karlovac) and the Youth Council (OMS) Milići – have take part in conducting this research. Nevena Žunjić (DOS Knin), Danijela Konjić (Human Rights Bureau Tuzla), Aleksandar Đukanović (OMS Milići) and Tatjana Vukobratović (CRTA Karlovac) have helped us in the regional co-ordination of the research, while twenty-five field researchers worked meticulously in the field. We would also like to thank other colleagues who have supported us in the process: Ivana Trkulja (SEE RAN Secretariat Sarajevo), Helene Bach (FRESTA/NAB), Maja Mateljan (DOS Split), Branka Rajner and Elizabeta Lukačević (Human Rights Bureau Tuzla), Dijana Lazić (Civic Democratic Initiative Project, Beli Manastir) and Saša Lalić (Association for Civic Alternatives and Ethnic Relations, Vukovar) without whose understanding this research could not have been conducted.

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Photographer Marc Schneider has contributed his photographs, a part of the series «Crossing Borders».

This publication is dedicated to our respondents from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, who have given us their trust and shared with us their experiences of living in the post-war communities.

# Contents:

# INTRODUCTION

"Living in Post-war Communities" is a research project designed and conducted with the view of identifying and describing factors important for finding durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced people in the Balkans.

Within the framework of this project, the IAN research team has during 2004 conceptualised and conducted a complex regional research on the sample of 1502 respondents: refugees and internally displaced, returnees and local residents in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This research is unique in its scope and regional character. It was conducted with initiative and collaboration of civil society actors, led by a group of non-governmental organisations from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, supported by FRESTA/NAB Programme of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following partner NGOs from the region have actively partaken in conducting the research:

- International Aid Network IAN, Belgrade;
- Human Rights Bureau, Tuzla;
- Dalmatian Solidarity Committee (DOS offices: Split, Knin, Benkovac);
- Centre for Development, Tolerance and Activism (CRTA), Karlovac and
- Youth Council Milići.

Since its foundation in 1997, IAN (www.ian.org.yu) has been actively working for the protection and promotion of mental health and human rights of refugees, internally displaced people and other vulnerable groups. A large portion of IAN activities is devoted to conceptualising and conducting research on various issues related to refugees and internally displaced. Results of these research projects provide guidelines for further planning of programmes that can respond to the needs of beneficiaries. This research is another step in this direction and represents not only an overview of the current situation, but is also a fruit of the eight-year experience that has largely affected the direction which this research would take.
The aims of the present research were the following:

1. look into the current living conditions and material status of returnees and refugees, in comparison with one another and with the local population;
2. explore their positions towards integration and return, potentials and conditions considered necessary for integration or return, as well as to what extent the expectations of returnees have been fulfilled;

3. explore the human rights status of returnees and refugees, in comparison with one another and with the local population;
4. look into the ethnic distance of returnees and refugees towards other nationalities, in comparison with one another and with the local population;
5. scrutinise current psychological state and mental health of returnees and refugees, in comparison with one another and with the local population;

Texts in this book have been arranged in a way that follows the sequence of research aims stated above.

The data collected give a complex overview of various aspects of refugee and returnee reality, including the issues of housing, employment and income, conditions and possibilities of return or integration, perception of their surroundings, general psychological status and mental health, infringement of basic human rights, war and post-war victimisation, as well as the social distance towards other ethnic groups.

Further intention of the project is to present results and recommendations of this research to organisations and agencies engaged in various types of aid activities for refugees and returnees in the region, as well as to policy and decision makers whose work affects refugees and returnees; on a larger scale – to present to the expert and wider public the phenomena accompanying forced migrations. We hope that this publication will find its readers among various groups of professionals and activists.

# A BRIEF RETROSPECTIVE ON THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES IN THE YUGOSLAV WARS 1991-99

***Borislav Radović***

*"And you, where do you come from?"*
*"From nowhere!"*
A terrified Slavonian peasant to a journalist of the RT Belgrade,
at the Belgrade railway station, November 1991

*

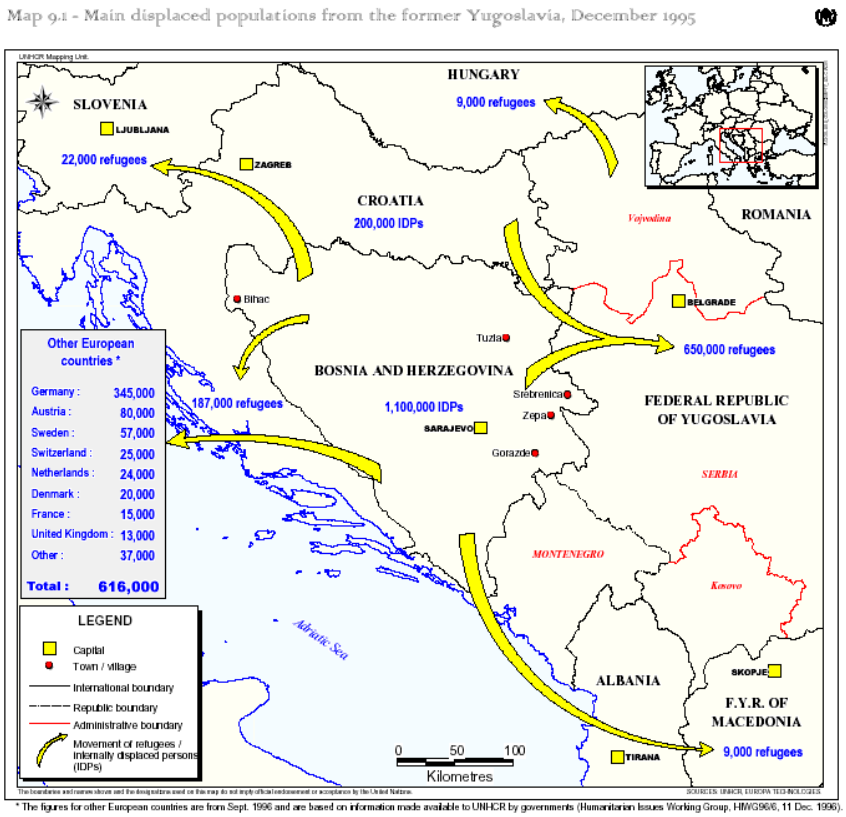
In the last decade of the 20th century, the former Yugoslavia was theatre of four wars:

1. War in Slovenia (June 27– July 7, 1991)
2. War in Croatia (summer 1991 – 1995)
3. War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (spring 1992 – November 1995)
4. War between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, i.e. Serbia and Montenegro (March 23 –June 11, 1999)

Each of these conflicts produced its contingent of refugees (persons who left the republic of their origin and went either to some other ex-Yugoslav republic or to a third country) and internally displaced persons (individuals who found refuge in some other location *within* their republic of origin). But, no matter how we call them, both "refugees" and "internally-displaced persons" shared one fundamental thing: they had to leave their homes because of war and try to continue their broken lives elsewhere. In the great majority of cases, these were the quite common people who never thought seriously about leaving their homes and

who, to the very last moment, believed there would be no war at all, although the acute phase of the Yugoslav crisis began at least two years before the actual outbreak of hostilities, at the end of June of 1991 in Slovenia. Our idea about the optimism of the ordinary Yugoslav is corroborated by the fact that mass exile began only *after* the outbreak of classical hostilities that involved at least two large armed groups.

And when the conflicts began, and Yugoslavia went ablaze in a whole series of wars,[1] there occurred a real explosion of compulsory emigration:

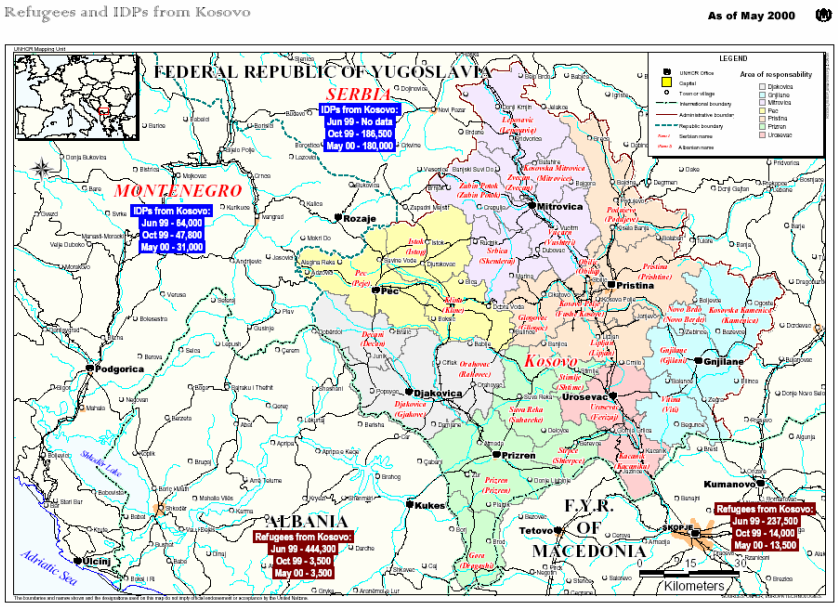



*Source: UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch)*

However, this spectacular and tragic map does not illustrate all big movements of refugees in the Yugoslav wars. For example, it does not demonstrate

[1] This work does not deal with the causes and events leading to the break-up of Yugoslavia and Yugoslav wars, since we tried to address that subject elsewhere ("Yugoslav wars 1991-9 and some of their social consequences", www.ian.org.yu/tortura/eng/publications/monografija/01.pdf). Therefore, we invite the reader to take the present work as an addendum to the previous essay.

the refugee movements during and after the NATO-FRY conflict in spring and summer 1999. This is how the refugee situation looked like after the conflict:




Source: UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch)

If we sum the numbers presented in the two maps and compare them with the 1991 Census data, we will obtain the astonishing results: out of 23 528 230 inhabitants of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there were 3 725 300 refugees and IDPs, which represents 15.83 % of the total population. This means that almost every sixth citizen of the former Yugoslavia has experienced exile or internal displacement.

If we analyze only the territories where conflicts actually took place (Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo),2 the figures become even more dramatic: out of 11 079 665 inhabitants of these territories, there were 3 716 300 refugees and IDPs, i.e. 33.54 % of the total population, which means that every third inhabitant of these territories became refugee or IDP.

If, finally, we perform a similar analysis for each of these territories separately, we will realize that the percentage for Croatia (4 760 344 inhabitants) was 15.58%, for Bosnia (4 364 574 inhabitants) 51.08%, and for Kosovo (1 954 747 inhabitants) 47.7%. In other words, during the wars in these countries, almost

[2] This analysis excludes Slovenia

every sixth inhabitant of Croatia and every second inhabitant of Bosnia and Kosovo experienced the fate of refugee!

A sad historical aftermath of this process is the fact that many of the war-affected persons from the former Yugoslavia are still refugees and IDPs. Thus, in 2003 (for IDPs) and 2004 (for refugees), UNHCR reports:

| **Country** | **Number of refugees** | ***Number of IDPs*** |
|---|---|---|
| Croatia | 4 387[3] | 31 279[4] |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 22 517[5] | 404 721[6] |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 291 415[7] | 256 891[8] |

The figures reveal that Croatia has mainly solved the problem, that Bosnia has mainly solved the problem of refugees (but remains burdened with a huge number of IDPs), while Serbia and Montenegro is burdened both with a huge number of refugees *and* a huge number of IDPs. Even in 2004 (five years after the Kosovo war and nine years after the wars in Croatia and Bosnia), Serbia and Montenegro remains the most burdened of all ex-Yugoslav countries.

In fact, if we take into account *the number of IDPs only,* we will see that in 2004 Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro were among the ten most burdened countries in the world:

[3] *Refugee trends 1 January – 30 June 2004 - refugee populations, new arrivals and durable solutions in 81,mostly developing, countries*, p. 4, UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch)
[4] *2003 global refugee trends - overview of refugee populations, new arrivals, durable solutions, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern to UNHCR*, table 1, (www.unhcr.ch)
[5] *ibid.* p. 4
[6] *2003 global refugee trends - overview of refugee populations, new arrivals, durable solutions, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern to UNHCR,* table 1, (www.unhcr.ch)
[7] *Refugee trends 1 January – 30 September 2004 - refugee populations, new arrivals and durable solutions in 73, mostly developing, countries*, p. 6, UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch)
[8] *2003 global refugee trends - overview of refugee populations, new arrivals, durable solutions, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern to UNHCR*, table 1, (www.unhcr.ch)

| MAJOR IDP POPULATIONS OF CONCERN TO UNHCR (at 1st January 2004) | |
|---|---|
| Country | IDPs |
| Colombia | 1 244 400 |
| Azerbaijan | 575 600 |
| Liberia | 531 600 |
| Sri Lanka | 386 100 |
| Russian Federation | 368 200 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 327 200 |
| Georgia | 260 200 |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 256 900 |
| Afghanistan | 184 300 |
| Cote d'Ivore | 38 000 |

Source: *Refugees by Numbers, 2004 Edition*, p. 12, UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch)

*

Reconsidering the previously exposed figures, we can ask ourselves about the reasons of such a magnitude of compulsory migrations during the Yugoslav wars. We believe that the answer is given by the following five major causes:

1. All Yugoslav wars of the 1990s (except the war in Slovenia) were of a kind that military operations also took place within smaller or bigger cities. There is a long list of the cities that underwent siege or bombardment (Vukovar, Mostar, Zadar, Pakrac, Gospić, Karlovac, Derventa, Drvar, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, Priština...). It meant, first of all, that a significant number of civilians happened to be in the locations where such fighting took place.
2. Even worse, civilians were often *intentionally targeted* by armed groups and local political authorities, within the so-called "ethnic cleansing". The term denotes a set of actions that the police, military and political authorities take in order to annihilate or significantly reduce an ethnic group in a particular territory. The actions ranged from brutal "cleansing" by artillery or tanks, through various forms of physical and sexual violence, to dislodgement, expropriation, dismissal from job, loss of various civil and social rights and all possible forms of pressure, discrimination, intimidation and humiliation.[9]

[9] Details on the methods, perpetrators and victims, locations, effects and human drama of ethnic cleansing in Yugoslav wars are contained in numerous reports and publications, of which we especially recommend those published by the United Nations Special rapporteur for human rights

3. The Yugoslav wars, as almost all other great wars in Europe, have brought about what we might call "the war misery", by which we mean a general impoverishment of all aspects of life. Aside from a frequently unbearable social and political climate, the Yugoslav wars have imposed to the population harsh living conditions, even in the regions where no actual fighting or "ethnic cleansing" took place. If we include in this also mass unemployment (caused by war) and compulsory mobilization, we can easily understand why many individuals decided to leave their homes and become refugees.
4. However, people did not leave only under the threat of violence – they also did so when the territory they lived in came under the authority of the ex-enemy, as part of a peace settlement. This happened in countless locations in Bosnia after the conclusion of the Dayton peace agreement (November 1995), as well as in Croatia, after the signing of the Erdut peace agreement and the final reintegration of the former Republic of Serbian Krajina into the Republic of Croatia, in 1998.
5. Lastly, and most importantly, the shocking magnitude of the refugee movements in the Yugoslav wars is explained by the fact that these were *interethnic wars* in *ethnically mixed territories.* As we know, the SFRY was an ethnically mixed country, construed in a way that its various parts (republics and autonomous provinces) contain (or embrace) the bulk of individual (the so-called "constitutive") nations and bigger national minorities. "The bulk" becomes clear if we take a look at the table that we have constructed on the basis of the last pre-war SFRY census:

Tadeusz Mazowiecki, International Confederation of Red Cross, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

| **DISTRIBUTION OF THE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS in the REPUBLICS of the SFRY (according to the 1991 census)[10]** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Croats | Slovenians | Moslems | Serbs | Montenegrins | Macedonians |
| in Croatia | 3 708 308 | 23 802 | 47 603 | 580 762 | 9 521 | 4 760 |
| in Slovenia | 53 688 | 1 718 318 | 26 725 | 47 097 | 4 233 | 4 412 |
| in Bosnia | 755895 | ▣ | 1 905 829 | 1 369 258 | ▣ | ▣ |
| in Serbia (with both autonomous provinces) | 109 214 | 8 340 | 237 358 | 6 428 420 | 140 024 | 47 577 |
| in Montenegro | 6 249 | 407 | 89 932 | 57 176 | 380 484 | 860 |
| in Macedonia | ▣ | ▣ | ▣ | 44 159 | ▣ | 1 314 283 |
| Total | 4 633 354 | 1 750 867 | 2 307 447 | 8 526 872 | 534 262 | 1 371 892 |
| Outside of the "mother" republic | 925 046 | 32 549 | 401 618 | 2 098 452 | 153 778 | 57 609 |
| % outside of the "mother" republic | 19.96 | 1.86 | 17.4 | 24.6 | 28.79 | 4.2 |

▣ = *included in the census column "Others". We assume that these were small, numerically negligible contingents.*

The table demonstrates clearly that the degree of inclusion of a particular group in its "mother" republic varied from republic to republic. In the case of dissolution of Yugoslavia along the former republican frontiers (which was precisely the scenario sanctioned by the international community on grounds of the opinions and recommendations issued by the Arbitration Committee of the Conference on Yugoslavia, a.k.a. the "Badinter commission"),[11] a minimal number of Macedonians (and especially Slovenians) would be left out of their "mother" republic, while such an outcome would affect one sixth of ethnic Moslems, one

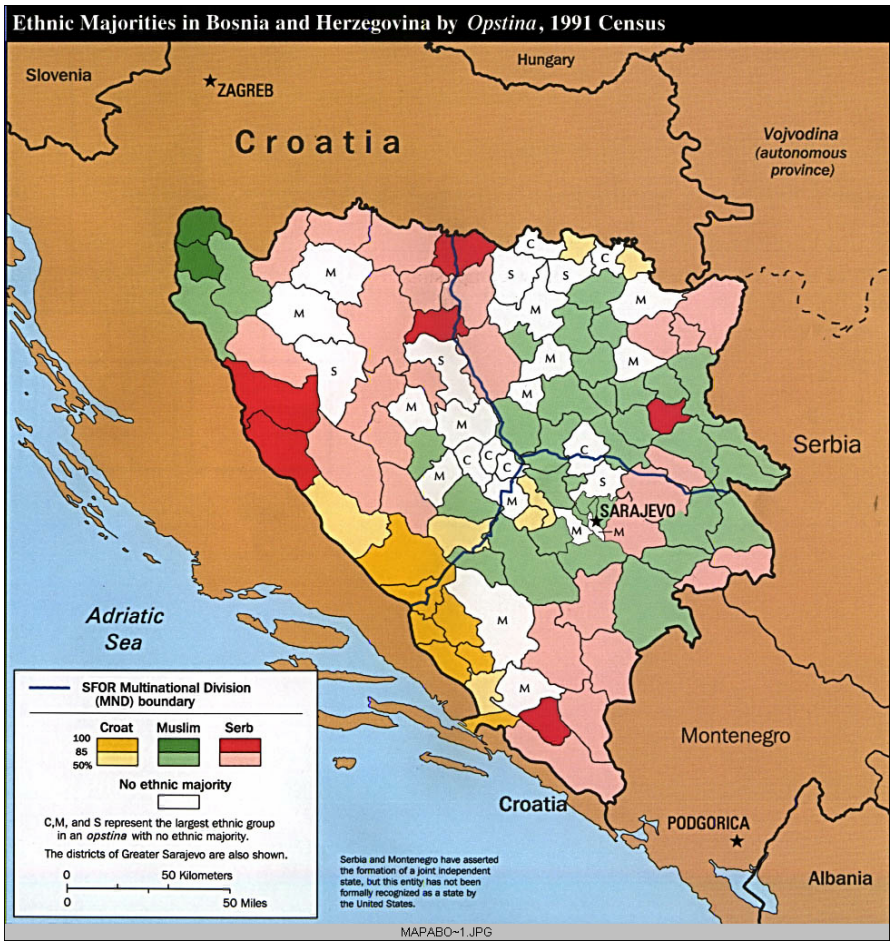
[10] *Popis 1991 [Census 1991],* Savezni zavod za statistiku, CD-ROM, Beograd, 1997.

[11] The capital importance of this solution, as well as the importance of other opinions of the Badinter commission, has eluded many analysts of Yugoslav conflicts. For a brilliant analysis of the context and consequences of the decisions of the Badinter commission see: Roland Rich, "Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union" (www.ejil.org/journal/Vol4/No1/art4.pdf). The reader can find the entire text of the Commission's decisions in: Alain Pellet, " The Opinions of the Badinter Arbitration committee: A Second Breath for the Self-Determination of Peoples" (www.ejil.org/journal/Vol3/No1/art13.html).

fifth of ethnic Croats and one fourth of ethnic Serbs. In other words, if the SFRY dissolved along the erstwhile republican borders (which, then, would become "hard", international borders), Moslems would have a large national minority in Serbia (primarily in the region of "Sandžak"), Croats would have one large minority in Bosnia and one small (but by no means negligible) minority in Serbia, while Serbs would have large minorities in Bosnia and Croatia (first of all in Slavonia, as well as in the region known as "Krajina").

However, ethnic mixture was not only significant between republics. It was especially the case *within* some republics, and first of all within Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Picture 1: Ethnic Majorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Opstina, 1991 Census




*Source: www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/bosnia/ethnic_majorities_97.jpg*

Even a casual look on the map reveals the extraordinary complexity of the geographical distribution of the main ethnic groups in Bosnia. The picture of what Serbian politician Vuk Drašković labeled the "leopard skin" could easily suggest to everyone that a war in Bosnia, should it happen, would be extremely cruel. Or more precisely, every idea of territorial separation and unification of ethnic groups would clash against the following three unpleasant facts:

1. absence of compact ethnic territories (for example, the division of the Moslem population into the eastern and western group of municipalities; the division of the Croat population into the southern, central and northern group; the division of the Serb population into the eastern and western group)
2. existence of the groups of municipalities that are "cut off" (isolated) from the "mother republic" or from the republican capital (thus the "isolation" of the western group of the "Moslem" municipalities (the so-called Bihać pocket) from Sarajevo; the "isolation" of the "Croatian" municipalities in the Central Bosnia from Croatia; the "isolation" of the western "Serbian" group from Serbia)
3. existence of numerous municipalities with high ethnic mixture

But, the ethnic territorial distribution was even more complex than the map illustrates. Namely, there was practically no municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina that did not contain numerous *mono-ethnic* villages of minority ethnic groups. Still, the situation was even more complicated, since *almost all* municipal centers in B&H (and these were the biggest settlements, i.e. cities) were multi-ethnic, while smaller settlements in their surroundings (i.e. villages) were mono-ethnic, with a high frequency of villages of minority ethnic groups. In fact, the sociological truth about the pre-war Bosnia could be also stated in this way: *multi-ethnic cities, mono-ethnic villages*.[12] In Bosnian cities Moslems, Croats and Serbs lived together, but they lived separately in villages.

[12] And that is one of the biggest tragedies of the Bosnian war. Not only that the village is more susceptible to the sentiments and ideas of ethnic nationalism, but the war has also brutally interrupted the further modernization of the Bosnian society and further urbanization (as one of its basic ingredients). Had the peaceful development of Bosnia continued, the inexorable urbanization (with all its ingredients, such as the multiplication of all possible contacts and the increase of geographical and social mobility) would in all probability have lead to every possible mixing between various ethnic groups. It would therefore have lead to the establishment of a strong multi-ethnic society, and, especially, to the reinforcement of a non-ethnic, civil self-designation of individuals. In support of this thesis, we can state that the vast majority of the B&H citizens who declared themselves as Yugoslavs in the 1991 Census (239 857 in total, or 5.49% of the total population) lived in the municipal centers (i.e. cities). The number becomes even more telling if we observe that the dwellers of Bosnian cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants declared themselves as Yugoslavs 2.67 times

In the case of an inter-ethnic war, this situation announced at least two horrifying things:

1. grisly and bloody street fighting, with a rather uncertain destiny of those ethnic groups that would found themselves unorganized and unarmed;
2. unselective destruction or eviction of whole villages;

War in Bosnia, especially, had to be avoided by all means.

Yet, when it happened, there occurred a real explosion of refugee movements that, as in all other Yugoslav wars, followed the logic of *ethnic territorial grouping*. It meant that people were fleeing (or were expelled) towards their "mother" republic or towards the territories controlled by the armed forces of their ethnic group. This, in turn, meant that the refugee movements were extremely dynamic and complex as they followed the bewilderingly complex and volatile military situation in the field. This is how the military situation in Croatia and Bosnia in April 1995 looked like:


*Source: UNHCR (www.unhcr.ch)*

The reader should compare this map with the preceding one in order to make an idea about the *directions* of refugee movements. Schematically, we can

more often than the Bosnian average. We can therefore state that Yugoslavianism was a *civil* political identity in both meanings of the word.

state that ethnic Croats fled (or were expelled) towards the Croat-controlled areas or towards Croatia itself (i.e. towards the parts of Croatia that were not war-affected), ethnic Serbs fled towards the Serb-controlled areas or towards Serbia itself, while ethnic Moslems fled towards the Moslem-controlled areas, towards other republics of ex-Yugoslavia (mainly Croatia and Slovenia) or towards third countries. The only exception to this logic of ethnic grouping were the movements of Bosnian Muslims towards Croatia, but we have to say that these took place *before* the outbreak of hostilities between Croatian and Muslim armed forces in Bosnia.[13]

However, even the map exposed above is not a true graphic representation of the *definite* territorial settlement of ethnic groups in the war-affected territories, since two significant events happened after April 1995:

1. Offensive actions of the Croatian army *Flash* (May 1995) and *Storm* (August 1995), during which the bulk of the remaining Serbian minority in Croatia fled the country; [14]
2. Signing of the Dayton peace agreement (November 1995) that definitely tailored the political map of Bosnia, which, in turn, produced additional refugee movement.

*

One of the major demographic consequences of the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia was *ethnic territorial homogenization*. In Bosnia and Kosovo the homogenization was total (Kosovo) or almost total (Bosnia). In Kosovo, the remaining non-Albanian groups (Serbs predominantly) are grouped in the North, as well as within a few isolated, numerically weak enclaves scattered across the province. As for Bosnia, it was divided in virtue of the Dayton peace agreement into the two entities: the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although, for the time being, we do not dispose of precise numerical data to substantiate our analysis,[15] everything we know about Bosnia makes us

[13] In October 1992, the HVO, armed forces of Bosnian Croats, attacked Bosnian Muslims in the municipality of Prozor. The ensuing conflict between the HV (Croatian Army) and the HVO *and* the armed forces of the Bosnian government lasted until the signing of the Washington agreement in February 1994.

[14] We will not discuss here whether these people were victims of ethnic cleansing or have they decided to leave Krajina of their own will, within a premeditated plan, as Dr. Dražen Živić affirms in his "Veličina, uzroci i posljedice iseljavanja/izbjega Srba iz Hrvatske" ["The scope, reasons and consequences of the expatriation/exile of Serbs from Croatia"] (www.hrz.hr/aktualno/zivic1.htm). What matters here is that these people lost their homes and *de facto* became refugees.

[15] Namely, the long-awaited Bosnian census, which had to take place in 2001, has not been carried out so far (February 2005).

believe that the majority of Serbs are concentrated in the Republika Srpska, while the majority of Moslems and Croats are grouped within the Federation, the ethnic situation of which is even more complicated by the fact that Croats are concentrated in the South, within the boundaries of the former "Croat Community of Herzeg-Bosnia". In fact, there are only two major cities in Bosnia where the ex-enemies continue to live together: Mostar (which is a *de facto* "divided city", in a permanent state of fragile balance between Croats and Moslems) and Brčko (which is directly governed by the international community and serves, we might say, as a kind of a shop window of the success of its peace-making mission). Everywhere else in Bosnia, common multi-ethnic life is – at least for the time being – a thing of the past. Of course, we mean common life in any significant numerical proportion.
However, ethnic homogenization was not exclusively a matter of the territories where the conflicts actually took place. A similar destiny befell also some other republics and provinces of the former Yugoslavia. Let us look at the ethnic majorities in the 1991 Census and in the first post-war population surveys:

| A. Republic | B. Ethnic majority | C. Part of the ethnic majority in the total population of the republic (1991)[16] | D. Part of the ethnic majority in the total population of the republic (2002) | E. Difference (D-C) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Slovenia | Slovenians | 87.55 % | 83.06 % [17] | - 4.49 % |
| Croatia | Croats | 78.09 % | 89.63 % [18] | + 11.53 % |
| Serbia (central Serbia) | Serbs | 88.91 % | 89.48 % [19] | + 0.57 % |
| Serbia (the province of Vojvodina) | Serbs | 56.79 % | 65.05 % [20] | + 8.25 % |
| Serbia Total | Serbs | 72.85 % | 77.26 % [21] | + 4.41 % |
| Macedonia | Macedonians | 64.62 % | 64.17% [22] | - 0.45 % |
| Montenegro | Montenegrins | 61.84 % | 40.64 % | - 21.2 % |

If we omit Montenegro from this table (since the weakening of its ethnic homogenization is only fictional)[23] and Slovenia (where the weakening did not

[16] *Popis 1991 [Census 1991],* Savezni zavod za statistiku, CD-ROM, Beograd, 1997.
[17] *Popis prebivalstva, gospodinjstev in stanovanj, Slovenija, 31. marec 2002 [Census of population, households and apartments, March 31 2002]* (www.stat.si/popis2002/gradivo/POPIS-2002-PSO1.pdf)
[18] *Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2001 [Census of population, households and apartments 2001]* (www.dzs.hr)
[19] *Коначни резултати пописа 2002 [Final results of the 2002 census]*. (www.statserb.sr.gov.yu/zip/esn31.pdf)
[20] *ibid.*
[21] *ibid.*
[22] *Попис на населението, домаќинствата и становите во Република Македонија, 2002 година [Census of population, households and apartments in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002]* www.stat.gov.mk/../zakon_popis2002.htm
[23] According to the 1991 Census, Montenegrins constituted 61.84 % of the population of Montenegro, while Serbs constituted 9.29 %. According to the 2003 Montenegrin census (which is still not on the Internet but has been widely commented in the media), the total population amounted to 672 656 persons, of whom 273 366 were Montenegrins (40.64 % of the total population) while 201 892 were Serbs (30.01 %). Whence this spectacular decrease of Montenegrins (and the equally spectacular increase of Serbs) came? We think that after a year-long political conflict between the partisans of

occur through the numerical increase of the minorities),[24] we will observe that the strongest homogenization occurred in Croatia and Serbia.

The changes in Croatia are, first of all, caused by the decrease of the number of Serbs from 581 663 (12.15 % of the total Croatian population in 1991) to 201 631 (4.54 % of the total Croatian population in 2002).[25] In other words, between the censuses, Croatia lost 380 000 Serbs. The majority of these people fled Croatia during and after the war, with the bulk of the refugees settling in Serbia and the minority going to the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina that were ultimately included into the Republika Srpska. By the same token, Croatia practically became a mono-ethnic country.[26]

As for Serbia, as illustrated by the table above, ethnic homogenization took place especially in Vojvodina, northern Serbian province. Two major processes explain the phenomenon:

1. Arrival of the Serbian refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina;
2. Numerical decrease of the national minorities, Croats, and especially Hungarians. According to the 1991 Census, Serbia (without Kosovo) was home to 101 053 Croats (1.29 % of the total population of Serbia), of whom 74 226 lived in Vojvodina (3.69% of the total population of Vojvodina). In 2002, Serbia (without Kosovo) was home to 70 602 Croats (0.94% of the total population of Serbia), of whom 56 546 lived in

Montenegrin independence and the partisans of Montenegrin remaining in the commonwealth with Serbia, a number of inhabitants of Montenegro who had declared themselves as Montenegrins in the 1991 Census declared themselves as Serbs in the 2003 Census. Namely, in 1991 Montenegrins and Serbs constituted 71.13 % of the population, while in 2003 they constituted 70.65 %. It is obvious then that what we deal here with is one and the same contingent, with the self-designations "Montenegrin" and "Serb" varying within.

[24] Namely, in comparison with the 1991 Census, the number of *all* national minorities, except Bosniaks and Albanians (and negligibly Russians, Germans and Ukrainians) decreased. But even the numerical increase of these few growing minorities cannot explain such a significant decrease of the part of Slovenians in the general population. The answer is given by the fact that, when compared with the 1991 Census, the number of "Slovenians" decreased by 58 294, while, on the other hand, the number of those who " did not want to reply" rose from 0 in 1991 (as this solution did not exist in previous censuses) to 58 294. Finally, in comparison with the 1991 Census, the number of persons of "unknown" nationality rose from 42 355 to the fantastic 126 325. However, the methodological explanations presented at the end of the census report give no clue to what this "unknown" category might be. Therefore, we cannot say what this category represents and how it is possible that 6.43% of the Slovenian population are of "unknown" ethnic affiliation.

[25] *Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2001 [Census of population, households and apartments 2001]* (www.dzs.hr)

[26] Right after "Serbs" come "other undeclared" (1.8% of the total population), followed by "others" (0.49%) and "Bosniaks" (0.47%). All other declared national minorities (Italians, Hungarians, Albanians…) are numerically inferior to Bosniaks. *Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2001,* table «Stanovništvo prema narodnosti» (www.dzs.hr)

Vojvodina (2.78% of the total population of Vojvodina). In other words, between the censuses Serbia lost 30 451 Croats and their part in the general population fell from 1.29 % to 0.94%.[27] As for Hungarians, according to the 1991 Census, Serbia (without Kosovo) had 345 376 Hungarians (4.4 % of the total population of Serbia), of whom 340 946 lived in Vojvodina (16.94% of the total population of Vojvodina). In 2002, Serbia (without Kosovo) had 293 299 Hungarians (3.91% of the total population of Serbia), of whom 290 207 lived in Vojvodina (14.28% of the total population of Vojvodina). In other words, between the censuses Serbia lost 52 077 Hungarians and their part in the general population fell from 4.4 % to 3.91%.

Still, in spite of the increased ethnic homogenization, Vojvodina, together with Macedonia (which is, in fact, a very unstable *bi-ethnic* country), remains the most ethnically diverse territory of the former Yugoslavia.

However, we must observe that after the wars the Serbian minority in Croatia and the Croatian minority in Serbia are practically nonexistent. One could cynically remark that Croatia and Serbia have been very successful in "exchanging" their populations, and we might only wonder if the further ethnic homogenization represents an inexorable destiny of the former Yugoslav countries. We believe that the answer to this question depends on the outcomes of the following issues:

1. Will the repatriation of refugees and IDPs lead to any significant restoration of the pre-war ethnic diversity?
2. Will there be any dynamic economic development which, coupled with a tolerant and non-xenophobic political climate, would reopen the new republican borders and make possible a normal, voluntary emigration.

It is certain that none of these processes can happen without a sufficient and continuous engagement of the international community as well as without a *genuine commitment* of the local political authorities to the cause of multi-ethnicity, civil society and respect of human rights.

Optimism or pessimism on these matters, we think, is a personal affair.

[27] It is certain that at least a part of the Croats from Vojvodina left their homes under the forms of pressures, personal attacks and intimidation that could be defined as "ethnic cleansing". This concerned the inhabitants of several villages in Vojvodina who, faced with attacks from the members of the ultra-nationalistic Serbian radical party, left their homes. See more details in several reports published by the Belgrade-based Fund for humanitarian law: *Pod lupom: kršenje ljudskih prava na teritoriji bivše Jugoslavije 1991-95,* Fond za humanitarno pravo, Beograd, 1997.

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# RESEARCH METHODS

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## CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

This research had been prepared during February and March 2004. A network was formed of 30 collaborators and field interviewers in the region and a three-day workshop was organised for interviewers who would be conducting the field work. Through active training the field interviewers were capacitated to utilise and initially administrate a full battery of test instruments.

The actual field research was conducted in two phases from April to July 2004. The first round of research spoke with 500 returnees to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina that our interviewers have been able to reach. Afterwards, based on the structure of the interviewed returnees, the sub-samples of refugees and local residents were planned, corresponding in gender, age, place of residence and education status. In the second phase of the research the interviewers received precise instructions and proportions for the choice of parallel sample groups.

Respondents have been approached personally; we informed them about the subject and aims of the research. Through this initial contact they have been motivated to partake in the research, informed about what their participation would entail and how long it would take; subsequently they were invited to sign a statement of voluntary participation in the research. An average interview with one respondent took about 90 minutes. Only one member of each household was supposed to take part in the research.

## TARGET POPULATION

The target population for this research have been refugees and returnees from war affected regions, currently residing in Serbia and Montenegro, Republic of Croatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina, between 25 and 70 years of age.

**Refugees** – The research uses this expression to denote refugees and internally displaced persons who have fled from their pre-war residence immediately before or during the conflict (in the period of 1990-1997) and are still living in exile, either in their own or another state, regardless of their ethnicity or country of origin, namely:

Serb refugees who fled from Croatia to Serbia or Republika Srpska;
Croatian refugees who fled from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Croatia;
Croatians internally displaced within Croatia;
Serb refugees who fled from the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation to Serbia;
Serbs internally displaced from Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation to Republika Srpska entity;
Bosniaks internally displaced from Republika Srpska to Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation entity.

A total of 501 respondents with this status took part in the research.

**Returnees** – This expression denotes persons who had temporarily fled their homes immediately prior to or during the war (in the period of 1990-1997), have lived in exile, either in their own or another state, but have returned to their pre-war residence after the conflict, regardless of their ethnicity or country of origin;

527 respondents in our research had the returnee status.

The authors are aware that such enlargement of respondent categories can be problematic, but have decided to resort to it while searching for common characteristics of refugee and returnee experiences, regardless of the specific migration directions.

Therefore the relevant texts specify other characteristics of the refugee and returnee sample when discussing their specific features in sub-groups.

**Local population** – A control group of 463 respondents encompassed a parallel sample of the local population from current places of residence of the target group.

## LOCATIONS

The research was conducted in over 50 locations in the region, mainly in municipalities where the partner organisations are active.

Table 1: *Number of respondents by state and municipality*

| SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO | |
|---|---|
| Central municipalities of Belgrade | 110 |
| Zemun | 50 |
| Obrenovac | 10 |
| Barajevo | 8 |
| Lazarevac | 7 |
| Mladenovac | 6 |
| Sopot | 6 |
| Pančevo | 5 |
| Stara Pazova | 29 |
| Novi Sad | 7 |
| Zaječar | 10 |
| Kraljevo | 8 |
| Užice | 5 |
| Other | 27 |
| No data | 14 |

| CROATIA | |
|---|---|
| Benkovac | 49 |
| Karlovac | 31 |
| Knin | 90 |
| Lipik | 42 |
| Obrovac | 11 |
| Osijek | 34 |
| Pakrac | 63 |
| Vojnić | 9 |
| Vukovar | 114 |
| Zadar | 27 |
| Other | 27 |
| No data | 3 |
| **TOTAL** | **500** |

| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | |
|---|---|
| Banjaluka | 55 |
| Bihać | 6 |
| Bratunac | 23 |
| Brčko | 11 |
| Doboj | 7 |
| Kladanj | 10 |
| Milići | 112 |
| Municipalities in Sarajevo | 100 |
| Srebrenica | 50 |
| Tuzla | 273 |
| Vlasenica | 10 |
| Živinice | 5 |
| Other | 30 |
| No data | 4 |
| **TOTAL** | **696** |

| **TOTAL** | **302** |
|---|---|

The bulk of respondents in Serbia were interviewed in Central Serbia, i.e. in wider Belgrade area (including central and outskirts municipalities such as Zemun, Barajevo, Lazarevac, Mladenovac, Obrenovac and Sopot), as well as in municipalities of Stara Pazova, Inđija, Pančevo, Novi Sad, Zaječar, Kraljevo and Užice.

In Croatia, the largest number of respondents were located in Vukovar-Srem County (Vukovar, Borovo), followed by Požeško-slavonska (Pakrac, Lipik), Šibensko-kninska (Knin, Kistanje) and Zadarska County (Benkovac, Obrovac, Zadar), while a smaller number was interviewed in Karlovačka (Karlovac, Vojnić) and Osiječko-baranjska County (Osijek).

The research was conducted in both entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Most respondents from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina came from the Tuzla (Tuzla, Lukavac, Živinice, Gradačac, Kladanj, Doboj) and Sarajevo Cantons (Sarajevo Centar, Sarajevo Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Ilidža, Ilijaš), while a lesser number was from Una-Sana Canton (Bihać, Sanski Most). The research also covered Banjaluka and the eastern part of Republika Srpska (Milići, Srebrenica, Bratunac, Vlasenica). Smaller number of respondents came from Brčko District.

## SAMPLE

The overall number of respondents within this research is 1502, of which 417 respondents from BIH Federation, 269 from Republika Srpska, 510 from Croatia and 295 from Serbia, while the remaining 11 respondents came from the Brčko District area (due to the small number of these respondents and the impossibility to set them as a separate category or include them in one of the existing categories based on which entity they reside in, data obtained by interviewing these 11 people have not been used in further analyses where the focus was on current residence in one of the states/entities).

### Civic status

Table 2: *Distribution of respondents with regard to civic status and country/entity*

| | | Federation BIH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **returnee** | **N** | 182 | 122 | 223 | | **527** |
| | **%** | 43.6% | 45.4% | 43.7% | | **35.3%** |
| **refugee** | **N** | 130 | 90 | 135 | 146 | **501** |
| | **%** | 31.2% | 33.5% | 26.5% | 49.5% | **33.6%** |
| **local resident** | **N** | 105 | 57 | 152 | 149 | **463** |
| | **%** | 25.2% | 21.2% | 29.8% | 50.5% | **31.1%** |

The overall sample was comprised of 56.0% of men and 44.0% of women. Among the returnee population represented in the sample, men accounted for 57. 5% and women for 42.5%. Given that the refugee and local population sample has been harmonised with the returnee one, a similar percentage of men and women is represented in these samples (54.2% men, 45.8% women in refugee sample and 56.1% men, 43.9% women in local population sample).

From the overall number of respondents from BIH Federation, 182 (43.6%) are returnees, 130 (31.2%) are refugees and 105 (25.2%) are people from the local domicile population. In Republika Srpska the sample contained 45.4% returnees, 33.5% refugees and 21.2% local population. In Croatia, 43.7% were returnees, 26.5% were refugees, while the local population accounted for 29.8% of the sample. In Serbia, the sample encompassed only refugees (49.5%) and local residents (50.5%), due to the fact that in Serbia proper (excluding Kosovo) there have been neither war activities nor significant migrations from and within Serbia that could be described as refugee/displacement movements.

Samples of refugees and local population have been created based on the returnee sample, which was the first to be established by way of chance sample. As can be seen, there is a relatively equal representation of all three categories of respondents (35.3% returnees, 33.6% refugees and 31.1% local population), which significantly increases the scope for comparing results obtained in the three categories.

## Ethnic origin

The sample consisted mostly of Serbs (59.0%), while Bosniaks account for 20.15% and Croats for 18.1% of the sample. The ethnic structure is very similar in all three key groups in this research – returnees, refugees and local residents. Other ethnic groups account for only 2.8%. Serbian respondents constituted a majority within all encompassed states and entities except BIH Federation, where the Bosniaks were the most numerous of respondents. Higher representation of Serbian respondents in the sample is a consequence of the fact that members of this ethnic group are most numerous, i.e., unlike Bosniak or Croatian respondents, they live in large numbers in all countries and entities encompassed by the research. More accurate data on sample distribution with regard to ethnic origin and country are given in the table below:

Table 3: *Distribution of respondents according to ethnic origin and state/entity*

| | | Federation BIH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bosniak** | **N** | 231 | 63 | 2 | 3 | **299** |
| | **%** | 55.4% | 23.4% | .4% | 1.0% | **20.1%** |
| **Croat** | **N** | 48 | 7 | 210 | 5 | **270** |
| | **%** | 11.5% | 2.6% | 41.2% | 1.7% | **18.1%** |
| **Serb** | **N** | 125 | 190 | 283 | 282 | **880** |
| | **%** | 30.0% | 70.6% | 55.5% | 95.6% | **59.0%** |
| **Other** | **N** | 13 | 9 | 15 | 5 | **42** |
| | **%** | 3.1% | 3.3% | 2.9% | 1.7% | **2.8%** |

Table 3a: *Distribution of respondents according to ethnic origin and civic status*

| | | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bosniak** | **N** | 112 | 129 | 69 | 310 |
| | **%** | 20.8% | 25.7% | 14.9% | 20.6% |
| **Croat** | **N** | 86 | 102 | 82 | 270 |
| | **%** | 16.0% | 20.4% | 17.7% | 18.0% |
| **Serb** | **N** | 321 | 259 | 300 | 880 |
| | **%** | 59.7% | 51.7% | 64.8% | 58.6% |
| **Other** | **N** | 19 | 11 | 12 | 42 |
| | **%** | 3.5% | 2.2% | 2.6% | 2.8% |

## Age

Average age of the respondents was 47 years and 6 months.
Detailed description of the age distribution in various countries/entities is given in the table below:

Table 4: *Distribution of respondents according to age and state/entity*

| | | Federation BIH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Up to 34 years of age** | **N** | 52 | 100 | 94 | 51 | **297** |
| | **%** | 12.5% | 37.3% | 18.5% | 17.5% | **20.0%** |
| **35-44** | **N** | 53 | 69 | 125 | 58 | **305** |
| | **%** | 12.8% | 25.7% | 24.7% | 19.9% | **20.6%** |
| **45-54** | **N** | 104 | 62 | 137 | 79 | **382** |
| | **%** | 25.1% | 23.1% | 27.0% | 27.1% | **25.8%** |
| **55-64** | **N** | 142 | 33 | 110 | 73 | **358** |
| | **%** | 34.2% | 12.3% | 21.7% | 25.0% | **24.2%** |
| **65 and over** | **N** | 64 | 4 | 41 | 31 | **140** |
| | **%** | 15.4% | 1.5% | 8.1% | 10.6% | **9.4%** |

Table 4a: *Distribution of respondents according to age and civic status*

| | | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Up to 34 years of age** | **N** | 97 | 117 | 85 | **299** |
| | **%** | 18.2% | 23.5% | 18.4% | **20.0%** |
| **35-44** | **N** | 97 | 126 | 85 | **308** |
| | **%** | 18.2% | 25.4% | 18.4% | **20.6%** |
| **45-54** | **N** | 140 | 120 | 122 | **382** |
| | **%** | 26.2% | 24.1% | 26.4% | **25.6%** |
| **55-64** | **N** | 141 | 97 | 125 | **363** |
| | **%** | 26.4% | 19.5% | 27.1% | **24.3%** |
| **65 and over** | **N** | 59 | 37 | 45 | **141** |
| | **%** | 11.0% | 7.4% | 9.7% | **9.4%** |

## Urban - rural

During the research period a total of 69.9% respondents lived in a town, while 30.1% resided in villages. Similar results were obtained by analysing data for each respective country/entity.

Table 5: *Distribution of respondents according to current place of residence (town-village) and country/entity*

| | | Federation BIH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In town** | **N** | 334 | 182 | 339 | 179 | **1034** |
| | **%** | 80,9% | 68,7% | 66,7% | 61,1% | **69,9%** |
| **In village** | **N** | 79 | 83 | 169 | 112 | **443** |
| | **%** | 19,1% | 31,3% | 33,3% | 38,9% | **30,1%** |

Table 5a: *Distribution of respondents according to current place of residence (town-village) and civic status*

| | | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In town** | **N** | 342 | 354 | 349 | **1045** |
| | **%** | 63.9% | 72.0% | 75.7% | **70.2%** |
| **In village** | **N** | 193 | 138 | 112 | **443** |
| | **%** | 36.1% | 28.0% | 24.3% | **29.8%** |

Respondents from all three entities had mainly lived in towns before the war, rather than in villages, with the highest number of urban population present among respondents from Federation BiH (73.7% had lived in a town), somewhat lesser among respondents in Republika Srpska (64.3% had lived in a town) while in Serbia 56.8% of respondents had lived in a town before the war; among respondents in Croatia, this percentage was 54.4%.

Table 6: *Distribution of respondents according to pre-war place of residence (town-village) and country/entity*

| | | Federation BIH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In town** | **N** | 232 | 135 | 191 | 83 | 641 |
| | **%** | 73,7% | 64,3% | 54,4% | 56,8% | 62,7% |
| **In village** | **N** | 83 | 75 | 160 | 63 | 381 |
| | **%** | 26,3% | 35,7% | 45,6% | 43,2% | 37,3% |

Table 6a: *Distribution of respondents according to pre-war place of residence (town-village) and civic status*

| | | Returnees | Refugees | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In town** | **N** | 347 | 300 | 647 |
| | **%** | 65.2% | 60.9% | 63.1% |
| **In village** | **N** | 185 | 193 | 378 |
| | **%** | 34.8% | 39.1% | 36.9% |

When comparing data on the current and pre-war place of residence, it becomes evident that a significant percentage of people have moved from town to a village and vice versa. Both types of changes certainly entail drastic changes in the way of life and therefore these people have been facing many difficulties in adopting the new culture and adapting to the new environment (new rhythm of live, new professions, social network, new forms of behaviour, system of values...)

Table 7: *Change of the place of residence (village – town)*

| | **Number** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| from village to village | 238 | 23.3% |
| **from village to town** | **94** | **9.2%** |
| **from town to village** | **139** | **13.6%** |
| from town to town | 551 | 53.9% |

## Marital status

In the overall sample, as well as in the three respective sub-samples (returnees, refugees and local population) married respondents are dominant (from 60.8% among local residents to 67.9% among refugees), followed by single individuals (from 16.6% among refugees to 23.1% among returnees), widows/widowers (from 9,9% among returnees to 11.9% among local population), while the smallest percent of the respondents were divorced (from 4.4% among refugees to 7.4% among local population).

Among returnees included in our sample, 62.4% are married, while 23.1% are single. Although the bulk of returnees are married people, there is a significant number of single individuals who have decided to go back to their hearth. The predominant number of these single individuals (over 50%) belongs to the youngest category of respondents. The same situation is found among refugees and local population.

Table 8: *Marital status of respondents*

| | | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **unmarried** | **N** | 124 | 83 | 92 | 299 |
| | **%** | 23.1% | 16.6% | 19.9% | 20.0% |
| **married** | **N** | 335 | 339 | 281 | 955 |
| | **%** | 62.4% | 67.9% | 60.8% | 63.8% |
| **divorced** | **N** | 25 | 22 | 34 | 81 |
| | **%** | 4.7% | 4.4% | 7.4% | 5.4% |
| **widower / widow** | **N** | 53 | 55 | 55 | 163 |
| | **%** | 124 | 83 | 92 | 10.9% |

## Number of children

Average number of children per respondent is 1.76. The majority of children belong to Bosniak respondents' families. It is also evident that refugees have more children than refugees. This difference is even more significant if we take into account only respondents under 45 years of age. It seems that families without children or with fewer children are more likely to return to their pre-war homes.

Table 9a: *Average number of children in relation to ethnicity*

| Bosniaks | Croats | Serbs |
|---|---|---|
| 2.08 | 1.78 | 1.66 |

Table 9b: *Average number of children in relation to civic status*

| Returnees | Refugees | Local population |
|---|---|---|
| 1.66 | 1.94 | 1.67 |

Table 9c: *Average number of children in relation to civic status (under 45)*

| Returnees | Refugees | Local population |
|---|---|---|
| 1.19 | 1.68 | 1.20 |

## Education status

All three categories of respondents are relatively equal when it comes to the education status (because the refugee and local population sample have been matched to the original returnee sample with regard to this criterion). All three sub-samples as well as the overall sample are dominated by respondents with secondary school education (64.2% of the overall sample). This is followed by respondents who have completed primary school (17.1% of the overall sample), slightly less numerous are those with higher or university education (14.2% of the overall sample), while the smallest percentage in the sample are those without primary school (4.5%).

Table 10: *Distribution of respondents according to education level and civic status*

| | | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Uncompleted primary school** | **N** | 23 | 24 | 21 | 68 |
| | **%** | 4.3% | 4.8% | 4.6% | 4.5% |
| **Primary school** | **N** | 89 | 96 | 71 | 256 |
| | **%** | 16.6% | 19.3% | 15.4% | 17.1% |
| **Secondary school** | **N** | 350 | 317 | 293 | 960 |
| | **%** | 65.2% | 63.7% | 63.6% | 64.2% |
| **High school or university** | **N** | 75 | 61 | 76 | 212 |
| | **%** | 14.0% | 12.2% | 16.5% | 14.2% |

## INSTRUMENTS

The applied battery of instruments was specially compiled for the specific requirements of this research. Parallel versions of the battery of instruments for returnees, refugees and local population contain adapted scales and have been appropriately adjusted in terms of language varieties.

We have used the following instruments:

**General questionnaire** – general demographic questionnaire composed by the IAN research team and already applied in other IAN research projects (Tenjović et al., 2001; Tenjović et al., 2004) has been adapted to the collection of data on socio-demographic characteristics of our respondent groups. The questionnaire consists of the following sections:

- General demographic data (gender, age, ethnicity, civic status, marital status, children and family, education level);
- Questions related to the current and pre-war socio-economic status (current and pre-war place of residence, profession and type of employment, average family income and sources of income, housing situation, estimate of the current situation in comparison with the pre-war one);
- Issues related to exile (duration of exile, changes of residence, connections with the place of origin, information status, contacts, visits, thoughts about return, conditions affecting the decision on return, level of integration into current environment, conditions affecting the decision to integrate; this section is not included in the Questionnaire for local residents and has also been adapted for returnees and refugees respectively);
- Questions related to subjective assessment of the pre-war and current psychological state (need for professional assistance, to talk to someone, use of tranquilizers, estimate of the change in psychological state compared to the pre-war period).

This questionnaire is applied orally, in the form of interview.

**SWOT** – This is a specific instrument; designed particularly for this research, it looks into political, economic, social and emotional conditions that could affect somebody's decision to live in a certain environment (country, region, place). It has been constructed based on the SWOT model of assessing own strengths and weaknesses against opportunities and threats of the environment. The instrument is applied by the interviewer, who reads statements to which the respondent answers.

For 22 statements related to various political, economic, social and emotional, personal and environment aspects, the respondent assesses if they are true or false in his/her particular case, in relation to the possibilities in the pre-war place/country and place/country of former or current exile.

This questionnaire is applied orally, in the form of interview.

**Human Rights Status Questionnaire – HRSQ** was constructed for the purpose of this research; it was used to register the human rights status of our respondents. A list of 45 questions on human rights abuse cases was compiled based on international human rights documents and treaties.

This instrument recorded two types of information:

1. Subjective impression of human rights violations;
2. Objective indicators of human rights violations (information on where, when and what exactly happened; who were the perpetrators; interviewer's assessment on whether the stated event constitutes human rights violation).

The initial answer of the respondent relates to his/her own experience. If in addition to the personal impression of having been subjected to human rights violation he/she can provide most of the aforementioned facts, that is:

- Where the violation occurred (Serbia, Croatia, BiH Federation, Republika Srpska);
- when (before 1991-92 war, during the war, after the war or during past year);
- what happened and who was the perpetrator (army, police, judiciary, public administration, medical staff, group of citizens or individuals),

as well as some other details about the event, then the interviewer assesses that there are enough objective indicators of a concrete human rights violation case, which is recorded as a separate variable.

The questionnaire is applied exclusively as an interview with the respondent.

**List of stressful life events** is an instrument used to assess the extent of exposure to stressful events. In this research we have used a list of 20 questions related to extremely stressful life events. Firstly, the respondent states if – and if yes, when – he/she experienced those events or has witnessed them and subsequently reports if the stressful event are related to his/her wartime or general life experience. If a particular type of event has occurred several times, the respondent states all years or months of a year in which this has happened. If the event has lasted for a longer time, or has been repeated continually, many times over a longer period of time, the period is registered in which the event took place (e.g. 1991-1993). This questionnaire has been amended and largely altered compared to the standard list of stressful life events (LSCL-R, Wolf and Kimerling, 1997).
The instrument can be applied in the form of self-reporting.

**Impact of Event Scale IES-R** (Weiss and Marmar, 1997) expanded with **Short scale for evaluation of stress related dissociative symptomatology SRD 10** (Knežević and Jović, 2004) was used to assess the prominence of post-traumatic symptoms. On each of 32 items the respondent chooses one of the given answers on a five-level scale (not at all, a little, moderately, very much, extremely), thereby indicating how often during past week he/she has had post-traumatic stress symptoms described under each item related to a particular traumatic event stated by the respondent. Intrusion, avoidance and hyper-arousal levels, as well as the overall extent of traumatisation and dissociation are extracted from these data.
The scale is applied in the form of self-reporting.

**Symptom Check-List SCL-90-R** (Derogatis, 1983) was used to assess the current complex of psychological symptoms, acute stress and global psychopathological

status. The respondent assesses each statement on a five-level scale (not at all, a little, moderately, very much, extremely) in accordance with how much he/she was preoccupied or disturbed during past week by the problem or symptom described in the item. Based on the respondent's answers to 90 items of the instrument measures are extracted for nine complexes of specific symptoms on the axis I DSM IV of mental disorder classification: somatisation, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, interpersonal hyper-sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation and psychoticism. Three global stress and symptom severity indicators (Global Severity Index GSI, Positive Symptom Distress Index PSDI, Positive Symptom Total PST) are used to measure the overall psychopathological status. This instrument is primarily used for research purposes and it cannot serve to establish a diagnosis for any of the mentioned psychopathological disorders, but only to obtain a general overview of the respondent with regard to inclination towards particular psychopathological reaction patterns. However, validation research has shown that the three global indicators do make a distinction among aspects of psychological disorders.

The questionnaire is applied in the form of self-reporting.

**Manchester Short Assessment of Quality of Life – MANSA** (Priebe et al., 1999). This instrument contains 16 questions and is intended for self-evaluation of the quality of life and its various aspects (employment, lodging, financial situation, friendships, leisure time, co-existence, security, health). The respondents are requested to answer the questions by choosing one responses at the seven-level scale; these answers represent various levels of satisfaction with respective aspects of life (couldn't be worse, very dissatisfied, mainly dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, mainly satisfied, very satisfied, could not be better).

The questionnaire can be applied in the form of self-reporting.

**NEO-FFI** (Costa and McCrae, 1992) – an abridged version of the well-known personality inventory is an operationalised version of the five-level personality model (Digman, 1990) and gives an assessment of the prominence of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, collaborativeness and conscientiousness. In this research it was used to assess the respondents' personality structure. The respondent answers to 60 questionnaire items by choosing one of the given answers on a five-level scale (completely false, partly false, not sure, partly true, completely true) in accordance with how well each of the statement in the item describes him/her.

The questionnaire is applied in the form of self-reporting.

**Genself 40** is an instrument to assess the functioning of the self-evaluation system (Opačić, 1995). The key idea is that measuring of self-concept cannot provide the right information if viewed unrelated to what it is based on, i.e. to what extent is

the overall image of oneself informed by the real external sources of information and how much by own defence mechanisms.

The instrument contains 40 items arranged in four sub-scales. The first scale measures the self-image in various aspects (physical, intellectual, social). Second scale measures the overall self-esteem and competence, which are closely related constructs (Bezinović, 1986), with items partly taken from the Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 1965) scale of overall self-esteem and Bezinović's (Bezinović et al., 1986) scale of generalised competence and partly developed specifically for this scale. Third scale is the externality scale, which has, with exception of several items, been modified and adapted (Bezinović and Savčić, 1987) and measures to what extent the respondent attributes to external factors all that happens to him/her in life. Fourth scale measures overall (dis)trust in people and together with several items from the misanthropy scale (Opačić, 1986; Bezinović, 1987) largely contains new items.

First two scales are an operationalisation of descriptive and evaluative component of self-concept, while the other two represent mechanisms for maintaining the overall image of oneself, similar to psychoanalytical constructs of rationalisation and projection.

The respondent gives an answer on a five-level scale depending on how much he/she agrees with stated items (not at all, no, neither yes nor no, yes, completely).

The questionnaire is applied in the form of self-reporting.

**Social distance scale** is an adapted version of the known Bogardus social distance scale (1925), on which the distance towards other nationalities is measured by the expressed readiness of respondents to engage in relations of different intensity with members of other ethnic groups. In this adaptation of the instrument the distance to own and other nationalities (Albanian, Bosniak, Croatian, Montenegrin, Roma, Serb) is measured through statement indicating lack of willingness to accept relations of different intensity (I would mind him coming as tourist to my country, to live in the same country, to work in the same company, to be my first neighbour, friend, spouse). Respondent assesses if each statement is true or false for him/her. Unlike the Bogardus seven-level scale if relationship intensity, this adaptation offers six relationship intensity levels, whereby the disagreement with all given statements is taken as the seventh level of the lowest social distance.

The questionnaire can be applied in the form of self-reporting.

The texts that follow hereafter represent the results obtained in this research, the methodology of which has been described in this paper.

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# MATERIAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

*Branko Vujadinović*

Analysis of the material status of respondents in our research can roughly be divided into two key parts: our primary interest was the subjective experience of the respondents, but objective indicators have also been taken into account.

## PROLOGUE: WESTERN BALKANS, ZONE OF POVERTY

War and devastation that have marked the last decade of the twentieth century in former SFR Yugoslavia have dramatically set back the economic status of almost all countries in the region. According to statistical data, only Slovenia has managed to attain and surpass the economic status it had in 1990, at the time when the dissolution of second Yugoslavia began. Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia are still way below this level. This is corroborated by the low level of the gross domestic product (GDP). Based on the competitive list published by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) within its publication "The World Fact book" (www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/) Croatia is in the best position and with a GDP of 10,600 US$ occupies the 77$^{th}$ place of the list. Bosnia-Herzegovina is 109$^{th}$ with 6,100 US$ per capita, while Serbia holds the poor 167$^{th}$ place with 2,200 US$.

Low domestic product is accompanied by high unemployment rate (19,3% in Croatia, 34,5% in Serbia and 40% in Bosnia-Herzegovina) and devastated infrastructure. Significant improvement is impossible without influx of fresh capital, but foreign actors are still reluctant to invest, given that appropriate conditions have not yet been created. Of the three states encompassed by our research, the economic situation is the best in Croatia, which has largely been confirmed by a positive opinion of the European Commission regarding Croatia's application for membership in the European Union.

One of the most direct and visible consequences of the drastic reduction of economic activities in the three countries is the decline of living standard of the population and increase of poverty. Very few existing quantitative data, due to various methodologies used in their collection, are not mutually comparable. Therefore we shall give a brief overview of each country respectively.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina.** Key finding from the research conducted in 2001[28] was that there has been no extreme poverty or starvation, but almost one-fifth of the population nevertheless had a consumption level below general poverty line and have therefore been classified as poor. Several groups have been identified who are at more than an average risk of poverty. Firstly, children in RS are particularly disadvantaged. Over 50% children under five in Republika Srpska live in poor families. Secondly, **displaced persons and refugees are far more at risk of poverty than other groups. It is interesting that returnees face a high risk of poverty in Republika Srpska, but that their risk of poverty still remains way below the average in the Federation BIH**. The third group at higher risk of poverty than the average are unemployed and the discouraged workers. The risk faced by the unemployed is at least double than that of the employed. Lastly, persons living in households whose breadwinner has eight or less years of school are almost three times more at risk of poverty.

**Croatia.** There is very little quantitative data about the extent of poverty in Croatia. Even the "National report on the implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration Goals", published by the Government of Croatia, states that the only relevant source is the World Bank study on poverty in Croatia from 1998[29] according to which about 10% of the population lives in absolute poverty. This study points out the poorly educated, unemployed and the elderly as groups in which a particular risk of poverty was registered. Refugees, internally displaced and returnees have not been included in this study, but based on the UNHCR provided information, the authors assume that the poverty level among these groups would be **about 3 times higher than among local population**.[30]

**Serbia.** According to data presented within the "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper"[31], there are about 10 to 20 percentage of the population affected by poverty (depending on where we draw the poverty line). The categories of population said to be most at risk of poverty are: the unemployed, elderly above 65, inhabitants of rural areas of Southeast and West Serbia and it is assumed – due to lack of precise data, like in Croatia – that particularly vulnerable categories consist of Roma, as well as displaced persons and refugees. It is assumed that the percentage of the poor among the displaced is 30%, while among refugees it is as high as 40%.

[28] Data on poverty in Bosnia-Herzegovina was taken from the report "Welfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2001: Measuring and fndings " prepared by the National Statistics Agency (BHAS), Bureau of Statistics RS (RSIS), Bureau of Statistics FBIH (FIS) and the World Bank (WB)

[29] World Bank (2000).
[30] Ibid, str. 21.
[31] Government of the Republic of Serbia (2003).

## MATERIAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS – SUBJECTIVE INDICATORS

Subjective indicators of material status of respondents in our research were the perception of personal financial situation before the war and today, as well as their current feeling of need for humanitarian assistance.

Table 1: *Perception of the material situation before the war – all respondents*

| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely poor | 1.5% | 1.6% | 0.4% | 1.2% |
| Poor | 4.3% | 5.8% | 4.8% | 4.9% |
| Average | 42.5% | 41.5% | 44.0% | 42.6% |
| Good | 37.8% | 36.9% | 38.1% | 37.6% |
| Very good | 14.0% | 14.2% | 12.6% | 13.6% |

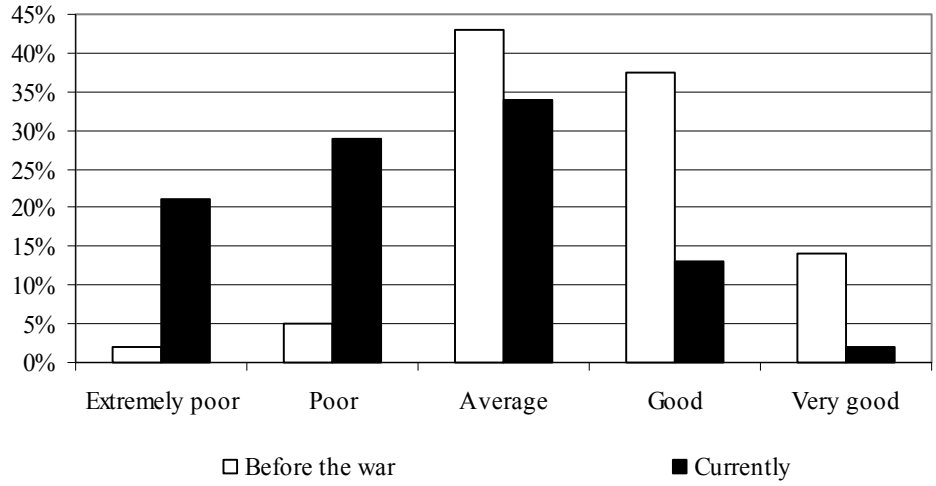
The table clearly shows that there are no significant differences between members of different with regard to assessing their financial status before the war ($\chi^2$=5.508, p=0.72).

Table 2: *Perception of current material situation – all respondents*

| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely poor | 23.4% | 26.9% | 11.4% | 20.9% |
| Poor | 30.7% | 29.1% | 28.5% | 29.5% |
| Average | 31.4% | 33.3% | 39.1% | 34.4% |
| Good | 12.5% | 9.8% | 18.1% | 13.3% |
| Very good | 2.0% | 1.0% | 2.8% | 1.9% |

There is an evident significant difference between returnees and refugees on one side and local population on the other ($\chi^2$=51.991, p=0.00). Over 50% of refugees and returnees perceive their current material situation as extremely poor or poor (compared to 6-7% before the war and exile). What all groups have in common is the feeling that their material situation has dramatically worsened compared to the period before the wars in former Yugoslavia (image 1).

Graph 1: *Perception of material situation*




Interesting conclusions are drawn by analysing the situation in countries/entities:

Table 3: *Perception of current material situation – Federation BIH*

| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely poor | 27.47% | 31.78% | 5.71% | 23.32% |
| Poor | 31.32% | 24.81% | 33.33% | 29.81% |
| Average | 29.12% | 31.78% | 39.05% | 32.45% |
| Good | 10.44% | 10.08% | 20.00% | 12.74% |
| Very good | 1.65% | 1.55% | 1.90% | 1.68% |

Table 4: *Perception of current material situation – Republika Srpska*

| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely poor | 26.23% | 13.48% | 12.28% | 19.03% |
| Poor | 27.05% | 38.20% | 14.04% | 27.99% |
| Average | 37.70% | 39.33% | 66.67% | 44.40% |
| Good | 9.02% | 8.99% | 7.02% | 8.58% |
| Very good | 26.23% | 13.48% | 12.28% | 19.03% |

It is evident that almost twice as many returnees then refugees in Republika Srpska perceive their material situation as very poor. This finding corresponds to official data from 2001, mentioned at the beginning of this paper, according to which returnees to Republika Srpska belong to groups at highest risk of poverty. Apparently their status has not changed very much in the past 3 years.

Table 5: *Perception of current material situation – Croatia*

| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely poor | 18.83% | 15.56% | 9.87% | 15.29% |
| Poor | 32.29% | 23.70% | 29.61% | 29.22% |
| Average | 29.15% | 41.48% | 31.58% | 33.14% |
| Good | 16.59% | 17.04% | 21.71% | 18.24% |
| Very good | 3.14% | 2.22% | 7.24% | 4.12% |

The situation in Croatia resembles the one in Republika Srpska. Here returnees are also in a much worse position than refugees.

Table 6: *Perception of current material situation – Serbia*

| | Refugees | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Extremely poor | 41.10% | 16.78% | 28.81% |
| Poor | 32.19% | 29.53% | 30.85% |
| Average | 23.29% | 36.24% | 29.83% |
| Good | 3.42% | 17.45% | 10.51% |
| Very good | 4.10% | 16.78% | 28.81% |

The most striking finding related to material status of respondents currently residing in Serbia is that over 73% of refugees assess their current material situation as extremely poor or poor. This number is much higher if compared to the percentage of Serb returnees to Croatia who assess their material situation as poor or extremely poor (59%). As will be seen further below, the improvement of material status is one of important incentives for refugees in Serbia to return to Croatia. It is worth mentioning that such a high percentage of respondents who perceive their material situation as poor is still fairly lower than the one obtained

through the survey on internally displaced persons from Kosovo, which was – according to findings of IAN research team in 2002 - above 89%.[32]

Another indicator of the poor material situation of our respondents, particularly refugees and returnees, is the need for humanitarian aid – 53.5% of returnees, 54.6% of refugees and 18% of local population consider themselves in dire need of humanitarian aid. Especially vulnerable are the refugees in BIH Federation, returnees to Republika Srpska and refugees in Serbia where this percentage ranges from 65% (Serbia) up to 75% (Republika Srpska). Respondents would prefer to receive assistance in food and cash. However, even these startling figures become pallid compared to those obtained in the survey on internally displaced persons from Kosovo, who had stated in over 93% of cases that they were in dire need of humanitarian aid.[33]

## MATERIAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS – OBJECTIVE INDICATORS

We have chosen the information on the amount of money at the disposal of each family member of the respondent as the key objective indicator of the material status of the respondents. Obtained results mainly correspond to the subjective impression of the respondents.

Table 7: *Income per family member in Euros*

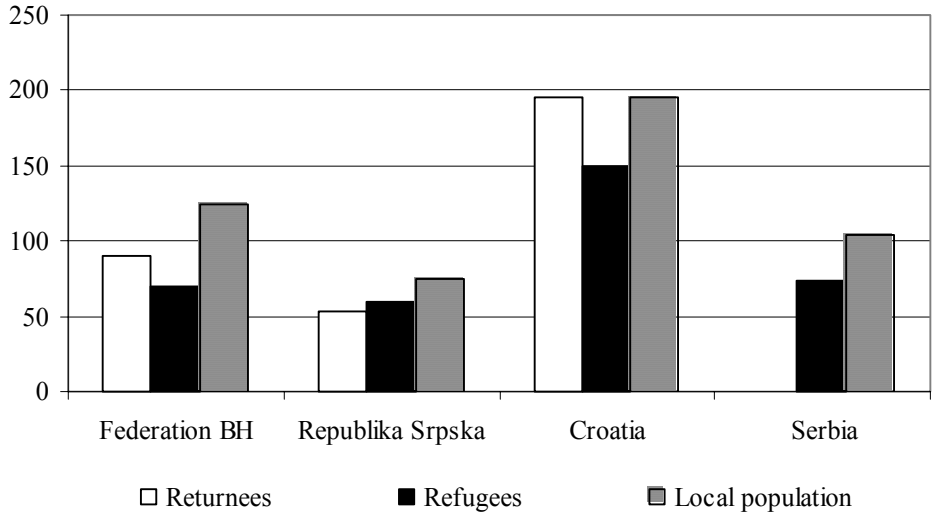
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federation BH | 92.79 | 64.14 | 124.13 | *92.42* |
| Republika Srpska | 52.03 | 61.61 | 76.50 | *60.36* |
| Croatia | 192.52[34] | 152.28 | 192.02 | *181.65* |
| Serbia | | 73.23 | 102.76 | *88.31* |
| Average | *125.60* | *90.76* | *134.29* | *116.83* |

Given results corroborate the assumption of authors of the studies on poverty in Serbia and Croatia as well as the findings of authors of the study conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Refugees and internally displaced persons have lower income than the local population. Two anomalies in the obtained results

[32] Tenjović et al. (2003).
[33] Ibid.
[34] This relatively high amount is due to returnees of Croatian ethnicity, whose income per family member is 272.31 Euros. Income of Serb returnees is 165.09 Euros.

circuitously reveal something about the position of the authorities in Republika Srpska and Republic of Croatia towards returnees of Bosniak and Serbian ethnicity respectively. Speaking in absolute amounts, returnees to Republika Srpska are the poorest group encompassed by this research. There is an evident large difference (over 100 Euros) between incomes of Serb and Croatian returnees to Croatia.

Graph 2: *Income (in Euros) per family member*




## Material status of respondents – below the poverty line

As stated above, it is difficult to compare incomes of people living in different countries. This is the reason for calculating the so-called poverty lines, i.e. Daily income per family member that separates the poor from the non-poor. Researchers often use relative measures, most frequently the percentage of average income of all households. Nevertheless, available sources show that in Bosnia-Herzegovina the poverty line has been set at 90 Euros per month per family member. In Croatia it is at 105 Euros and in Serbia about 85 Euros.

Table 8: *Percentage of respondents living below poverty line*

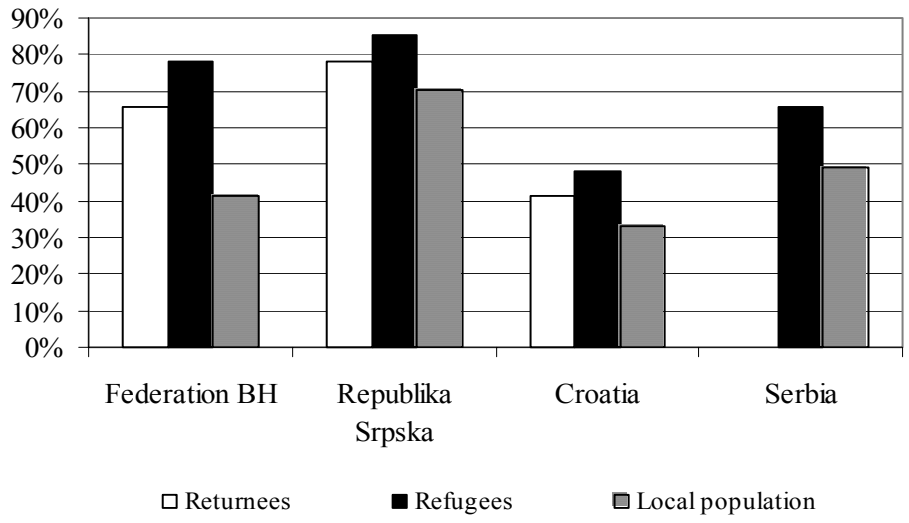
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federation BH | 65.5% | 78.2% | 41.3% | 63.0% |
| Republika Srpska | 84.7% | 85.4% | 70.4% | 82.0% |
| Croatia | 54.9% | 48.1% | 33.1% | 46.5% |
| Serbia | | 65.9% | 49.3% | 57.4% |
| Average | 65.5% | 67.6% | 44.6% | 57.3% |

Results obtained in this way differ significantly from those stated at the beginning. First reason could be further deterioration of material status among residents of all three countries included in our research compared to the period when quoted studies were produced.

Second reason is probably the specific nature of our sample: formed on the basis of the initial sample of returnees, it was bound to contain older and less educated people, consequently generally poorer than the rest of the population.

Nevertheless, obtained results remain striking. The very fact that 57% of respondents are poor and that this number mounts to the unbelievable 82% in Republika Srpska is an indicator of profound material poverty in our societies. Refugees and returnees are the poorest stratum of these impoverished societies.

Graph 3: *Percentage of respondents below poverty line*



## Housing status

Housing status of refugees and returnees is among key information in describing their current material status.

Table 9: *Housing status of respondents*

| | Federation BH | | Republika Srpska | | Croatia | | Serbia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ret[35] | Ref | Ret | Ref | Ret | Ref | Ref |
| Own flat / house | 93.5% | 25.0% | 84.4% | 16.7% | 75.3% | 41.0% | 27.4% |
| With relatives | 3.8% | 3.1% | 8.2% | 3.3% | 21.3% | 5.2% | 5.5% |
| Tenant | 2.2% | 22.7% | 7.4% | 57.8% | 9.6% | 32.8% | 31.5% |
| Collective accommodation | | 34.4% | | 12.2% | 2.3% | 3.0% | 24.7% |
| Temporary accommodation | 0.5% | 14.8% | | 10.0% | 0.5% | 17.9% | 11.0% |

Although our sample is not representative for refugee population (mainly due to higher number of respondents from collective centres), some regularities are still perceptible.

Primarily, as expected, incomparably higher percentage of returnees than refugees live in their own flats / houses. Repossession of private property was the strongest incentive for return (more information in the chapter ”Return factors”).

The highest percentage of returnees live in their own flats/houses in the Federation BH, the lowest in Croatia, which is most likely the consequence of disparate attitude of authorities towards repossession of property for returnees. In Croatia occupancy rights have not yet been restored to pre-war owners and this impacts on the results of our research. On the other hand, it is in Croatia that the highest percentage of refugees who live in their own flats/houses.

Table 10: *Number of moves during exile*

| Number of moves | Percentage of respondents |
|---|---|
| None | 23.74% |
| One | 31.30% |
| Two | 22.87% |
| Three or more | 22.09% |

[35] Ret – returnees; Ref - refugees

The already difficult housing situation of refugees and returnees is further complicated by frequent moves and problems they entail: from additional expenses, to finding new kindergartens or schools for children, to lack of possibility to establish a social network, fully or partly severed due to exile.

## Unemployment

The bleak picture of the material status of respondents in our research, be they refugees, returnees or local population, is completed by data on unemployment:

Table 11: *Unemployment rate among respondents under 55 years of age*

| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population |
|---|---|---|---|
| Federation BH | 56.3% | 72.0% | 19.6% |
| Republika Srpska | 70.6% | 62.5% | 43.8% |
| Croatia | 69.2% | 46.7% | 47.6% |
| Serbia | N/A | 55.9% | 37.9% |

It is an ungrateful task to compare this data with the data on general unemployment rates in the countries mentioned at the beginning, partly because in Croatia our research was conducted in areas particularly affected by conflict and where the economy has been largely set back.

Nevertheless, the information obtained speak clearly of the difficult situation besetting the inhabitants of the region, returnees and refugees in particular. An exceptionally striking difference was registered in Federation BH, where even today, nine years after the end of war, the unemployment rate among returnees is three times and among refugees (in this case, internally displaced) almost four times higher than among local population. It is worth noting that the unemployment among refugees and local population in Croatia is almost the same. There is however a significant difference in this rate between respondents of Croatian (48.3%) and Serbian (63.5%) ethnicity.

By comparing these results with those of previous research projects conducted by the IAN research team[36] we can also conclude that the unemployment rate among refugees residing in Serbia, however high, is still far below the one registered among internally displaced persons from Kosovo, which goes up to 84%.

[36] Tenjović et al. (2003)

## CONCLUSIONS

It is not an easy task to analyse the material status of respondents in a research such as this. First of all, there is no adequate data for comparison. Official statistics are often not updated or do not include information on refugees and internally displaced people. This situation is paradigmatic of the attitude towards refugees and returnees by authorities of the three states encompassed by this research – they are viewed as an uncomfortable burden the existence of which would rather be denied. Nonetheless, despite difficulties of comparison with official data, obtained results provide an abundance of useful information on the respondents.

Key conclusions to be drawn from the obtained results are the following:

1) Most respondents evaluate their current material situation as poor. The feeling of poverty is particularly strong among returnees to Republika Srpska and refugees residing in Serbia.
2) Vast majority of respondents view their current material situation as much worse than before the wars in former Yugoslavia.
3) Objective indicators of material status correspond to the subjective impression of respondents – most of them live below the poverty line. Particularly vulnerable are returnees and refugees in Republika Srpska. There is a striking difference in income per family member in Croatia between respondents of Croatian and Serbian ethnicity, in favour of the first. Similar difference favouring the majority population was registered in Republika Srpska.
4) Unemployment plagues all categories of respondents, but is far more prominent among refugees and returnees than among local population. The difference is particularly striking in the Federation BH.

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# THE DILEMMA: RETURN OR INTEGRATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Ten years after the war the problem of refugees on the territory of former Yugoslavia still remains unresolved. Although there has been progressively more talk over the past several years about the necessity to solve this issue and many strategies and programmes have been drafted for support to return or integration of refugees, it seems that the ultimate solution is still far ahead. There are still many people with refugee status who do not feel as if they belong either here or there and who keep on living in a kind of vacuum without real sense of continuity of their lives and without possibilities to carry on a meaningful existence.

Nevertheless, there are certain changes towards resolving the problem of refugees and stimulating the decision making on return or integration; we therefore hope there would be more positive steps in this field.

Consequently one of the aims of our research was to explore the position towards return and integration and help clarify important factors affecting the decision of refugees to either return to their pre-war residence or integrate locally in the communities of exile.

## RETURN AND INTEGRATION – CURRENT STATE

### Croatia

According to a report by the Government of Croatia[37] the overall number of registered returnees to Croatia since the beginning of the return process in 1995 amounts to 330.727; of this number 215.579 are Croatian refugees (65%) while 115.148 are Serbs (35%) - 83.162 returnees from Serbia and Montenegro, 8.232 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and 23.754 internally displaced who had been residing in Croatian Podunavlje region. Based on the same source, during 2004 there were 12.478 returnees to Croatia, of which 7.295 Serbs (58%) and 5.183 Croatians (42%).

The ultimate solution, either through return to their homes or integration in Croatia, still awaits a total of 34.621 registered exiles and refugees (this includes persons expelled/refugees from Croatia, internally displaced within Croatia as well as people from other areas of former Yugoslavia who sought refuge in Croatia). This number is much higher when we take into account all Croatian citizens of Serbian ethnicity currently residing in Serbia.

The overall number of properties restored to owners is 18.074, of which 3.256 empty housing units still not repossessed by their owners. During 2004 a total of 2.312 houses have been restored to their owners, after having been vacated by temporary settlers. The settlers were provided with housing or given building materials, while a smaller number was accommodated in apartments considered as state property. There are still 1.197 illegally occupied or non-restored housing units.

In Croatia, 131.634 houses and apartments destroyed or damaged during the war have been reconstructed. According to an ICG Balkan report dated December 2002[38], *"...the bulk of reconstruction funded from the Government budget went to Croats rather than Serbs*". Different results are found in the report *Return of exiles and refugees in Croatia: progress until the end of 2004,* which states that since 2003, 70% of reconstruction beneficiaries have been returnees of Serbian ethnicity. There are 13.700 still unresolved requests for reconstruction. As concerns the accommodation of returnees who used to live in socially owned apartments (occupancy right holders) so far there have been 6.474 claims filed in the areas of special state care and 1641 requests outside this area of Croatia. This programme is expected to be finalised by the end of 2006.

Although these figures look promising, other sources are less optimistic concerning the issue of returnees to Croatia, primarily in case of Serbs. The ICG Balkan report No.138 states: "*less than one-third of the more than 300,000*

[37] *Return of exiles and refugees in Craotia: progress until the end of 2004 (*Povratak prognanika i izbjeglica u Hrvatskoj: napredak do kraja 2004. godine), report by Government of Croatia.
[38] ICG (2002).

*Croatian Serbs displaced during the conflict have returned*" while "*according to one survey, as few as 6 per cent of Croatian Serb refugees in Serbia expressed a desire to return.*"[39]. The same source quotes a research by the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees, which concluded that over 25% Serbs from Croatia residing in Serbia are still undecided with regard to return and that there were about 8.000 return cases registered from FRY and BIH in the first 9 months of 2002. Besides problems related to property repossession and possibilities of exercising various rights in Croatia, the significant factor in making a decision on return is the perception of the security situation. The aforementioned ICG report also quotes an information from the Institute for War and Peace Reporting dated March 2002, which says: "*While the security situation has improved, the perception of insecurity among potential Serb returnees appears still to be a real disincentive to return. Such a perception was fed by the appearance of an extensive list of alleged Serb war criminals that was published and placed on the internet by hard-line Croat nationalists.*"[40].

Regarding refugees in Croatia, by October 2002 there were 8500 people (mainly from BIH) still registered as refugees in the country. How many of these people would return to heir homes remains to be seen, although "*indications from representatives of Bosnian Croat settlers in Croatia are that relatively few Bosnian Croats wish to return to Bosnia*".[41]

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

The ICG Balkan report states that, according to official data, about 900.000 people have returned to their homes in BIH, from which they had fled or been expelled during the war[42]. Until end September 2002, over 150.000 BIH citizens have been registered as having repossessed their properties, which is 62% of all filed claims for repossession of property. However, there are doubts with regard to accuracy of this information, since the municipal housing authorities in BIH only register in their reports the overall number of filed repossession claims and the number of implemented repossessions, while individual cases are not registered, which makes it impossible to ascertain the correctness of the data.

Apart from the repossession issue, there are other return related problems due to which the number of those who have not decided to return is still fairly high (in December 2002 there were about 127.000 registered refugees from BIH who were still living in Croatia and the then FRY, while close to 380.000 refugees were still internally displaced within BIH).

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] The Continuing Challenge of Refugee Return in Bosnia & Herzegovina - ICG Balkan report, No.137, 13th December 2002

One of the factors having an adverse effect on the return process is the gloomy economic situation and high unemployment rate affecting all people in BIH, although returnees still face the biggest problems, including illegal privatisation: *"...with official unemployment rate of about 40%, return to urban areas, with very little or no arable land available, is more problematic"*. Another significant problem in enhancing sustainable return to Bosnia and Herzegovina, mentioned in the ICG report, is the serious difficulty that returnees face when trying to repossess their former commercial premises and usurped land; the consequence of this is that even if the returnees resolve the issue of housing they still face the problem of earning a living.

Another important unfavourable factor in the return process is the persistent ethnic discrimination that *"prevents the full realisation of potential returns, threatens the sustainability of achieved returns and encourages returnees who do stay to huddle in enclaves rather than to reintegrate"*[43]. The same source states that, although the BIH authorities have been coerced into recognising the right to repossession of pre-war property, this is not accompanied by their readiness to eradicate institutionalised discrimination that condemns many "minority"[44] returnees to the status of second-rate citizens.

The ICG report further states that the education system in BIH, with three separate and politically tinted curricula, represents another problem reported by families with children as a reason not to return, as well as discrimination in provision of communal and health services and pensions. With regard to security situation, although it is said to have significantly improved, there is still the problem of intimidation of "minority" returnees. In corroboration, it is stated that *"in some parts of the RS a returnee is ten times more likely to be the victim of violent crime than is a local Serb"*.

It is said that one of the positive steps in stimulating repatriation process in BIH is the passing of amendments pursuant to which local administrations are requested to employ returnees in accordance with ethnic quotas based on the last pre-war population census; it is believed that if implemented, these amendments would give a better chance to returnees to preserve their interests.

The overall conclusion is that as concerns the return of refugees to BIH and within BIH significant steps have been made and it seems that the positive trend will continue in the future, provided that the international community maintains its supervision until Bosnia and Herzegovina has established *"those genuinely "normal" constraints that civilised societies impose upon themselves"*.

[43] Ibid.
[44] Returnees whose ethnic group represents factual minority in communities of return.

## REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Table 1: *Proportion of responses to question: "Are you planning to go back to the place from which you were exiled?"*

| | Federation BIH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **I don't think about it at all** | 26.0% | 55.6% | 64.0% | 68.5% | **53.9%** |
| **In current circumstances I'm not planning to** | 23.6% | 31.1% | 27.2% | 20.5% | **25.0%** |
| **I'm planning but not in the next year** | 22.8% | 10.0% | 8.0% | 8.2% | **12.3%** |
| **I'm planning within a year** | 27.6% | 3.3% | 0.8% | 2.7% | **8.8%** |

The table shows that 53.9% of refugees covered by our research are not at all thinking about return to the place they had been expelled from, 25.0% of them are not planning to return under current circumstances but leave room for reconsidering if the situation changes, 12.3% are planning to return but not in a year's time, while 8.8% plan to go back to their homes during next year.

Somewhat different results are obtained by viewing this data with regard to country or entity where our respondents currently reside or have been displaced/exiled to. Refugees currently residing in Federation BH are by far the most numerous planning to return to their pre-war homes. By contrast, respondents from Republika Srpska and especially those from Croatia and Serbia, mostly do not think about return. Similar results were published by Brajdić-Vuković and Bagić in 2004. Such finding is not unexpected: it is a consequence of a variety of factors of which the most significant for us seems the constant mobilisation of all resources within Bosniak national community to promote return as the best solution to refugee problem.

In the overall sample as well as in sub-samples by country/entity there is a relatively high percentage (total of 25%) of those who are not planning to return under current circumstances. As already said, these respondents fall in the group that despite the current negative position towards return could potentially reconsider in case the political, economic and other circumstances should change; they are potential returnees. At the same time they are probably the most vulnerable group on account of their "neither here nor there" position, which prevents them from meaningfully continuing their lives.

Following lines attempt to analyse the conditions that might affect the decision of those who are still undecided and have not yet resolved the dilemma of ”return or integration”.

Table 2: *Overview of answers to the question: ”Fulfilment of conditions that would influence return” (1 – not at all, 5 – very much)*

| | Federation BH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ensured health care by state** | 4,62 | 4,13 | 3,80 | 4,39 | **4,32** |
| **Security of family** | 4,11 | 4,60 | 4,12 | 4,37 | **4,23** |
| **Stable economic situation** | 4,18 | 4,52 | 3,84 | 4,20 | **4,15** |
| **Return of private property** | 4,19 | 4,48 | 3,98 | 4,00 | **4,14** |
| **Personal safety** | 4,00 | 4,19 | 3,88 | 4,44 | **4,08** |
| **Possibility of employment** | 3,96 | 4,53 | 4,00 | 3,82 | **4,02** |
| **Stable political situation** | 4,16 | 3,97 | 3,59 | 4,17 | **4,00** |
| **Possibility of normal education for children** | 4,10 | 4,22 | 3,44 | 3,65 | **3,87** |
| **Assistance of IO[45] to returnees in housing reconstruction** | 3,99 | 4,07 | 3,45 | 3,90 | **3,86** |
| **Real commitment of IO to ensure personal and property security** | 3,98 | 3,96 | 3,41 | 4,03 | **3,85** |
| **Possibility of loans** | 3,67 | 3,89 | 3,49 | 4,15 | **3,75** |
| **Other IO assistance for returnees** | 3,95 | 3,89 | 3,04 | 3,88 | **3,72** |
| **Assistance by IO to returnees in infrastructure rebuilding** | 3,99 | 3,93 | 3,08 | 3,56 | **3,69** |
| **State assistance in provision of social welfare** | 3,48 | 3,70 | 3,16 | 3,90 | **3,51** |

[45] IO – International organisations

| | Federation BH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strong commitment of other ethnic groups not to compromise safety of returnees** | 3,65 | 3,40 | 3,15 | 3,39 | **3,45** |
| **Restitution of socially owned property** | 3,54 | 3,96 | 2,69 | 2,51 | **3,17** |
| **Public pledge by political leaders to guarantee security** | 3,07 | 3,10 | 2,24 | 3,10 | **2,88** |
| **Public appeal by highest functionaries to returnees** | 2,94 | 3,13 | 2,29 | 2,85 | **2,80** |

When looking at the overall sample of respondents, it is evident that these are the most important conditions that would influence return if fulfilled: ensured health care by state, security of family, stable economic situation, return of private property, personal safety, possibility of employment and stable political situation. The need for basic safety and security therefore dominates, which is quite logical and corresponds to the well known Maslow's theory on hierarchy of motives, according to which the motive of security immediately follows basic physiological motives. Concurrently, knowledge that the respondents still put basic security in the first place is a sad reminder of the fact that even today, ten years after the end of war, these people remain concerned about their safety in places they had lived in before the conflict.

Situation in respective entities is quite similar, although there are differences with regard to results from the overall sample. For refugees from Croatia residing in Serbia, most important are security, favourable economic situation and possibility of employment, the situation being similar among refugees from Federation BH currently in Republika Srpska. In contrast, respondents currently accommodated in the Federation BH who wish to return to Republika Srpska, state that exercise of basic social rights is most important. These differences should not surprise us. It has already been mentioned that refugees currently residing in Federation BH have the highest unemployment rate in our research. Employment is not high on their priority list simply because they do not have a job at present. The very fact that a large majority of these people would not have to live as sub-tenants upon return constitutes for them a serious financial improvement. If the country of return also ensures their basic health care, they would certainly not be worse off than they are now.

There is an evident lack of confidence in local authorities and their factual influence: their actions occupy the bottom of the list. Refugees find the reaction of international organisations much more important when contemplating return.

Table 3: *Overview of answers to the question: "Fulfilment of conditions that would influence integration"*

| | Federation BH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stable political situation** | 4,18 | 3,83 | 4,20 | 5,00 | **4,10** |
| **Security of family** | 3,69 | 3,85 | 4,04 | 3,88 | **3,87** |
| **Ensured health care by state** | 4,01 | 3,74 | 3,91 | 3,75 | **3,86** |
| **Possibility of employment** | 3,69 | 3,85 | 3,64 | 4,08 | **3,82** |
| **Public pledge by political leaders to support integration** | 4,02 | 3,39 | 3,93 | 4,40 | **3,82** |
| **State assistance in provision of social welfare** | 3,71 | 3,53 | 3,36 | 4,23 | **3,74** |
| **Personal safety** | 3,63 | 3,66 | 3,85 | 3,71 | **3,72** |
| **Possibility of normal education for children** | 3,83 | 3,84 | 3,31 | 3,82 | **3,68** |
| **Acceptance by neighbours and acquaintances** | 3,40 | 3,07 | 3,19 | 4,26 | **3,54** |
| **Possibility of loans** | 3,61 | 3,64 | 3,27 | 3,51 | **3,49** |
| **Other IO assistance** | 3,48 | 3,42 | 3,36 | 3,61 | **3,48** |
| **Return/sale of property in country of origin** | 2,94 | 3,73 | 3,41 | 3,38 | **3,35** |
| **Assistance by IO in building infrastructure in refugee settlements** | 3,46 | 3,65 | 2,93 | 3,32 | **3,31** |
| **Assistance by IO in infrastructure rebuilding** | 3,32 | 3,23 | 2,37 | 3,79 | **3,19** |

Five factors that the respondents with refugee status named as the most important for making the decision to integrate in communities of asylum are: stable political situation, security of family, ensured health care by the state, possibility of employment and public pledge by political leaders to support integration.

As is the case with conditions that would stimulate return, the dominant conditions here are also related to the sense of basic security, social welfare and economic prosperity. Noticeably, refugees currently residing in Serbia consider political stability as the most important factor for their decision to integrate (all respondents from the sub-sample of refugees in Serbia gave the highest mark to this condition). This clearly indicates the preoccupation with political stability factor, i.e. how much is this condition regarded as currently unfulfilled in Serbia. There is a similar (albeit less drastic) situation in other countries/entities. The exception is Republika Srpska, where political stability ranks only as tenth, which seems to be a circuitous confirmation of the general opinion that refugees residing in Republika Srpska largely represent a backbone of support for the present regime. Namely, the fact that political stability is not mentioned as a highly important condition reflects to a certain extent the satisfaction with current political situation.

## RETURNEES

The next step in the analysis was to verify which conditions and to what extent had contributed to the decision making among respondents who have already returned.

Table 4: *Overview of answers to the question: "To what extent has the fulfilment of these conditions influenced your return" (1 – not at all, 5 – Very much)*

| | Federation BH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Return of private property** | 3,49 | 3,50 | 3,18 | **3,36** |
| **Ensured health care by state** | 2,89 | 2,87 | 3,86 | **3,30** |
| **Security of family** | 2,95 | 3,07 | 3,64 | **3,27** |
| **Personal safety** | 2,88 | 2,98 | 3,46 | **3,15** |
| **Stable political situation** | 2,45 | 2,41 | 3,13 | **2,73** |
| **Real commitment of IO to ensure personal and property security** | 2,97 | 3,09 | 2,22 | **2,67** |
| **Restitution of socially owned property** | 3,24 | 2,81 | 2,07 | **2,66** |
| **Possibility of normal education for children** | 2,45 | 3,03 | 2,57 | **2,63** |
| **Possibility of employment** | 2,42 | 2,84 | 2,55 | **2,57** |
| **Assistance by IO to returnees in housing reconstruction** | 2,26 | 2,86 | 2,59 | **2,54** |

| | Federation BH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Strong commitment of other ethnic groups not to compromise safety of returnees** | 2,92 | 2,53 | 2,09 | **2,47** |
| **Other IO assistance for returnees** | 2,15 | 2,72 | 2,49 | **2,43** |
| **Stable economic situation** | 1,95 | 2,07 | 2,94 | **2,40** |
| **Assistance by IO to returnees in infrastructure rebuilding** | 2,06 | 2,76 | 2,44 | **2,38** |
| **State assistance in provision of social welfare** | 1,92 | 2,42 | 2,41 | **2,24** |
| **Possibility of loans** | 1,94 | 2,69 | 2,24 | **2,24** |
| **Public pledge by political leaders to guarantee security** | 2,01 | 2,04 | 2,42 | **2,19** |
| **Public appeal by highest functionaries** | 1,99 | 1,91 | 2,38 | **2,14** |

When we view the overall sample of returnees, the results show that following factors have had a decisive influence on their return to former places of residence: return of private property, ensured health care by the state, security of family, personal safety and stable political situation. It is of course the individual perception of respondents that these factors exist and have been fulfilled in the places from which they had been forced to flee during the war.

These are also more or less the same conditions mentioned by refugees as key incentives for return or integration. It is evident that the level of fulfilment of these conditions is much lower than the feeling of importance that refugees attribute to them. It appears that the act of return marks a transition from a phase where there is no decisions and everything seems so important into a phase where people tend to judge more realistically and with moderation; or maybe those who are returning have more modest expectations and demands then those who are still refugees, which facilitates their decision to go back.

There are significant differences between countries/entities. As concerns returnees into BIH Federation, the following factors had the most important impact on their decision-making: return of private property, return of socially-owned property (i.e. tenancy rights), real readiness of international forces to ensure personal security and security of property, as well as family, together with firm pledges by other ethnic groups not to compromise the security of returnees.

There is a similar estimation by returnees to Republika Srpska: here too the return of private property is the most important, followed by readiness of international forces to ensure security of person, family and property, as well as uninterrupted education for children and personal safety.

Returnees to Croatia view things differently: above all they state the state-ensured health care, followed by security of family, personal safety and only at fourth and fifth place the return of property and stable political situation.

These results are a good indicator of the real situation in each of the three countries/entities: the key incentive for return to Bosnia and Herzegovina is the progress in property rights, while returnees to Croatia have been motivated mainly by the improved security of returnees. It is striking that actions of local authorities again occupy the very bottom of the list.

Table 5: *Overview of answers to the question: "To what extent are respective conditions fulfilled in the community of return" (1 – not at all, 5 – very much)*

| | **Federation BH** | **Republika Srpska** | **Croatia** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Personal safety** | 3,59 | 3,53 | 4,03 | **3,76** |
| **Security of family** | 3,57 | 3,51 | 3,93 | **3,71** |
| **Ensured health care by state** | 2,82 | 2,39 | 3,78 | **3,13** |
| **Return of private property** | 3,41 | 3,42 | 2,58 | **3,06** |
| **Strong commitment of other ethnic groups not to compromise safety of returnees** | 3,49 | 2,95 | 2,51 | **2,95** |
| **Stable political situation** | 2,41 | 2,38 | 3,09 | **2,70** |
| **Possibility of normal education for children** | 2,64 | 2,91 | 2,56 | **2,67** |
| **Restitution of socially owned property** | 3,48 | 2,90 | 1,60 | **2,57** |
| **Real commitment of IO to ensure personal and property security** | 2,80 | 2,72 | 2,08 | **2,47** |
| **Public pledge by political leaders to support integration** | 2,16 | 2,01 | 2,44 | **2,24** |
| **Public appeal by highest functionaries** | 1,92 | 1,80 | 2,32 | **2,06** |
| **Stable economic situation** | 1,73 | 1,64 | 2,46 | **2,02** |

| | Federation BH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Assistance of IO to returnees in housing reconstruction** | 1,65 | 2,24 | 2,13 | **1,99** |
| **Assistance by IO to returnees in infrastructure rebuilding** | 1,61 | 2,09 | 2,03 | **1,90** |
| **Other IO assistance for returnees** | 1,54 | 1,89 | 1,89 | **1,77** |
| **Possibility of employment** | 1,80 | 1,82 | 1,72 | **1,77** |
| **State assistance in provision of social welfare** | 1,31 | 1,59 | 2,07 | **1,70** |
| **Possibility of loans** | 1,58 | 1,81 | 1,48 | **1,59** |

Respondents who have returned to places of their former residence estimate that the following conditions for integration in the community of return have been fulfilled to a large extent: personal and family security, health care provided by the state, return/sale of private property and firm commitments by other ethnic groups not to compromise the safety of returnees.

Therefore it is evident that in all three entities where there are returnees (BIH Federation, Republika Srpska and Croatia) our respondents who have gone back consider that primarily the conditions of personal and family security have been fulfilled.

## ONE FORM OF SWOT ANALYSIS

Relying on the well known model of analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the SWOT analysis, we have tried to look in yet another way at the perception of conditions in countries of origin and asylum, as well as the differences between refugees and returnees.

Table 6: *Proportion of respondents with "yes" answers to statements regarding conditions in countries of origin and asylum – difference between returnees and refugees*

| | COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | | | COUNTRY OF ASYLUM | | | DIFFERENCE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ret. | Ref. | Ret-Ref | Ret. | Ref. | Ret--Ref | Ret. | Ref. |
| **I have resolved my housing issue** | 0.88 | 0.21 | 0.67 | 0.08 | 0.32 | -0.24 | **0.80** | **-0.11** |
| **I have a stable income (shop, rent, job, pension)** | 0.54 | 0.13 | 0.41 | 0.23 | 0.50 | -0.27 | **0.31** | **-0.38** |

| | COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | | | COUNTRY OF ASYLUM | | | DIFFERENCE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ret. | Ref. | Ret-Ref | Ret. | Ref. | Ret--Ref | Ret. | Ref. |
| **I have a wide circle of friends and acquaintances** | 0.82 | 0.35 | 0.47 | 0.67 | 0.76 | -0.09 | **0.14** | **-0.41** |
| **Children have good possibility for education** | 0.63 | 0.19 | 0.44 | 0.64 | 0.68 | -0.04 | -0.01 | **-0.49** |
| **Economic situation is satisfactory** | 0.30 | 0.11 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 0.33 | -0.14 | **0.11** | **-0.22** |
| **Political situation is satisfactory** | 0.47 | 0.13 | 0.34 | 0.38 | 0.47 | -0.09 | **0.09** | **-0.33** |
| **International community helps people a lot** | 0.37 | 0.29 | 0.08 | 0.29 | 0.32 | -0.03 | **0.07** | -0.03 |
| **International community will ultimately force the authorities to resolve our problems in a just way** | 0.70 | 0.52 | 0.18 | 0.55 | 0.52 | 0.03 | **0.14** | 0.00 |
| **International community is unfair to people** | 0.44 | 0.46 | -0.02 | 0.41 | 0.50 | -0.09 | 0.03 | **-0.05** |
| **I simply belong ...** | 0.88 | 0.28 | 0.60 | 0.16 | 0.64 | -0.48 | **0.72** | **-0.37** |
| **I speak the same language as other people** | 0.92 | 0.74 | 0.18 | 0.74 | 0.83 | -0.09 | **0.19** | **-0.09** |
| **Our problems will ultimately be resolved** | 0.82 | 0.60 | 0.22 | 0.54 | 0.76 | -0.22 | **0.29** | **-0.16** |
| **My property is destroyed or usurped** | 0.56 | 0.75 | -0.19 | 0.07 | 0.13 | -0.06 | **0.49** | **0.61** |
| **Our surroundings views us as second rate people** | 0.36 | 0.61 | -0.25 | 0.43 | 0.41 | 0.02 | **-0.08** | **0.20** |
| **I have nobody who could help me here** | 0.41 | 0.60 | -0.19 | 0.42 | 0.46 | -0.04 | -0.01 | **0.14** |
| **I am treated as an alien** | 0.26 | 0.63 | -0.37 | 0.51 | 0.40 | 0.11 | **-0.25** | **0.23** |
| **I cannot exercise my basic human rights** | 0.37 | 0.57 | -0.20 | 0.35 | 0.34 | 0.01 | 0.03 | **0.23** |
| **I'm afraid of being accused of war crimes** | 0.01 | 0.11 | -0.10 | 0.00 | 0.02 | -0.02 | 0.00 | **0.09** |
| **There could easily be another war** | 0.24 | 0.30 | -0.06 | 0.24 | 0.26 | -0.02 | 0.00 | **0.05** |
| **I'm afraid of losing my identity** | 0.13 | 0.34 | -0.21 | 0.10 | 0.15 | -0.05 | 0.03 | **0.19** |
| **My life is in danger** | 0.11 | 0.41 | -0.30 | 0.09 | 0.16 | -0.07 | 0.02 | **0.26** |
| **I cannot achieve anything due to my ethnic origin** | 0.25 | 0.50 | -0.25 | 0.16 | 0.19 | -0.03 | **0.08** | **0.30** |

Data in the table speak clearly about the differences between returnees and refugees in their perception of conditions in the country of origin and country of asylum. Returnees generally view and evaluate more positively the living conditions in the country of origin they had fled and then returned after a certain time in exile. It was probably the more positive perception of living conditions in the country of origin that has influenced returnees to make the decision to go back, while the more negative perception of these conditions among current refugees represents an important factor in their reluctance to opt for return at this time.

Concurrently, refugees perceive the conditions in the country of asylum as better. Following the logic of the above conclusions, we could say that the more positive perception of living conditions in the country of asylum among refugees has influenced them to opt for integration, while the more negative assessment of the same conditions by returnees has played a key role in their decision to go back.

It is justified to assume that every single respondent, while making the decision about his/her future, has undergone a process essentially similar to a SWOT analysis. Those who have decided to return found strengths and opportunities in the country of origin much higher that those in the country of asylum. Likewise, weaknesses and threats seemed to them lesser in the country of origin than in the country of asylum. The country of origin is for the returnee a place where he/she owns private property and has a stable income, as well as a large circle of friends and acquaintances, where he simply belongs and where his problems would ultimately be resolved. Refugees see the country of origin as a place where his/her property is destroyed or usurped, with no possibilities to earn a living and send children to school, where he is treated as an alien, a second rate citizen who cannot exercise his/her basic human rights.

On the contrary, the country of asylum is for a refugee the place where his/her problems will ultimately be resolved, where he has friends, can send children to school, where he/she truly belongs. It is worth noting that the difference in perception of conditions in the country of asylum is much lower between returnees and refugees than the perception of conditions in the country of origin. Key differences are probably main factors conducive to return: returnee is a person with a house or apartment where he can return, has a guaranteed income in the country of origin and simply feels he/she belongs there. We should therefore not be astonished that the bulk of returnees are elderly people and that the number of returnees would soon begin to decrease due to the inevitable process of integration.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. There are significant differences in readiness among groups of refugees currently residing in various countries/entities to return to their pre-war homes. The idea of return is mostly favoured among Bosniaks currently accommodated in BIH Federation. Far less respondents willing to return have been registered in Republika Srpska and Croatia. About 1/5 of respondents still do not have a clearly formed final decision on return/integration; they represent probably the most vulnerable and sensitive part of the refugee population, as well as the target group on which further programmes and strategies for resolving the refugee issue should be focussed.
2. Potential returnees stress basic security, basic social welfare and economic prosperity as conditions the fulfilment of which would to the largest extent positively influence their decision to return to the country they had fled from. More or less the same conditions apply in decision-making on potential integration.
3. Those who have returned point out that in making this decision the most decisive factor for them was the return of private property in the country of origin, as well as their impression of a satisfactory level of personal and family security. Returnees also stress that their expectations in this regard have largely been fulfilled.
4. There are clear and substantial differences in the way the country of origin is perceived among returnees and refugees who still haven't returned. Returnees experience the country of origin as their own, while refugees feel the same about the country of asylum. It seems that the feeling of belonging, return on private property and a stable income have all played the key role in the decision of returnees to go back to their pre-war homes.

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# THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF RETURNEES, REFUGEES AND LOCAL POPULATION IN THE REGION

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## THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights represent a collection of minimum moral and political requirements of natural-legal character that every individual has or should have in relation to the state authority and society he/she lives in. Human rights, therefore, do not depend on the state and on the objective legislation it creates. A human being acquires these rights by birth (Radonjić, 2003). The concept of human rights encompasses an array of universal values indispensable for human identity and integrity. The exercise of these rights is a precondition not only for the political and cultural existence of man, but also for his spiritual identity and physical survival. It concerns values that are inherent to every human being and that ensure his/her autonomy and dignity.

Although human rights are recognised as universal and inalienable, periods of wars and subsequent forced migrations present a huge challenge to the principles of respect of human rights and to the mechanisms for their protection. Unfortunately, the higher the socio-economic vulnerability of people and the higher the need to protect human rights, the lower the rate of their implementation.

Partly under the influence of enormous human suffering in the WWII, the United Nations in their Charter containing general obligation to promote human rights proclaim the faith in basic rights of man, dignity and value of human individual.

**The Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted in 1948 and became the generally accepted standard for human rights protection. It proclaims two large

categories of rights: civil and political rights on one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other (Burgental, 1997).

*Civil rights* encompass: right to life, freedom and security of person; prohibition of slavery, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; right to freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention and persecution; right to a fair trial in civil and criminal proceedings; presumption of innocence and prohibition of *ex post facto* laws and punishments; right to privacy; right to own property; right to freedom of speech, religion and association; right to freedom of movement and the right of everyone to "leave any country, including his own, and to return to this country", right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution; right to nationality.

*Political rights* encompass: right of individual to take part in the government of the country, right to participate in elections or be elected to office.

*Economic and social rights* include social security; right to work and protection from unemployment; right to fair remuneration; to equal pay for equal work; right to rest and leisure; right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of individual and his family; right to security in the event of unemployment or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control; right to education, including free education in elementary and fundamental schools.

*Cultural rights* involve the freedom to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, enjoy arts and share in scientific advancement.

The Universal Declaration itself was adopted as a declarative document on common understanding and general standards in the protection of human rights. Subsequently emerged the need to have those rights regulated by international legal protection instruments. The Universal Declaration has over time become the basic component of international custom law. Its key items are further specified through the following UN documents in 1966.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** was created with more legal precision and stipulates more rights than the Universal Declaration, including the rights of ethnic, religious or language minorities to have their own cultural life, religion and language, as well as the right of all persons deprived of liberty to be treated humanely. Nevertheless, for various ideological and political reasons, this document does not mention the right to own property, seek and enjoy asylum and the right to nationality/citizenship. The Covenant leaves to states the possibility to limit and reduce the implementation of rights stipulated therein, as well as contains the "provision on derogation" allowing the state party to suspend all except the basic rights in national emergency situations.

**International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** elaborates in detail the list of economic, social and cultural rights and expands it in comparison to the Universal Declaration: right to work; right to just and favourable working

conditions; right to establish and join trade unions; right to enjoy the highest level of physical and mental health; right of every individual to education; right to participate in cultural life.

Other UN documents relate to particular forms of human rights abuses[46].

The European system for the protection of human rights and the Council of Europe instruments play an important role in the promotion and regulation of human rights. Their legal source is the **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** (**ECHR**, 1950) with 13 additional protocols and the **European Social Charter** (1961) (Petrović, 2000). The general perception is that the human rights system established by ECHR is still the most advanced and most effective of all existing documents (Burgental, 1997). Ratification of ECHR is a precondition to membership in the Council of Europe[47].

These and additional documents regulate the rights of individuals in general, as well as particular rights of individuals in specific situations: rights of refugees, victims of war, stateless persons, members of minority groups, etc. Defining human rights in legal regulations is ongoing, while initiatives are enhanced to promote and raise awareness about human rights, especially in the light of fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And while the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993, under the slogan "All human rights for all", was stressing that cultural and religious differences must not be a pretext for deficient implementation of international obligations in the field of human rights, as well as proclaiming the decade of human rights education (1995-2004), in the immediate vicinity, in former SFRY republics, the human rights principles were being suspended for over two million refugees and internally displaced people.

[46] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)
International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973)
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

[47] Other most important documents of the Council of Europe:
European Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987)
Final Helsinki Act (1975) and Paris Charter for the New Europe (1990)
European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages (1992)
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1994)
European Union Charter on Fundamental Rights (2001)

## NORMATIVE AND FACTUAL IN HUMAN RIGHTS

Implementation and regulation of the principles for human rights protection advance much slower than their definition. States parties to these legal acts have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, to prevent violence, discrimination and other forms of human rights violations on their territory. They are obliged to incorporate in their national legislation the norms corresponding to regulations of the adopted international conventions, as well as ensure that the proclaimed rights are not restricted or denied. Domestic legal system of a country possess necessary mechanisms for exercising compromised rights before administrative and judicial bodies. Human rights are therefore best protected by legislative provisions of the state and its effective implementation (Petrović, 2003).

In order to ensure the implementation of obligations by states parties, for most international conventions and covenants an international monitoring mechanism was introduced, through the system of periodic reporting by the states, complaints procedures for individuals before international courts in case of violation of their rights by a state, as well as possibility of legal action of one state party against another. Besides the regulation procedures contained in the respective human rights instruments, there are mechanisms based on the UN Charter, establishing the work of the Human Rights Commission and its rapporteurs. The scope of activities and the mechanisms for human rights monitoring are well illustrated by the fact that there are close to 40 specific institutions collecting information within their respective domains (Benedek, 2003). Monitoring through specific procedures is envisaged for cases of mass and systematic violations of human rights. Special missions of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) are established in countries at high risk. Such missions in then territory of former Yugoslavia had been opened in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia (until end 2002) Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, etc. Missions of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), also active in all countries of the region, supervise and develop the domains of human and minority rights and freedoms, rule of law, democratic institutions and values, free elections, etc.

Non-governmental organisations also work in the protection and promotion of human rights. Prominent NGOs in this field are Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, International Crises Group, International Helsinki Federation, Minority Rights Group International and others. They analyse the level of harmonisation of national legislation with international standards, monitor the situation of human rights and actions by state authorities, collect data and documentation on cases of abuse, prepare reports with the view of advocacy and influencing the public, governments and international community.

## HUMAN RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED IN THE REGION

Tens of relevant local NGOs in the region also engage in monitoring and protection of human rights and implement their cross-border activities through regional networks[48]. Their annual and periodical reports and analyses also indicate human rights violations against refugees, both in national legislation of respective states and in practice. Issues mentioned in the reports reveal the violation of an array of civil and socio-economic rights, which is a common fate of refugees in the region regardless of their ethnicity (return of private property allocated to temporary users, lost tenancy rights, right to reconstruction of destroyed or damaged property, compensation for damages, pension, health care and social welfare rights, personal documents, right to citizenship, security, etc.) (Ećimović et al. 2004).

Possibility to exercise basic rights of refugees, both in the country of origin and that of asylum will influence their decision on integration or return. In its latest reports, Human Rights Watch states that return of Serb refugees to Croatia has been largely slowed and impeded primarily because they cannot exercise their basic rights in the country of origin. Failure of state systems to actively engage in resolving manifold problems, primarily return and/or reconstruction of property, prevention of further devastation and the provision of compensation for damages, problem of denied tenancy rights and ensuring proper alternative accommodation, discrimination in employment, compensation for unpaid pensions and social benefits, problems of physical security, intimidation, arrests and indictments for war crimes on ethnic grounds. This not only creates impunity for human rights violations that occurred during and after the war, but also protract the violation of basic minority rights (HRW 2003, HRW 2004).

Administrative and legal bodies on both state and local level are seen as mechanisms of prolonging or obstruction rather than as ways of exercising violated rights before administrative and judicial bodies (MRGI, 2003).

Promotion of return of refugees and the displaced, as well as the property restitution process, implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina and supervised by the Office of the High Representative (OHR) are evaluated as successful, but real return is burdened with many other unresolved issues: right to work and employment, right to reconstruction of and compensation for devastated property, discrimination in social, economic and cultural rights, participation in public sector, issues of security, etc. (Ivanišević, 2003). State entities, federation BIH and Republika Srpska differ in their relation toward returnees, available assistance programmes and consistency in implementing the return of property; many OHR reports indicate that Republika Srpska is lagging behind.

[48] For instance, BHRN - Balkan Human Rights Network, Legal Issues Group (LIG) of the SEE RAN network for assistance to refugees in Southeast Europe, SEE HRC network and others.

In Serbia as the country of asylum, refugees have also faced discrimination and violation of their basic rights. In the long period of exile there was a striking lack of a system for legal protection or compensation by the state for cases of violence, threat to life and security, forced mobilisation, etc; the right to free choice of residence and freedom of movement was restricted, the process of issuing personal documents and obtaining citizenship was slowed down[49]. Local NGOs estimate that refugees have very limited access to labour market, social and health care services (Papić, Dimitrijević, 2004). The problem of housing for refugees has become acute with the national strategy envisaging closure of collective centres.

## QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The only quantitative research[50] to date on the issue of human rights has been conducted since 1998 by the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights and published within its annual report on human rights in Serbia and Montenegro.[51] The situation of "human rights in the legal consciousness of citizens" is evaluated through the knowledge of citizens about human rights, their awareness about specific rights and assessment of possibility of exercising human rights by SaM citizens.

According to data from the latest research in July 2004, up to 71% of the 1683 respondents believe that exercising of human rights in SaM is more difficult than in previous years. There is also an increased concern of citizens about poor economic situation, where the right to work and choice of employment is stated as the most problematic: 55% of respondents think this right is not respected in SaM, 46% that the right to equality before law is not respected, 35% believe that right to social welfare and other socio-economic rights are compromised. In addition, 25% of respondents think that right to life is not respected in SaM.

Assessment of human rights implementation is slightly more favourable when viewed from personal experience than in judging the overall degree of violations within the population as a whole. Nevertheless, every third respondent (31%) believes that he is able to exercise his rights. Confidence in judicial institutions and their mechanisms of protection in cases of human right abuse is lower than in 2003 (14%); respondents would rarely seek protection before

[49] Only by end of December 2004, Serbian Parliament adopted the new Law on Citizenship, making it easier for refugees to obtain citizenhip.

[50] Belgrade Centre for Human Rights and Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute have been conducting a public opinion research in SaM on the representative sample of voting citizens. Methodology used in this work is the well-known KOL research ("Knowledge and Opinion about Law"). Public opinion research is conducted based on methodology by Charles Humana. It looks at views of citizens using standardised questionnaires with limited number of choice answers. (Papić, Dimitrijević, 2004)

[51] Formerly "Human Rights in Yugoslavia 2002" (Papić, Dimitrijević, 2003)

domestic courts (27%) or international courts (11%); higher number of respondents (38%) believes that in such cases it is best to seek help through informal channels and ensure protection by powerful individuals (Dimitrijević, 2005).

This research does not include refugees and other stateless persons in SaM.

## A NEW MODEL OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH OF HUMAN RIGHTS STATUS

The way of looking at the status of human rights presented in this article differs somewhat from the standard ways of reporting on human rights violations.

The nature of this research (quantitative, with battery of tests with predominantly closed questions, large number of respondents and limited time for conducting it) influenced the approach chosen by authors. An instrument was created that registers the status of human rights based on answers to 45 questions on violations of human rights stemming from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents defining the list of basic human rights.

Then we faced another problem regarding the nature of data obtained in this way, i.e. whether this information tells us about facts or about the subjective experience of our respondents. Therefore a specific manner of administering this instrument was introduced, requiring it to be applied only in the form of an interview conducted by researcher with the respondent. Initial answer of the respondent to each question was related to his/her **subjective feeling of rights violation** described in the respective items. Together with subjective assessment whether he/she has been subjected to violation of human rights, the respondent describes, either on own accord or prompted by further questions of the researcher, event or events and states basic facts in more detail:

- Where did this occur (Serbia, Croatia, BiH Federation, Republika Srpska)?
- When (before 1991-92 war, during the war, after the war or during past several years)?
- What exactly occurred and who is the perpetrator (army, police, judiciary, state administration, medical staff, group of citizens or individuals)?

Based on this information the interviewer evaluates if there are enough indicators of a concrete human rights violation case, which is registered as a separate variable. In this respect, the **objective indicator of specific human rights violation** is operationalised in this instrument through the assessment of interviewer whether there is enough information about the violation of human right given under each respective item.

Data obtained in this way represent estimations based on immediate experience of respondents and violation of their own human rights, which are often neither reported nor registered in official records and statistics.

In this respect the instrument resembles victimisation surveys, which attempt to bridge the gap between "real" and "official" crime and criminal-legal statistics by registering immediate experience of respondents (Zvekić, 2001).

## RESULTS

### Structure of the questionnaire

Given that we have applied a completely new approach and instrument in this research, we shall begin by presenting its structure and dimensions it is meant to measure. By analysing key components from the list of human rights violations we have extracted four independent factors. Table 1 gives the overview of saturation by questionnaire items through abstracted factors.

Table 1: *Factor structure of the questionnaire*

| QUESTION | FACTOR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Would it be possible for a member of your ethnicity to be elected to important function? | ,748 | | | |
| Has your freedom of movement been restricted? | ,564 | | | |
| Do you feel that due to your origin you are not treated as other citizens when you appeal to state bodies? | ,529 | | | |
| Have you been prevented from settling where you wanted because of your ethnic origin? | ,525 | | | |
| Have you ever been insulted or humiliated by state bodies because of your ethnic origin? | ,516 | | | |
| Do you think that members of your ethnicity could get respected and well paid jobs? | ,507 | | | |
| Have you been prevented from going to your place of worship and/or publicly displaying your religion? | ,503 | | | |
| Have you been denied a job due to your ethnic origin? | ,480 | | | |
| If you have the right to health care, do you exercise it? | ,407 | | | |
| Are you afraid to leave your place of residence because many others who have done so have been subjected to ill treatment and harassment? | ,401 | | | |
| Was your property ever or is it still illicitly occupied by other people? | ,351 | | | |

| QUESTION | FACTOR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have you been denied the right to compensation of damages inflicted by the state? | ,320 | | | |
| If you have underage children, do they have a possibility to choose their own religious education? | ,316 | | | |
| Are you able to obtain personal documents, passport? | | | | |
| If you have underage children, can they be educated in their native language? | | | | |
| Have you been denied the use of your native language for official purposes (before state bodies, in courts, etc.)? | | | | |
| Have you or your family members been denied the right to citizenship? | | | | |
| Have you been unable to repossess your property despite rulings by the court? | | | | |
| Have you been coerced into joining an organisation / association / party, against your will? | | | | |
| If you have the right to pension, do you receive it? | | | | |
| Were you ever denied employment because of your sex? | | | | |
| Have you been arrested, humiliated or tortured because of your ethnic background? | | ,699 | | |
| Have you been arrested without an official warrant? | | ,695 | | |
| Have you ever been detained without having been told on what grounds? | | ,677 | | |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of your religious affiliation? | | ,673 | | |
| Have you been tried before a court without being assigned an attorney and given the possibility to prepare your defence? | | ,491 | | |
| Have you ever been denied the right to appeal / complaint? | | ,433 | | |
| Have you been convicted in absentia or without right to defence? | | ,425 | | |
| Have you been subjected to forced labour? | | ,396 | | |
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | | ,386 | | |
| Has the police ever searched your apartment without a warrant issued by court? | | ,344 | | |
| Have you attempts to organise yourselves in protection of your rights and interests ever been declared as hostile activity by the media, police or politicians? | | | ,601 | |

| QUESTION | FACTOR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have you ever been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of your political opinion? | | | ,599 | |
| Have you ever been detained because of partaking in rallies and demonstrations? | | | ,539 | |
| Have you ever been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of something you've said or written? | | | ,505 | |
| Do you think you have been followed, had your phone tapped or mail reviewed by the police? | | | ,412 | |
| Was there a secret indictment against you? | | | ,393 | |
| Has ever a court made a less favourable decision in your case then in other similar cases only due to your ethnic origin? | | | ,336 | |
| Were you paid less for same work than your fellow citizens? | | | | |
| Has your right to vote been restricted? | | | | |
| If you have underage children, do they have necessary conditions for education? | | | | ,680 |
| If you have the right to social welfare, do you receive it? | | | | ,545 |
| If you have underage children, do they have to work in order for the family to make a living? | | | | ,523 |
| If you have the right to child welfare compensation, do you receive it? | | | | ,512 |
| Have you ever been denied adequate medical service due to your ethnic origin? | | | | |

As the table shows, the first factor relates to **discrimination on ethnic grounds** and contains questions regarding discrimination in employment or promotion, restriction of freedom of movement and choice of residence, humiliation on ethnic grounds by state bodies, impossibility to restore property and obtain compensation for damages.

The second factor describes **intimidation by police** *on ethnic grounds:* detention, arrest, denying the right to fair trial and other rights in criminal proceedings, apartment search, abuse, threat to life, police-inflicted torture and forced labour.

*Accusations and detention for* **political offence**, political opinions, self-organising, freedom of opinion and speech, describe the third factor of human rights violations. It also contains questions related to surveillance by police and existence of secret indictments.

Fourth factor relates to **cultural, economic and social rights**: lack of possibility of education for children, denied right to social welfare or child compensation, denied health care.

In relation to the content of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and categories of human rights defined therein we can conclude that the second and third factor in our instrument largely correspond to civil and political rights, fourth factor covers the category of economic, social and cultural rights, while discrimination on ethnic grounds stands out as a separate factor in our research.

## Status of human rights

Results of our research show that a significant percentage of respondents from all categories report on violations of their human rights. The degree of violations are expressed through frequency or percentage of respondents who state their perception of having at least one of their human rights violated, i.e. give an affirmative answer to at least on of the 45 items of the questionnaire. These degrees are then discussed from the perspective of civil status of respondents and country/entity where the violation has occurred.

Table 2: *Percentage of respondents reporting on human rights violations against them, i.e. giving affirmative answers to issues in questionnaire*

| | Frequency | Percentage | Cumulative percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| No violation | 557 | 37,1% | 37,1% |
| 1 | 238 | 15,8% | 52,9% |
| 2 | 211 | 14,0% | 67,0% |
| 3 | 110 | 7,3% | 74,3% |
| 4 | 87 | 5,8% | 80,1% |
| 5 | 78 | 5,2% | 85,3% |
| 6-10 | 169 | 11,2% | 96,5% |
| 11-15 | 34 | 2,3% | 98,8% |
| 16-20 | 11 | 0,7% | 99,5% |
| 21-31 | 7 | 0,5% | 100% |

Slightly over one third of respondents (37,1%) report their human rights have not been violated. Most of respondents report on limited violation of their rights, while 20% of them have experienced mass violation of four or more human rights.

Table 3: *Frequency and percentage*[52] *of statements on human rights violations in relation to civil status of respondents and country/entity where violation occurs*

| | Returnee | Refugee | Local population | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federation BiH | 490<br>53,67% | 306<br>33,52% | 117<br>12,81% | 913<br>100% |
| Republika Srpska | 671<br>46,37% | 730<br>50,45% | 46<br>3,18% | 1447<br>100% |
| Croatia | 295<br>32,07% | 474<br>51,52% | 151<br>16,41% | 920<br>100% |
| Serbia | 34<br>18,78% | 86<br>47,51% | 61<br>33,70% | 181<br>100% |
| Total | 1490<br>43.05% | 1596<br>46,11% | 375<br>10,85% | 3461<br>100% |

Most respondents report on their experience of human rights violation in Republika Srpska, where 1447 reported cases makes up to 41,8% of all registered human rights violations. Almost the same number of violations is found in Croatia (920 or 26,58%) and Federation BiH (913 or 26,38%). Smaller number of human rights violations against the sample of our respondents occurred in Serbia (181 or 5,23%).

Relative frequency of human rights violations in Federation BiH is highest among returnees, followed by refugees and local population.

Republika Srpska is characterized by very low presence of local population (3,18%) in the overall number of human rights violations, while refugee and returnee population are almost equally represented (46,37% and 51,2%) in the overall number of human rights violations in Republika Srpska.

Violations of human rights in Croatia are reported mainly by refugees, in 51,52% of cases with respect to all human rights violations in Croatia.

In Serbia, probably due to the fact that there have been no inter-ethnic conflicts on its territory, human rights violations are less prominent; nevertheless, it is mostly refugees who report on human rights violations, followed by local population, while the smallest number is among respondents who are now returnees to their pre-war residence, but have spent their exile in Serbia.

It is interesting to view this information in relation to the current civil status of respondents. *Proportions of human rights violations are significantly higher among migrants, i.e. respondents with refugee experience regardless of whether they are still in this status or have returned to their pre-war residence, than among local population that has not migrated.* Table 4 shows mean numbers

[52] Percentage was calculated in relation to the overall number of reported human rights violations in each country/entity

of subjective impressions of human rights violations and deviation from mean by sub-groups within the sample: returnees, refugees and local population. While the mean number of human rights violation within overall sample is 2,5 these levels are much higher among returnees and refugees, going above 3,2 violations, with a higher variability within respective sub-groups, indicating more multiple human rights violation cases among refugees and returnees.

Table 4: *Subjective impression of human rights violation – arithmetic means and standard deviations for sub-groups: returnees, refugees and local population*

| | Returnee | | Refugee | | Local population | | Total | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | **F(2,1449)** |
| Subjective impression of human rights violation | 3,19 | 4,15 | 3,26 | 3,40 | ,87 | 1,64 | 2,50 | 3,47 | **821,63** |

Most of human rights violations, according to perception of our respondents, had occurred during and immediately after the war. Within past year far less perceived violations are recorded, although this level is still higher then before the war. A total of 43,3% of all statements on human rights violations in the past year relate to Republika Srpska, where this level is still much higher than before the war. Impression of human rights violations during past year among our respondents in Federation BiH as well as in Serbia is only slightly higher than before the war. In Croatia this percentage is even lower that before the war.

Table 5: *Frequency and percentage of statements on experience of human rights violation with regard to period and country/entity of occurrence*

| | Before the war | During the war | After the war | In the past year | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Federation BiH | 69<br>7,61% | 345<br>38,04% | 414<br>45,64% | 79<br>8,71% | 907<br>100% |
| Republika Srpska | 14<br>0,98% | 847<br>59,48% | 407<br>28,58% | 156<br>10,96% | 1424<br>100% |
| Croatia | 115<br>12,67% | 359<br>39,54% | 342<br>37,67% | 92<br>10,13% | 908<br>100% |
| Serbia | 20<br>10,26% | 48<br>24,62% | 94<br>48,21% | 33<br>16,92% | 195<br>100% |
| Total | 218<br>6,35% | 1599<br>46, 56% | 1257<br>36,60% | 360<br>10,46% | 3434<br>100% |

Missing data 27

Table 6: *Frequency and percentage of statements on experience of human rights violation with regard to perceived perpetrator and country/entity of occurrence*

| | Federation BiH | Republika Srpska | Croatia | Serbia |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Army | 176<br>19,41% | 345<br>24,29% | 116<br>12,82% | 26<br>13,51% |
| Police | 126<br>13,97% | 215<br>15,17% | 196<br>21,59% | 57<br>29,35% |
| Court | 41<br>4,61% | 46<br>3,28% | 72<br>7,97% | 10<br>5,45% |
| Administration | 337<br>37,24% | 497<br>34,93% | 275<br>30,37% | 53<br>27,53% |
| Medical staff | 8<br>0,98% | 9<br>0,66% | 3<br>0,40% | 1<br>0,78% |
| Group of citizens | 36<br>4,00% | 62<br>4,40% | 52<br>5,75% | 9<br>4,68% |
| Individuals | 179<br>19,79% | 245<br>17,27% | 191<br>21,09% | 36<br>18,70% |
| **TOTAL** | 903<br>100,00% | 1419<br>100,00% | 905<br>100,00% | 192<br>100,00% |

Missing data 42

The most frequent perpetrators of these incidents in all countries and for all categories of respondents, are said to be the administration, army, police and individuals. According to the perception of our respondents violations are also perpetrated by courts, groups of citizens and to a lesser extent medical staff.

The role of state and its bodies in violation of human rights is evident for all categories of respondents. The sense of vulnerability is higher when violations are perpetrated by state representatives who are supposed to protect these rights. We shall illustrate this by a full analysis of one question, indicating the lack of citizens' confidence in state services and the ineffectiveness of human rights protection through mechanisms of criminal law in respective states.

Up to 20% of respondents stated they have *been attacked or their lives were threatened on ethnic grounds*. The highest percentage of these reports relate to Republika Srpska (9,3%), followed by Croatia (6,7%) and Federation BiH (3,8%).

Table 7a: *Number and percentage of respondents reporting on incidents of assault or life threat due to ethnic background, by respective state/entity of occurrence*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | yes | Federation BiH | 57 | 3,8% |
| | | Republika Srpska | 139 | 9,3% |
| | | Croatia | 100 | 6,7% |
| | | Serbia | 5 | 0,3% |
| | | TOTAL | 301 | 20,0% |
| | no | | 1098 | 73,1% |
| | missing data | | 103 | 6,9% |

Most assaults on ethnic grounds or direct threat to life occurred during the war; this is reported by 4,5% of respondents. In the post-war period, percentage of such incidents (3,4%) is higher than before the war (1,6%), while 0,5% of respondents have been subjected to assault or felt a threat to life during past year.

Table 7b: *Number and percentage of respondents reporting on incidents of assault or life threat due to ethnic background, by period of occurrence*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | yes | Before the war | 25 | 1,6% |
| | | During the war | 218 | 14,5% |
| | | After the war | 51 | 3,4% |
| | | In the past year | 7 | 0,5% |
| | | TOTAL | 301 | 20,0% |
| | no | | 1098 | 73,1% |
| | missing data | | 103 | 6,9% |

Most frequently stated perpetrator of these incidents is the army (8,7%), followed by individuals (6,2%) or groups of citizens (3,0%), while police (1,7%) and other state services appear more rarely in this context.

Table 7c: *Number and percentage of respondents reporting on incidents of assault or life threat due to ethnic background, by respective perpetrator*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | yes | Army | 131 | 8,7% |
| | | Police | 26 | 1,7% |
| | | Individuals | 92 | 6,1% |
| | | Group of citizens | 44 | 2,9% |
| | | Other | 9 | 0,6% |
| | | TOTAL | 301 | 20,0% |
| | no | | 1098 | 73,1% |
| | missing data | | 103 | 6,9% |

In over 90% of cases when the respondents state their subjective impression of life threat due to ethnic origin, interviewers have assessed, based on provided descriptions and details, that there are enough objective indicators of basic rights violation. Nevertheless, out of 301 respondents who have been subjected to this, only every fifth had reported it to the police, while the police has undertaken an investigation in 50% of reported cases. In 26 cases the perpetrator was found, in eight he was legally prosecuted and only in 6 cases perpetrators were convicted.

Table 8: *Number of respondents reporting on their impression of the threat to life, by country/entity where the violation occurred and by civil status*

| | | Civil status | | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Returnee | Refugee | Local population | |
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | Federation BiH | 27 (47,37%) | 19 (33,33%) | 11 (19,30%) | 301 |
| | Republika Srpska | 43 (30,94%) | 92 (66,19%) | 4 (2,88%) | |
| | Croatia | 34 (34,00%) | 41 (41,00%) | 25 (25,00%) | |
| | Serbia | 2 (40,00%) | 2 (40,00%) | 1 (20,00%) | |

| | | Civil status | | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Returnee | Refugee | Local population | |
| Did you report the incident to the police? | Federation BiH | 11* | 7* | 0* | 64 |
| | Republika Srpska | 6* | 0* | 0* | |
| | Croatia | 13 | 7 | 12 | |
| | Serbia | | 8* | 0* | |
| Did the police undertake an investigation? | Federation BiH | 8* | 2* | 0* | 31 |
| | Republika Srpska | 6 | 0 | | |
| | Croatia | 7 | 3 | 4 | |
| | Serbia | | 1 | | |
| Was the perpetrator found? | Federation BiH | 5 | 2 | 1 | 26 |
| | Republika Srpska | 3 | 0 | | |
| | Croatia | 4 | 1 | 7 | |
| | Serbia | | 3 | 0 | |
| Was the perpetrator legally prosecuted? | Federation BiH | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| | Republika Srpska | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Croatia | 2 | 0 | 1 | |
| | Serbia | 0 | 1 | 0 | |
| Was the perpetrator convicted? | Federation BiH | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| | Republika Srpska | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Croatia | 2 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Serbia | 0 | 1 | 0 | |

*Statistical significance of difference on level 0.05, Cramer's V

Similar analyses are possible for all other items in the human rights status questionnaire.

At the end of this chapter we shall give the list of human rights questionnaire items and the overview of frequencies (table 9) and percentages of respondents (table 9a) reporting on their subjective impression of violation of their human rights, classified by civil status of respondents and countries/entities where the violation took place.

Main areas of human rights violations reported by our respondents relate to the following:

- Loss of property, impossibility to repossess usurped property and to get compensation for destroyed or damaged property;
- Discrimination, humiliation on ethnic grounds;
- Restricted freedom of movement and choice of residence;
- Impossibility of employment; impossibility to be promoted at work and get respected, well paid jobs and public office;
- Impossibility to exercise pension and health care rights;
- Threat to physical security or threat to life; detention, arrest, humiliation and torture;
- Violation of right to privacy
- Impossibility to exercise religious and cultural rights.

This summary overview shows that data obtained through the questionnaire for rapid assessment of human rights status are in accordance with areas of human rights violations identified in reports by international and local NGOs that follow legislation and practice of the states in the region.

Table 9: *Subjective impression of human rights violation – Number of respondents reporting on their impression of violation of their human rights, by civil status and country/entity*

| QUESTION | Federation BIH | | | | Republika Srpska | | | | Croatia | | | | Serbia | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
| Was your property ever or is it still illicitly occupied by other people? | **115** | **76** | **6** | 197 | **84** | **109** | **8** | 201 | **55** | **72** | **7** | 134 | | | **6** | 6 |
| Have you been unable to repossess your property despite rulings by the court? | **28** | **13** | **1** | 42 | **17** | **18** | **1** | 36 | **10** | **10** | | 20 | | | **2** | 2 |
| Have you been denied the right to compensation of damages inflicted by the state? | **37** | **39** | **11** | 87 | **35** | **61** | **4** | 100 | **26** | **41** | **10** | 77 | | **1** | **6** | 7 |
| Have you been denied the use of your native language for official purposes (before state bodies, in court, etc.)? | **1** | **2** | **1** | 4 | **6** | **6** | | 12 | **5** | **10** | **3** | 18 | | **1** | | 1 |
| Have you been prevented from going to your place of worship and/or publicly displaying your religion? | **1** | **4** | **2** | 7 | **24** | **24** | | 48 | **2** | **7** | | 9 | | | **2** | 2 |
| Has your right to vote been restricted? | **1** | **3** | | 4 | **8** | **7** | | 15 | **7** | **5** | | 12 | | **10** | **1** | 11 |
| Have you been insulted and humiliated by state bodies due to your ethnic background? | **16** | **7** | **3** | 26 | **28** | **31** | **2** | 61 | **14** | **27** | **12** | 53 | **1** | **3** | | 4 |

| QUESTION | Federation BIH | | | | Republika Srpska | | | | Croatia | | | | Serbia | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
| Do you feel that due to your origin you are not treated as other citizens when you appeal to state bodies? | **38** | **16** | **1** | 55 | **32** | **28** | **3** | 63 | **28** | **21** | **9** | 58 | | **14** | **1** | 15 |
| Have you ever been detained because of partaking in rallies and demonstrations? | **1** | | | 1 | **1** | **1** | | 2 | | **1** | | 1 | **1** | | **1** | 2 |
| Have you been coerced into joining an organisation / association / party, against your will? | | | **1** | 1 | **1** | | | 1 | **1** | **5** | | 6 | | **1** | **3** | 4 |
| Have you attempts to organise yourselves in protection of your rights and interests ever been declared as hostile activity by the media, police or politicians? | **6** | **1** | **1** | 8 | **14** | | | 14 | | **6** | **3** | 9 | **3** | **1** | **5** | 9 |
| If you have underage children, do they have necessary conditions for education? | **2** | **8** | **1** | 11 | **8** | **1** | | 9 | **2** | | **1** | 3 | | | **2** | 2 |
| If you have underage children, do they have to work in order for the family to make a living? | **1** | **7** | | 8 | **2** | **2** | | 4 | | | **1** | 1 | | **2** | | 2 |
| If you have underage children, can they be educated in their native language? | **4** | | | 4 | **7** | **1** | | 8 | **7** | | **4** | 11 | | **1** | | 1 |

| QUESTION | Federation BIH | | | | Republika Srpska | | | | Croatia | | | | Serbia | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
| If you have underage children, do they have a possibility to choose their own religious education? | **3** | | | 3 | **6** | | | 6 | | | **2** | 2 | | **1** | | 1 |
| Have you or your family members been denied the right to citizenship? | **1** | | **1** | 2 | **4** | | | 4 | **6** | **6** | **2** | 14 | | **2** | **1** | 3 |
| Are you able to get personal documents, passport? | | | **1** | 1 | **5** | | | 5 | **2** | **4** | | 6 | | | | 0 |
| Has your freedom of movement ever been restricted? | **9** | **11** | **11** | 31 | **32** | **29** | **3** | 64 | | **12** | **1** | 13 | **1** | **1** | **1** | 3 |
| Are you afraid to leave your place of residence because many others who have done so have been subjected to ill treatment and harassment? | **10** | **9** | **4** | 23 | **22** | **36** | **5** | 63 | **3** | **24** | | 27 | **1** | **3** | **2** | 6 |
| Have you been prevented from settling where you wanted because of your ethnic origin? | **4** | **16** | **1** | 21 | **32** | **48** | | 80 | **3** | **32** | **2** | 37 | **1** | **4** | **3** | 8 |
| Have you been denied a job due to your ethnic origin? | **24** | **9** | **3** | 36 | **29** | **12** | | 41 | **14** | **20** | **10** | 44 | **1** | **8** | **3** | 12 |
| Were you paid less for same work than your fellow citizens? | **1** | **3** | **3** | 7 | **6** | **1** | | 7 | **1** | **4** | **2** | 7 | **1** | **4** | | 5 |
| Were you ever denied employment because of your sex? | **1** | **6** | | 7 | **1** | **1** | | 2 | | **2** | **1** | 3 | | | **1** | 1 |

| QUESTION | Federation BIH | | | | Republika Srpska | | | | Croatia | | | | Serbia | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
| Would it be possible for a member of your ethnicity to be elected to important function? | **15** | **2** | **3** | 20 | **31** | **4** | **1** | 36 | **3** | **9** | **1** | 13 | | **5** | | 5 |
| Do you think that members of your ethnicity could get respected and well paid jobs? | **21** | **1** | **7** | 29 | **33** | **15** | **1** | 49 | **10** | **11** | **2** | 23 | | **1** | | 1 |
| If you have right to pension, are you receiving it? | **32** | **2** | **1** | 35 | **2** | | **1** | 3 | | **3** | | 3 | | | | 0 |
| If you have right to social welfare, are you receiving it? | **3** | **7** | **3** | 13 | **8** | | | 8 | | | | 0 | **1** | **1** | | 2 |
| If you have right to child welfare compensation, are you receiving it? | | **6** | **5** | 11 | **2** | | | 2 | | | | | | **1** | | 1 |
| If you have right to health care, do you exercise it? | **18** | **2** | **3** | 23 | **19** | **1** | **5** | 25 | **4** | | | 4 | | | **2** | 2 |
| Have you ever been denied adequate medical service due to your ethnic origin? | **2** | **2** | | 4 | **4** | **3** | **1** | 8 | | | | 0 | | **3** | | 3 |
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | **27** | **19** | **11** | 57 | **43** | **92** | **4** | 139 | **34** | **41** | **25** | 100 | **2** | **2** | **1** | 5 |
| Have you ever been detained without having been told on what grounds? | **4** | **2** | **1** | 7 | **13** | **27** | **1** | 41 | **6** | **8** | **8** | 22 | **1** | **2** | **7** | 10 |

| QUESTION | Federation BIH | | | | Republika Srpska | | | | Croatia | | | | Serbia | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
| Have you been arrested without an official warrant? | **3** | **1** | | 4 | **15** | **16** | **1** | 32 | **11** | **10** | **4** | 25 | **5** | **4** | **3** | 12 |
| Have you been arrested, humiliated or tortured because of your ethnic background? | **9** | **6** | **2** | 17 | **16** | **36** | | 52 | **13** | **14** | **14** | 41 | **6** | **2** | | 8 |
| Have you been tried before a court without being assigned an attorney and given the possibility to prepare your defence? | | | | 0 | **3** | **2** | | 5 | | **5** | | 5 | | | **1** | 1 |
| Have you been convicted in absentia or without right to defence? | | | | 0 | **2** | **2** | | 4 | **1** | **3** | | 4 | | | | 0 |
| Have you ever been denied the right to appeal / complaint? | **3** | **5** | | 8 | **8** | **7** | **2** | 17 | **2** | **3** | **1** | 6 | | **2** | **1** | 3 |
| Has ever a court made a less favourable decision in your case then in other similar cases only due to your ethnic origin? | **3** | **1** | | 4 | **4** | **1** | | 5 | **6** | **3** | **3** | 12 | **1** | **2** | | 3 |
| Do you think you have been followed, had your phone tapped or mail reviewed by the police? | **13** | **6** | **4** | 23 | **13** | **23** | | 36 | **11** | **19** | **15** | 45 | **2** | | **5** | 7 |
| Has the police ever searched your apartment without a warrant issued by court? | **28** | **3** | **19** | 50 | **10** | **28** | **1** | 39 | **4** | **11** | **4** | 19 | **1** | **4** | | 5 |

| QUESTION | Federation BIH | | | | Republika Srpska | | | | Croatia | | | | Serbia | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total | Returnees | Refugees | Local population | Total |
| Was there a secret indictment against you? | | | **2** | 2 | **2** | | | 2 | **1** | **7** | **1** | 9 | **1** | | | 1 |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of your religious affiliation? | **4** | **5** | **1** | 10 | **24** | **34** | | 58 | **2** | **12** | **2** | 16 | | | | 0 |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of your political opinion? | **1** | **1** | | 2 | **2** | **3** | **1** | 6 | | **2** | **1** | 3 | **2** | | **1** | 3 |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of something you said or wrote? | | **4** | **1** | 5 | **3** | **1** | | 4 | | **3** | | 3 | **1** | | | 1 |
| Have you been subjected to forced labour? | | **1** | **2** | 3 | **10** | **19** | **1** | 30 | **1** | **1** | | 2 | **1** | | | 1 |
| **Total** | **490** | **306** | **117** | 913 | **671** | **730** | **46** | 1447 | **295** | **474** | **151** | 920 | **34** | **86** | **61** | 181 |

Table 9a: *Subjective impression of human rights violation – percentage of respondents reporting on their impression of violation of their human rights, by civil status and country/entity*

| | **Returnee %* | *Refugee %* | *Local %* | ***FBiH%* | *RS %* | *Cro %* | *Ser %* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Was your property ever or is it still illicitly occupied by other people? | 36 | 46 | 5 | 16 | 17 | 11 | 1 |
| Have you been unable to repossess your property despite rulings by the court? | 6 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Have you been denied the right to compensation of damages inflicted by the state? | 14 | 25 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Have you been denied the use of your native language for official purposes (before state bodies, in court, etc.)? | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Have you been prevented from going to your place of worship and/or publicly displaying your religion? | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Has your right to vote been restricted? | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Have you been insulted and humiliated by state bodies due to your ethnic background? | 9 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Do you feel that due to your origin you are not treated as other citizens when you appeal to state bodies? | 13 | 14 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Have you ever been detained because of partaking in rallies and demonstrations? | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you been coerced into joining an organisation / association / party, against your will? | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you attempts to organise yourselves in protection of your rights and interests ever been declared as hostile activity by the media, police or politicians? | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| If you have underage children, do they have necessary conditions for education? | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| If you have underage children, do they have to work in order for the family to make a living? | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| If you have underage children, can they be educated in their native language? | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| If you have underage children, do they have a possibility to choose their own religious education? | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you or your family members been denied the right to citizenship? | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

| | **Returnee %* | *Refugee %* | *Local %* | ***FBiH%* | *RS %* | *Cro %* | *Ser %* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Are you able to get personal documents, passport? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Has your freedom of movement ever been restricted? | 7 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| Are you afraid to leave your place of residence because many others who have done so have been subjected to ill treatment and harassment? | 5 | 14 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| Have you been prevented from settling where you wanted because of your ethnic origin? | 7 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Have you been denied a job due to your ethnic origin? | 10 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Were you paid less for same work than your fellow citizens? | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Were you ever denied employment because of your sex? | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Would it be possible for a member of your ethnicity to be elected to important function? | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Do you think that members of your ethnicity could get respected and well paid jobs? | | | | | | | |
| If you have right to pension, are you receiving it? | 9 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| If you have right to social welfare, are you receiving it? | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| If you have right to child welfare compensation, are you receiving it? | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| If you have right to health care, do you exercise it? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you ever been denied adequate medical service due to your ethnic origin? | 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you ever been assaulted or was your life in danger because of your ethnic origin? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you ever been detained without having been told on what grounds? | 17 | 30 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 7 | 0 |
| Have you been arrested without an official warrant? | 4 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Have you been arrested, humiliated or tortured because of your ethnic background? | 6 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Have you been tried before a court without being assigned an attorney and given the possibility to prepare your defence? | 7 | 11 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

| | *Returnee % | Refugee % | Local % | **FBiH% | RS % | Cro % | Ser % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Have you been convicted in absentia or without right to defence? | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you ever been denied the right to appeal / complaint? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Has ever a court made a less favourable decision in your case then in other similar cases only due to your ethnic origin? | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Do you think you have been followed, had your phone tapped or mail reviewed by the police? | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Has the police ever searched your apartment without a warrant issued by court? | 5 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Was there a secret indictment against you? | 3 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of your religious affiliation? | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of your political opinion? | 5 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Have you been laid off, detained, arrested or tortured because of something you said or wrote? | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Have you been subjected to forced labour? | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Was your property ever or is it still illicitly occupied by other people? | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

- * percentage calculated in relation to sub-sample of returnees
- ** percentage calculated in relation to the overall number of valid data. Given that the sample contained a high proportion of refugees from BiH and Croatia and RS, the percentage is very high

## Objective and subjective in human rights

In this preliminary overview we have presented and discussed data based on subjective impressions of respondents about violation of their rights. Objective indicators of rights violations, obtained through assessment of interviewers on the credibility of respondent's statement and corroboration by concrete information about the case, are smaller in terms of percentage but follow all discussed analyses.

Depending on how a person in particular stages of his/her life expresses and fulfils own economic, social, political and other needs and affirms his/her national identity, his/her views on the state, society and their services, as well as the impression of how much their rights are exercised or violated, tend to change. In times of general sense of vulnerability, conflicts, massive plight, loss of property and expulsion or eviction of a part of the population, one can expect higher objective indicators of human rights violations, as well as a higher subjective impression that individual rights are violated. According to preliminary data in this research possible factors influencing the discrepancy between subjective impression and objective indicators of human rights violations can be sought in particular aspects of current living circumstances, stressful experiences, especially those linked with war, as well as their impact on the health of respondents and on some basic characteristics of their personality.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Research of the status of human rights, both related to the legal consciousness of citizens (knowledge of respondents about existence of human rights, ways of exercising and mechanisms for protecting them) and linked with their personal experience, i.e. subjective reality (assessment of respondents on the general violation of specific rights within population, their experiences with regard to their own rights violation) provide a rapid overview of the awareness about human rights and main areas in which violations occur. The questionnaire presented here allows these data to be complemented by qualitative information about specific incidents. Such research could be general – comprehensive or focused on particular topics. They can also be focused on populations or other vulnerable target groups. Most of such research exercises would enable the collection and systematic monitoring of relevant data about human rights violations, as well as an evaluation and improvements of instruments applied.
2. Main areas of human rights violations identified by this research coincide with incidents already pointed our by international and local NGOs. Violations occur in all categories of human rights, with most reported cases

falling under the wide array of *civil rights* – right to life, freedom and security of person, property rights – right to own and enjoy property, right to fair trial, right to privacy, freedom of movement and choice of residence, etc., followed by *social and economic rights* – right to social security, pension, social and health care insurance, right to work, access to labour market and rights from employment. Restrictions in exercising *political rights* are followed by drastic violations of basic civil rights (detention, arrest, humiliation and torture), while *discrimination on ethnic grounds* is practiced in many spheres of social and public life.

3. Much higher extent of human rights violations have been registered among the population with refugee experience. Violation of rights of refugees and returnees is much higher then among local population that had not migrated. Such tendencies are seen during the war, as well as in the post-war period. These data speak in favour of the statement that refugees and returnees are a population at particular risk, needing specific assistance in protection and exercising their rights in countries of origin and asylum, for a longer period of time after the war.

4. Confidence of all categories of respondents in state structures that are supposed to ensure protection of human rights is very low and the effectiveness of criminal-legal mechanisms is even lower. State bodies are most often stated as perpetrators of human rights violations. Relationship between citizens and state institutions in countries in transition merits particular attention and a separate research.

5. A very important yet uncovered field is a research into war victimisation and possibility of restorative justice for victims of war in the region[53]. Models of victimology surveys could be adapted for this type of research, while statements of respondents about ways of achieving justice and compensation could be an important guideline for reconciliation programmes in the region. Besides the civil sector, such programmes should also involve victims and their families, as well as state structures, in order to discontinue the long tradition of not acknowledging and denying war plight in former Yugoslavia.

[53] Authors would like to thank professor PhD Vesni Nikolić-Ristanović (Serbian Victimology Society, Belgrade) for her useful comments on results related to the human rights status of respondents in our research and for pointing out the possibility of a research concept of war victimisation.

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# ETHNIC DISTANCE AND ETHNIC STEREOTYPES AS FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DECISION ON REPATRIATION

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The theme of prejudices and stereotypes imposes a whole series of questions: Why do stereotypes appear? Should they be understood as a need of the individual to simplify reality (i.e. as an inexorable side-effect of the cognitive functioning) or as a tendency to penetrate behind the surface of information? Should we grasp stereotypical thinking as a response to some external frustration or as a reflection of some deeply hidden personal and motivational variables? Are stereotypes and prejudices a product of the evolutionary heritage or of some particular culture? The literature about stereotyping contains different answers to these questions, and good research summaries can be found in Smith (1993), Snyder & Miene (1994) and Stroebe & Insko (1989).

Without trying to be comprehensive and exhaustive, we can classify the factors that contribute to the creation and maintenance of stereotypes into several groups: 1) general principles of the functioning of the cognitive apparatus, b) personal socio-demographic characteristics, 3) factors that represent a consequence of individual motivation and personal characteristics of individuals.

General principles of the functioning of the cognitive apparatus, such as unconscious generalizations (Hill et al, 1989, 1990), establishment of illusory correlations between behavior and group membership (Hamilton et al, 1989, 1993; Mullen, Johnson, 1990), priming (i.e. the fact that previous experience determines the ways of hearing, seeing, interpreting, storing and using information) (Sedikides and Skowronski 1991), inclination to better memorize the stereotype-congruent than stereotype-incongruent information (Rojahn & Pettigrew 1992, Stangor & McMillan 1992) are the factors that generally affect stereotyping. Aside from them, the maintenance of stereotypes is highly dependent on the way of assessment of the motivation that lies behind the behavior of members of various groups. The

mechanism that Pettigrew (1979, in: Hewstone, 1990) labeled **"**the ultimate attribution error" implies attribution of bad intentions (internal locus of control) to the members of other groups when the consequences of their behavior are bad, and attribution of external locus of control when the consequences of their behavior are good, while the situation is quite opposite when our own group is in question – there, bad consequences have external causes while the good ones have internal causes. Hewstone (1990) mentions a series of empirical findings that go in support of this conception. Stereotype maintenance is also favored by the need to mutually harmonize the discrepant information we operate with (reduction of the cognitive dissonance - Festinger, 1957).

**Social characteristics of the individual**, such as social status, social mobility, occupational status and profession, educational level and residential status (city-village) are related with a general tendency towards tolerance or intolerance of other groups (Brown, 1965, Duckitt, 1994). When educational and professional statuses are taken into account, highly qualified intellectuals show the least ethnic distance. The highly educated have demonstrated a significantly weaker ethnocentrism than persons with secondary or elementary education. In a sample of American teenagers, Glock et al. (1975) have discovered that socio-economic and educational deprivation was highly associated with prejudices against Jews and Afro-Americans. Downward social mobility (descent on the social ladder) was often mentioned as a factor fostering the development of prejudices and stereotypes (frustration theory). In their study of War World Two veterans, Bettelheim and Janowitz (1964) have found that the strongest relationship was to be discovered between intolerance, and impression of deprivation and social decay, which gives support to the thesis that social frustration is one of the strongest sources of prejudice. Somewhat later on, Bagley and Verma (1979) have confirmed these findings in a British sample, while Hodge and Treiman (1966) did the same in one American sample. Some results suggest that the social decay of close persons, in comparison with an other-group, can be more relevant for the attitude towards the other-group in question than one's own relative deprivation (Appelgryn & Nieuwoudt, 1988; cf. Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972).

The fact that there are individual differences of intensity of stereotypes has long been known. High correlations between stereotypes about different nations, including the non-existing ones, are an indicator of some deeper source of variability. Interest for relationships between social phenomena and personality characteristics has been especially spurred by Adorno's works on the authoritarian personality (Adorno et al, 1950). For instance, he established a 0.74 correlation between anti-Semitism and prejudices against Afro-Americans. Hyman and Sheatsley (1954) believe that an explanation for the consistency of intensity of prejudice should not be sought in the specificities of the target groups but in a general disposition within personality itself. Nevertheless, the authors believe that

the organizational factor that resides in the basis of this general disposition could be of social nature. Many authors agree that the reason of the ubiquity of prejudices is to be sought within the internal dynamics of personality (Adorno et al., 1950; Ashmore, 1970; Babad et al., 1983; Bagley et al., 1979; Harding et al., 1969).

Many social and psychological factors are mentioned as possible influences on the individual's propensity to prejudice: 1) aggressiveness, 2) maladjustment, 3) low self-esteem and 4) the belief and political conviction system. Many, fairly consistent, results point out to the relationship between aggressiveness (i.e. hostility) and prejudice (Patchen et al., 1977). The results of those studies demonstrate that persons with intense prejudice behave much more aggressively than persons with less prejudices (Donnerstein, Donnerstein, Simon, & Ditrichs, 1972; Leonard & Taylor, 1981; Genthner & Taylor, 1973). An explanation of the relationship between aggressiveness and prejudice, aside from the already mentioned frustration theory, can also be found in scapegoat theory (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). Frustration generates aggressive impulses that, since the source of frustration is unknown, inaccessible or too powerful, are displaced towards a group that cannot backfire, most frequently some minority group. According to this conception, prejudice is understood as the fulfillment of a hostile instinct, while negative stereotypes are to be seen as its rationalization. In a recent reformulation of the theory, Berkowitz (1989, 1990) affirms that the negative affect is the mediator between unpleasant experiences and aggressiveness. An unpleasant experience activates anger-related memories and thoughts, which leads to the facilitation of aggressive actions. It is quite certain that aggression does not have to be necessarily a consequence of frustration. Altemeyer (1988) believes that the aggressiveness and hostility that characterize the authoritarian personality syndrome is actually a reflection of a global impression of the world as a dangerous and threatening place.

There are many indices suggesting that poor psychological adjustment, manifested through anxiety, insecurity, low self-esteem and general neuroticism, can predispose a person to prejudice (Allport, 1954; Bagley et al., 1979; Ehrlich, 1973; Levin & Levin, 1982; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). Various explanations of the relationship between maladjustment and prejudice can be found in several theoretical frameworks, such as theory of self-adjustment (the principle of self-congruity), social comparison theory and psychoanalytical theory of ego-defenses. Ehrlich, (1973) believes that the individual has a generalized impression of him/herself and others and that a positive attitude towards the self represents a basis for acceptance of others while a negative attitude towards the self represents a basis for rejection of others (the principle of self-congruity). This approach clearly implies a negative correlation between self-esteem and prejudice.

Jahoda (1960) affirms that the prejudices of ego-defenses protect the ego from pathological impulses or impending anxiety. This approach predicts that acceptance of prejudice will increase the general satisfaction and self-esteem of the

persons with ego "threats". That is why a person with more prejudice does not necessarily have to be more neurotic or anxious.

On the other hand, it is possible to predict that the persons with a chronically weak self-esteem or negative affects will be more likely to compare themselves with the persons on the lower end of the social ladder, i.e. to defend their ego by attributing a lower value to other social groups (Bagley et al., 1979; Crocker et al., 1987; Wills, 1981). In terms of this theory, one could expect low-esteem to be correlated with more prejudice.

Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) states that group identification serves to glorify "us" (and therefore enhance individual self-esteem) through humiliation (but also stigmatization) of "them". This, of course, produces negative stereotypes that, in turn, are very hard to change (Fein and Spenser, 2000). It therefore can be concluded that prejudices and stereotypes represent just one defense of the overall personal self-esteem, as a specific manifestation of the principle of maximization of the global self-esteem (Opačić, 1995).

Bagley and Verma (1979) describe several methodologically well-founded studies of the relationship between self-esteem, neuroticism and racial prejudice. The correlations they obtained ranged from .17 to .41, which indicates a weak or moderate relationship between these phenomena. Hasan et al. (Hassan, 1975, 1976, 1978) have established a correlation between anxiety, bad self-image and general maladjustment, on the one hand, and religious, caste and sexual prejudice, on the other hand.

Research in South Africa revealed opposite tendencies. While elsewhere correlations between self-esteem and prejudice turned out to be positive or insignificant, white South Africans have revealed a weak self-esteem coupled with less racial prejudice (Duckitt, 1985,1988; Heaven, 1983; Orpen, 1972). Orpen (1972, 1975) believes that these results are a product of the normative nature of the prejudice in South African society at that particular time, which means that they were not much conditioned by psychological factors such as low self-esteem. This, it seems, would be a good explanation of the absence of correlations, but not of the negative correlations.

## RESEARCH IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was a multi-ethnic country. Almost all republics of the SFRY, except Slovenia, had their own multi-ethnic structures. After the atrocities of the Second World War, the authoritarian communist elites adopted a repressive policy towards every insistence and emphasizing of ethnic belonging. The proclaimed policy of "brotherhood and unity" led to a repression of ethnic animosities. Public display of ethnic distance was most frequently sanctioned and sometimes even subjected to criminal prosecution. On the other hand, all important administrative posts were distributed

according to the ethnic "key" (i.e. politically-defined ethnic proportions). The conversion of the communist elites into the nationalistic ones (which occurred in various ways in the ex-Yugoslav republics at the end of the 1980s) and the breakup of the SFRY have promoted some very different values.

There occurred a media war that served as an "artillery preparation" of the real one. Tension was created in various ways: creation of black and white images characterized by complete idealization of one's own ethnic group and its history, demonization of other ethnic groups, uncovering of various "historical injustices", revision of history, complete or partial rehabilitation of collaborationist (fascist) movements within one's own national corps and reuse of symbols that had very bad connotations in other ethnic groups. Ethnic belonging became the basic criterion of value while ethnic distance reached the maximum.

The wars in the former Yugoslavia had many characteristics of ethnic conflicts. Because of their ethnic belonging, people were dismissed from jobs, imprisoned, tortured and even killed in some instances. The minority ethnic groups left their traditional locations, most often forcibly, and went to the territories where their ethnic group represented the majority of population.

After the end of the wars, mostly under pressure of the international community, the process of repatriation was initiated, in order to annihilate the consequences of ethnic engineering. The process is by no means followed by a media coverage akin to the one that produced exile. The examples in which members of other ethnic groups are positively portrayed are still rare, and the same goes for good examples of ethnic cooperation. Ethnic stereotypes and pejorative speech still dominate the media, school textbooks and public appearances of politicians and prominent individuals (Biro, 2005).

Measurement of ethnic distance is based on the idea that various social relations imply different levels of emotional proximity or distance, so that the acceptance of a particular relation with an abstract person (member of a particular group) reflects one's general attitude towards the particular group. Since Park (1902), who defined the concept, and Bogardus (1925), who designed one of the most commonly used instruments to date, there appeared a huge number of studies dealing with social distance.

In the last few decades, the former Yugoslavia was a fertile ground for such research. Its results indicate that ethnic distance, low in the period 1960-80, rose abruptly at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, reaching its maximum in 2000. Afterwards, the distance gradually decreased, with occasional oscillations.

In the post-war period, the region was ground of several studies of ethnic distance (Brajdić-Vuković, Bagić, 2003; GfK centar za istraživanje tržišta, 2002; Lučić, 1997; Puhalo, 2003; Turjačanin, 2000; Turjačanin, Čekrlija, Powell, Butollo; 2002; Vujadinović, 2003).

Because of the methodological changes we made (explained in the further text), our research could hardly be compared to other surveys. Nevertheless, we

will compare our results with some recent studies, such as the ones performed by Turjačanin (2004), Brajdić-Vuković, Bagić, (2003), Puhalo (2003) and Vujadinović et al. (2003). The results of these studies will be made comparable with our findings because we will recode their findings in a way that will show the percentage of refusal of the proposed relation.

The results obtained by Turjačanin (2000) indicated that the Serbs from Banja Luka had high ethnic distance towards the other two nations, with the ethnic distance towards Bosniaks being somewhat stronger than the one towards Croats. The Bosniaks from the Federation demonstrated the strongest distance towards Serbs and then towards Croats (Puhalo 2003).

A research conducted on a sample of the young from the Republika Srpska (Vujadinović et al., 2004) revealed that the distance towards Croats was the strongest one, and it even surpassed the traditionally biggest distance towards Albanians and Roma. It is a remarkable fact that, in difference with what Turjačanin (2000) found, the distance towards Bosniaks (with whom Serbs shared a tradition of common life) was in some cases lower than the traditionally low distance towards Montenegrins. Equally remarkable is a change of the order of refusal of the proposed relations, which opens some methodological questions.

Table 1: *Distances by the percentage of refusal, Milići*[54] *2003*

| | Montenegrins | Croats | Bosniaks | Albanians | Roma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visit my country as tourist | 11 | 28 | 26 | 14 | 13 |
| Live in my country | 16 | 43 | 35 | 19 | 17 |
| Attend my school | 16 | 42 | 10 | 26 | 23 |
| Live in my building or neighborhood | 51 | 82 | 21 | 67 | 67 |
| Be my friend | 36 | 80 | 24 | 55 | 55 |
| Be my spouse | 35 | 70 | 53 | 49 | 51 |

It is interesting to compare these results with those obtained by Mijatović and Previšić (1999, in: Kuzmanović, 2001) .

[54] Milići is a town near Srebrenica, primarily inhbitated by Serbs. We have transformed the data borrowed from Vujadinović et al. (2003)

Table 2: *Distances by the percentage of refusal, Croatia, 1999*

| | Montenegrins | Serbs | Bosniaks | Albanians | Roma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Be removed from Croatia | 84 | 74 | 88 | 91 | 84 |
| Visit my country as tourist | 70 | 75 | 70 | 69 | 73 |
| Live permanently in my country | 67 | 69 | 62 | 56 | 65 |
| Be my colleague at work | 75 | 77 | 71 | 71 | 80 |
| Live in my neighborhood, building or street | 74 | 76 | 70 | 70 | 80 |
| Be my friend | 70 | 72 | 65 | 64 | 74 |
| Become my spouse | 89 | 89 | 91 | 92 | 93 |

It is clear that all the distances are drastically lower that those measured in Croatia in 1999, except the relations of friendship and marriage with Croats.

We suppose that ethnic distance is possibly a very important factor of reconciliation and repatriation. In order to verify this hypothesis, we have compared three groups of respondents with regard to the distance expressed towards other ex-Yugoslav ethnic groups. It was logical to assume that returnees would have the lowest ethnic distance and returnees the highest one.

## METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

Our research made use of a modified Bogardus scale of ethnic distance. Since its creation (Bogardus, 1925, in: Moghaddam and Weinfurt 2001), the scale was one of the most frequently used instruments in social psychology. The reasons for this can be found in its quick and simple use in various cultures. The scale also underwent numerous modifications.

Some of its basic logical assumptions were questioned in some previous studies. Firstly, because of the specificities of Bosniak-Croatian-Serbian language, double negations pose problems for the elderly and the less-educate (Vujadinović et al., 2003). The statement that in earlier versions figured on the top of the list ("I would not like to have anything with him/her"), and that in all logic excludes all other relations, used to confuse the respondents so that they agreed with this statement while accepting some other ones as well. That is why we decided to exclude it from our version of the scale.

Moreover, refusal of some relations (for instance, refusal of kinship through marriage) can be a consequence of a general unpreparedness to marry or a consequence of the fact that a respondent is already married. Refusal of the relationship of friendship can be a consequence of ignorance of the language, etc.

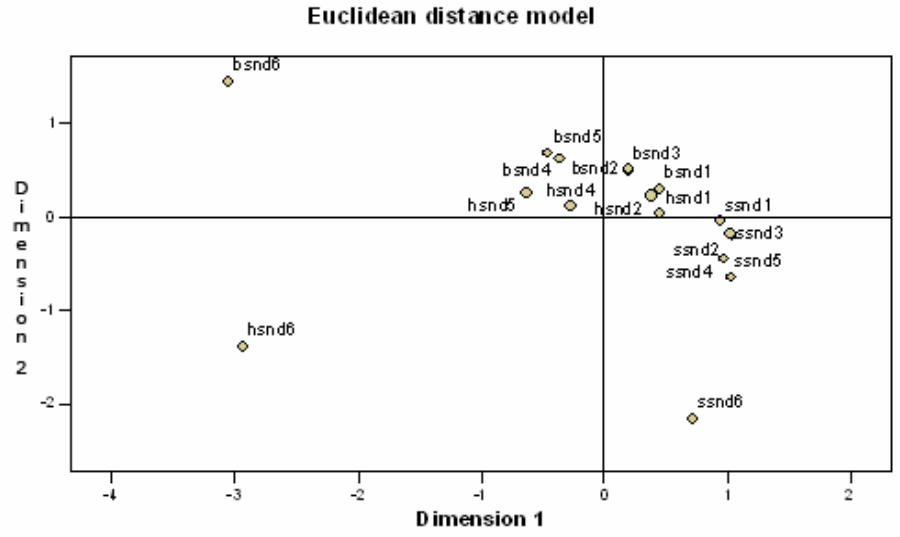
That is why we thought that formulation of statements in a negative, reverse way ("I would be bothered to marry…", or "I would be bothered if he/she was my colleague)" is more clear and easier to interpret.

Thirdly, the order of the distances assumed in Bogardus' scale (spouse < friend < neighbor < colleague < compatriot < tourist) cannot be maintained in our culture (Vujadinović et al., 2003; Puhalo, 2003), and that is something which is concordant with some foreign findings as well (Moghaddam & Weinfurt, 2001). Here are two typical examples: many Serbs accept friendship with Roma but refuse neighborhood, or they frequently accept Montenegrins as spouses or friends but not as colleagues, because of the stereotype that Montenegrins are lazy and power-hungry.

The results of Vujadinović et al. (2003), passed in review a few moments ago, have demonstrated that in all ethnic groups (except Bosniaks) neighborhood was more strongly rejected than friendship and marriage. It is not clear if this is a consequence of a culturally specific system of values (a neighbor is closer than brother) or a consequence of the fact that the bloodiest aspect of the war was the war between neighbors, convincingly depicted in Srđan Dragojević's film "Nice villages burn nicely". Moreover, there occurred an inversion between friendship and marriage, which is probably a consequence of the age of the respondents who understand love and marriage as an uncontrollable phenomenon. We believe that these results are a consequence of the age of the respondents as well as a consequence of the fact that they have already had experience of common life with Bosniaks but not with other ethnic groups.

Fourthly, there is not an equidistance between various types of relations, so that the distance between friendship and marriage is much bigger than all other distances (the acceptance of marriage is far less frequent than acceptance of all other relations). The following graph shows the results of multidimensional scaling that demonstrate this clearly.

Graph 1: *Position of various relationships in relation to various ethnic groups*




b = Bosniaks; h = Croats; s = Serbs; 1 = tourist; 2 = compatriot; 3 = colleague; 4 = neighbor; 5 = friend; 6 = spouse

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following section, we will demonstrate the results of our research. We will first show the percentages of refusal of various relationships in various ethnic groups, since it turned out that there is a relatively high homogeneity within various ethnic groups, regardless of status. In order to avoid unnecessary piling of tables, refugees, returnees and the domicile population will be analyzed separately only when such analysis can procure important additional information. Then, we will demonstrate the results of summary differences between groups of various civil statuses. Finally, we will try to additionally ponder the phenomenon through analysis of mutual correlations between various distances, as well as through cross correlations between various predictors and social distance. The results will be brought into relation with the findings of other studies and discussed immediately.

## Ubiquity of the attitudes that reflect extreme chauvinism

The attitude expressed in the statement "I would be bothered if a member of a particular nation lived in my country", or even in the statement "I would be bothered if he/she visited my country as tourist", certainly expresses extreme national intolerance, chauvinism and even fascism (when present in multi-ethnic communities). The tables below demonstrate the proportion of persons who agree with these statements. These individuals are to bee seen as an obstacle to the processes of repatriation and reconciliation.

Table 3: *Percentage of persons who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group visited their country as tourist*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb-tourist | Roma – tourist | Croat – tourist | Montenegrin - tourist | Bosniak - tourist | Albanian - tourist |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 10 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Croat | 12 | 11 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 12 |
| Serb | 1 | 5 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 15 |
| Other | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Total | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 11 |

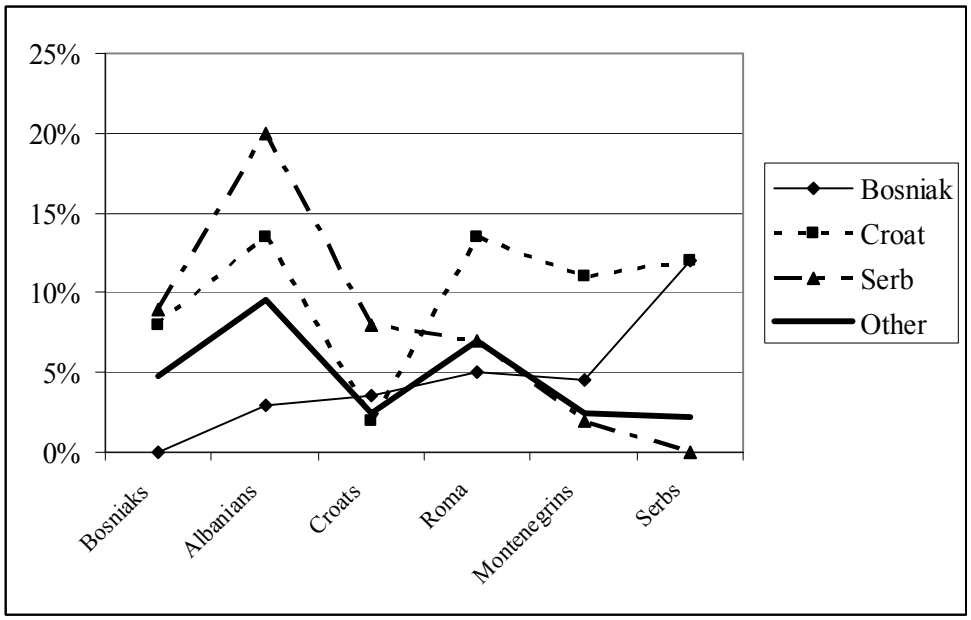
The table speaks for itself. Some 15% of Serbs do not want to see Albanians, even as tourists in their country. There is a comparable proportion of Croats who have a similar attitude towards Albanians, Roma and Serbs. Among Bosnian Moslems, there are some 10 % of those who have such a grudge against Serbs that they do not want to see them even as tourists in their country.

This trend becomes more visible when coexistence of various ethnic groups within one and the same state is in question.

Table 4: *Percentage of persons who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group lived in their country*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – lives in my country | Roma - lives in my country | Croat - lives in my country | Montenegrin - lives in my country | Bosniak - lives in my country | Albanian- lives in my country |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 11 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| Croat | 12 | 14 | 1 | 11 | 9 | 14 |
| Serb | 1 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 10 | 20 |
| Other | 2 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 5 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 15 |

Graph 2: *Percentage of persons who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group lived in their country*




We can see that Bosniaks are the least tolerant since they have the largest percentage of those who would not accept Serbs as compatriots (11%). This is a somewhat surprising result given the integralist policy which is dominant in the Bosniak political corps in B&H. However, the fact that 11% of Bosniaks would like to see a unified B&H (but without Serbs) represents a serious conflict potential. A comparable percentage of similar individuals can be found among Croats – 12%. Still, it is interesting that among Croats there are more of those who would not like to see Albanians and Roma as their compatriots (14%). The attitudes of Serbs and Bosnians towards Roma correspond to the proportion of the extreme right-wing voters in Europe, and it is even something bigger in Croatia.

Serbs who reject Albanians (20%) reveal the most extreme refusal of common life within one and the same state. If we know that the dominant political attitude in Serbia is that Kosovo must by all means remain in Serbia, that group of respondents should be asked if they agree with that attitude and if so, where they think Albanians should live. As for the attitude of Serbs towards Montenegrins, less than 2% of respondent Serbs declared they would be bothered to live in the same state as Montenegrins, which means that the idea of state community with Montenegro does not meet a strong opposition in Serbia.

Since our sample is not representative, these results are to be taken with reserve. It seems that we will obtain a more realistic picture if we divide the sample into the domicile population, refugees and returnees.

Table 5: *Percentage of returnees who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group lived in their country*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb - lives in my country | Roma - lives in my country | Croat - lives in my country | Montenegrin - lives in my country | Bosniak - lives in my country | Albanian- lives in my country |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Croat | 8 | 7 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 7 |
| Serb | 2 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 17 |
| Other | 5 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 11 |
| Total | 3 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 12 |

Table 6: *Percentage of refugees who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group lived in their country*

| Ethnic belonging | Serbs - lives in my country | Roma - lives in my country | Croat - lives in my country | Montenegrin - lives in my country | Bosniak - lives in my country | Albanian- lives in my country |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 20 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 3 |
| Croat | 12 | 18 | 4 | 14 | 11 | 21 |
| Serb | 1 | 10 | 13 | 2 | 15 | 25 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 18 |
| Total | 8 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 18 |

Table 7: *Percentage of returnees who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group lived in their country*

| Ethnic belonging | Serbs - lives in my country | Roma - lives in my country | Croat - lives in my country | Montenegrin - lives in my country | Bosniak - lives in my country | Albanian- lives in my country |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 7 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Croat | 16 | 16 | 0 | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| Serb | 0 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 11 | 19 |
| Other | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 4 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 15 |

The results demonstrate that the least number of persons who do not accept members of other ethnic groups as compatriots is to be found among returnees. In the same time, the biggest percentage of refusal of other ethnic groups as compatriots is to be found among refugees. By far the strongest refusal is found with refugee Serbs towards Albanians, immediately followed by the refusal of Albanians by refugee Croats. While the distance of Serbs towards Albanians is probably a consequence of the unresolved status of Kosovo as well as a consequence of the current ethnic tensions, this distance in Croats is probably a consequence of the participation of Croatian refugees from Janjevo, or simply a consequence of intolerance of diversity. Next on the list is Bosniak refugees' refusal of Serbs (20%).

The next group that excels as the object of refusal of common life are Roma, and that is a consequence of an exceptionally rejective attitude of Croat refugees and resident Croats. Serbs are refused in the same percentage (16%) by resident Croats. These 16%, augmented by the 12% of Croat refugees, through their participation in the electorate as well as through their direct obstruction in the field, represent the biggest obstacle to the return of refugee Serbs to Croatia. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the percentage of the domicile population who oppose the return is significantly lower (7%), but Bosniak refugees represent a serious obstacle.

If we bear in mind the negative correlations between social distance and readiness for reconciliation, it is clear that the unresolved refugee question is a rocket fuel for the extreme right-wing part of the electorate and that it represents the biggest obstacle to reconciliation. On the other hand, some 20 % of Bosniak, 13-15 % of Serb and 11-12 % of Croat refugees are not to be counted among those who wish a peaceful repatriation.

## Repatriation-relevant relations

Acceptance of other ethnic groups as neighbors and colleagues represents the minimal precondition of common life and that is why we consider these two relations as the most important for returnees.

Table 8: *Percentage of population who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group worked with him/her in the same company*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – works in the same company | Roma – works in the same company | Croat - works in the same company | Montenegrin works in the same company | Bosnia - works in the same company | Albanian- works in the same company |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 10 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| Croat | 13 | 16 | 1 | 10 | 9 | 16 |
| Serb | 1 | 10 | 9 | 2 | 11 | 21 |
| Other | 2 | 12 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 10 |
| Total | 5 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 16 |

As we could suppose, the situation of acceptance of colleagueship prolongs the same trend of refusal of Roma and Albanians.

As for the mutual relations between Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, the mutual refusal of colleagueship is around 10 %. The strongest refusal of this relation is that of Croats towards Serbs. Namely, 13% of the respondents declared they would be bothered if Serbs worked in the same company. Croats were three times more likely to refuse Bosniaks as colleagues than vice versa.

Table 9: *Percentage of respondents who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group was their closest neighbour*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – closest neighbor | Montenegrin - closest neighbor | Croat - closest neighbor | Bosniak - closest neighbor | Roma – closest neighbor | Albanian- closest neighbor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 15 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 13 | 8 |
| Croat | 15 | 12 | 2 | 12 | 22 | 19 |
| Serb | 1 | 2 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 30 |
| Other | 2 | 5 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 17 |
| Total | 6 | 5 | 10 | 12 | 18 | 23 |

As for neighborhood, we have discovered the same pattern as in the previous relations. Bearing in mind the relations between Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, the refusal of neighborhood is almost symmetrical (15-16%). Neighborhood with Roma and Albanians continues to be less acceptable than the mutual neighborhood of these three ethnic groups.

Given the fact that neighborhood is especially relevant for repatriation, these results were decomposed with regard to the respondent's civil status.

Table 10: P*ercent of returnees who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group was their closest neighbor*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – closest neighbor | Montenegrin - closest neighbor | Croat - closest neighbor | Bosniak - closest neighbor | Roma – closest neighbor | Albanian- closest neighbor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 8 | 18 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| Croat | 8 | 18 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 14 |
| Serb | 1 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 22 |
| Other | 5 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 16 |
| Total | 4 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 18 |

Table 11: *Percent of refugees who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group was their closest neighbor*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – closest neighbor | Montenegrin - closest neighbor | Croat - closest neighbor | Bosniak - closest neighbor | Roma – closest neighbor | Albanian- closest neighbor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 24 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| Croat | 15 | 27 | 5 | 15 | 17 | 25 |
| Serb | 1 | 24 | 25 | 2 | 26 | 38 |
| Other | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 18 |
| Total | 10 | 21 | 16 | 6 | 17 | 27 |

Table 12: P*ercent of the domestic population that would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic group was their closest neighbor*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – closest neighbor | Montenegrin - closest neighbor | Croat - closest neighbor | Bosniak - closest neighbor | Roma – closest neighbor | Albanian- closest neighbor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 10 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Croat | 22 | 21 | 1 | 15 | 15 | 18 |
| Serb | 0 | 17 | 15 | 2 | 18 | 31 |
| Other | 0 | 17 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 17 |
| Total | 5 | 17 | 10 | 4 | 14 | 24 |

Data decomposed in this way offer an even more depressing picture. If we omit the extremely bad Serbian opinion about Albanians, and if we omit returnees (whose percentage of refusal of other ethnic groups corresponds to the percentage of the right-wing electorate in the "normal" - western - countries), refugees and the domicile population show a high percentage of refusal (10-26%) of the idea of

neighborhood with the ethnic group(s) with whom they had been in conflict (Bosniaks and Croats refuse Serbs, and vice versa). In this case as well, the percentage of refusal in refugees is somewhat bigger than in the domicile population, when Bosniaks and Serbs are in question. Therefore, even ten years after the end of wars in Bosnia and Croatia, and after the huge international resources spent for the process of reconciliation, acceptance of multi-ethnic neighborhood is still a problem for many individuals. On the basis of our survey, we cannot conclude if it is the fear of reappearance of conflicts or nationalistic prejudices that are responsible for such an attitude.

However, our results are somewhat better than those obtained by Brajdić-Vuković and Bagić (2003). The majority of the respondents in their survey did not think that the return of Serb refugees was good for Croatia. That is how 63% of the respondents from the domicile population and 47% of the respondents from the referent group thought. Only 26% of the respondents from the domicile population thought that that the return of Serb refugees could be good for Croatia. The majority of the respondents declared that the return could deteriorate the negative tendencies in the areas where Serbs should return, and there was also a fear that the return could enhance unemployment. Only 7% of the respondents in both samples thought that all the Serbs wishing to return should be allowed to do so, while some 30% (in both samples) thought that the return should be allowed only to those Serbs who had not committed a war crime. A significant portion of the respondents (around 30%) declared that Serbs had left Croatia voluntarily and therefore should not be allowed to return. However, it is of concern that all the respondents who would not object if refugee Serbs returned declared that they would not socialize with them. The respondents from Croatia mainly disliked the idea of the Croatian government helping returnee Serbs in any way. Namely, 42% of the examined resident Croats and 32% of the respondents from the referent group shared this attitude.

## When politics meddles into private life

### Friendship

We will all agree that friendship and marriage are private matters of every individual. Still, it is not always so in these countries. Since friendship was never a matter covered by censuses, we do not dispose of any official data on acceptance or refusal of friendship, so that the results of other studies represent the only basis for comparisons.

Table 13: *Percentage of respondents who would be bothered if a member of a particular ethnic groups was their friend*

| Ethnic belonging | Serb – friend | Roma - friend | Croat - friend | Montenegrin - friend | Bosniak - friend | Albanian-friend |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bosniak | 22 | 15 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 8 |
| Croat | 15 | 21 | 3 | 14 | 13 | 19 |
| Serb | 1 | 19 | 18 | 2 | 18 | 31 |
| Other | 2 | 14 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 17 |
| Total | 8 | 19 | 12 | 6 | 13 | 24 |

The results demonstrate clearly the same pattern of relations as the previous data, with the percentages being somewhat higher than those for colleagueship or neighborhood. It is interesting that Croats refuse Serbs and Bosniaks as friends in almost identical percentages (15 and 13 %), while they reject Albanians and Roma in significantly higher percentages (19 and 21%). Simultaneously, there are significantly less Bosniaks who refuse Croats (6%) than Croats who refuse Bosniaks (13%).

Serbs identically refuse Bosniaks and Croats (18%), but their refusal of Albanians is very strong (31%). The table below demonstrates the general trend for the population in Serbia.

Table 14: *Percentages of Serbian refusal of friendship with members of other ethnic groups – a comparative analysis*[55]

| Period | Croats | Montenegrins | Moslems-Bosniaks | Albanians |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1966 | 11 | 6 | 16 | 21 |
| 1985 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 11 |
| 2002 | 48 | 13 | 43 | 58 |
| 2004 | 18 | 2 | 18 | 31 |
| REFUGEES | 32 | 2 | 32 | 44 |
| LOCAL POPULATION | 17 | 3 | 17 | 31 |
| RETURNESS | 7 | 2 | 8 | 22 |

The table above shows that the refusal of friendship by all groups in our sample was weaker than the one measured in 2002. It can be a consequence of the change of regime in Serbia, as well as a consequence of the fact that our sample

[55] Data for the 1966-2002 period are borrowed from: Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnenje (2003): *Neki indikatori raspoloženja građana Srbije na kraju 2002,* IDN, Beograd

was not entirely representative for the population of Serbia. Moreover, it can also be a consequence of a more precise and more exclusive definition of the relations in our survey.

When returnees and the domicile population are taken into account, their values come close to or become even somewhat lower than the ones measured in 1996. As for refugees, their values are somewhat lower than those of the general population in Serbia in 2002, but they are still very high.

It is very hard to generalize on the basis of these findings but we hope that what we have here are positive trends. As for Croatia and B&H, we do not have data that could enable us to make comparisons in a proper way. Still, the measured values for Croatia as well are far lower than those reported by Mijatović and Previšić in 1999 and those obtained by Puhalo in 2003, in the Federation of B&H and the RS.

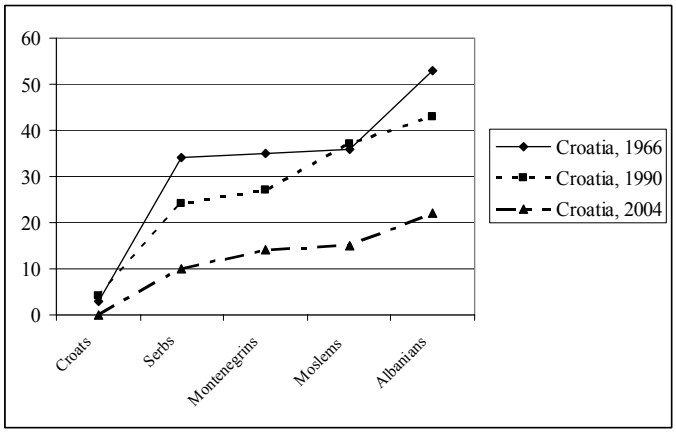
The results also demonstrate that refugees are those who most strongly refuse friendship with members of other ethnic groups.

**Marriage**

There is a conviction that inter-ethnic marriages were very frequent in the SFRY (25 % in Croatia, Mijatović, 1995; 36% in B&H - Biro, 2005)[56]. This is very often used as an argument for the thesis that the SFRY was a country of good inter-ethnic relations. It is quite certain that these relations in the SFRY had been much better than what they were during the last 15 years. The graphs below illustrate the situation in Croatia and Serbia measured at the end of the era of Aleksandar Ranković (1966), on the eve of the war in 1990 and at the time of this survey.

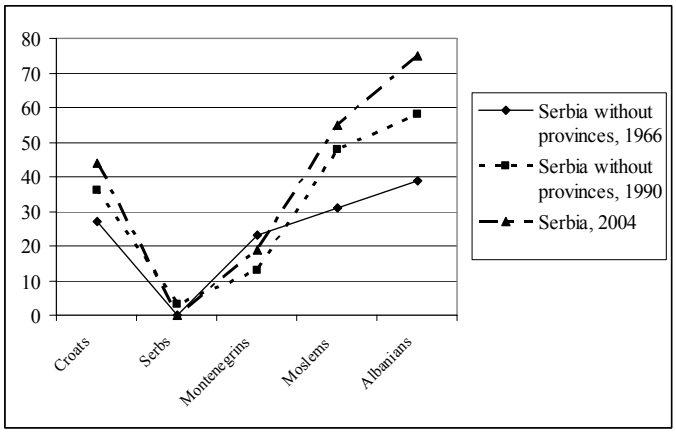
[56] Our attempts to discover the official sources of these data remained unsuccessful. If the data are correct, which the author (who spent years living in Croatia and Bosnia) doubts, then national affiliation was a relevant factor of marital selection. Namely, if national affiliation was not a relevant marital selection factor, then 90% of the members of a minority group (who constitute 10% of the total population of the society in question) would in all probability be married to members of the ethnic majority, and that was *not* the case in the former Yugoslavia. Therefore. we must admit that ethnic affiliation had been relevant in marital selection.

Graph 3: *Percentages of the refusal of marriage with members of particular ethnic groups in Croatia*[57] *- a comparative review*




The graph demonstrates clearly that the acceptance of marriage at the time of our study is stronger than in 1966 and 1990. : the biggest distance was that towards Albanians, followed by the distance towards Bosniaks, Serbs and Montenegrins, who are all approximately on the same level, between 35 and 40%.

Graph 4: *Percentages of the refusal of marriage with members of particular ethnic groups in Serbia*[58] *- a comparative review*




[57] We have modified the values for 1966 and 1990 that we had borrowed from: Pantić, D.(1991) Nacionalna distanca građana Jugoslavije u Baćević, LJ.(ed) Jugoslavija na kriznoj prekretnici, IDN, Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje.

[58] We have modified the values for 1966 and 1990 that we had borrowed from: Pantić, D.(1991) Nacionalna distanca građana Jugoslavije u Baćević, LJ.(ed) Jugoslavija na kriznoj prekretnici, IDN, Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje.

As the graphs demonstrate, refusal of marriage in 2004 is bigger than it was in the previous two surveys. It is especially visible in the relation towards Albanians. We can ask ourselves whether the trend of increase of ethnic distance continues in Serbia, or whether these results represent a consequence of a stronger distance towards other ethnic groups among refugees, who are in this research more represented than in the general population.

Still, the situation is much better than in Šiber's research carried out in 1997 in Croatia. When the question "Would you accept a member of….ethnic group to be your brother/son-in-law or sister/daughter-in-law?" was presented to a Croatian sample, only 21% of the respondents said they would accept such a kinships with Serbs, and 23% with Bosniaks (Šiber, 1997). Moreover, our results are somewhat better than those obtained by the 2002 research carried out in Serbia, and the 2003 research effectuated in B&H. The Serbs from Serbia have in 40% of cases accepted the idea of kinship with Croats, while 36% have accepted the idea of kinship with Bosniaks. In 2003, 25% of the Bosniaks from the Federation would accept kinship with Croats, and 20% with Serbs. The biggest ethnic distance was manifested by the Serbs from the Republika Srpska – only 16% of them would accept kinship with Croats, and 14% with Bosniaks (Puhalo, 2003)!

**Differences of ethnic distance in refugees, returnees and the domicile population**

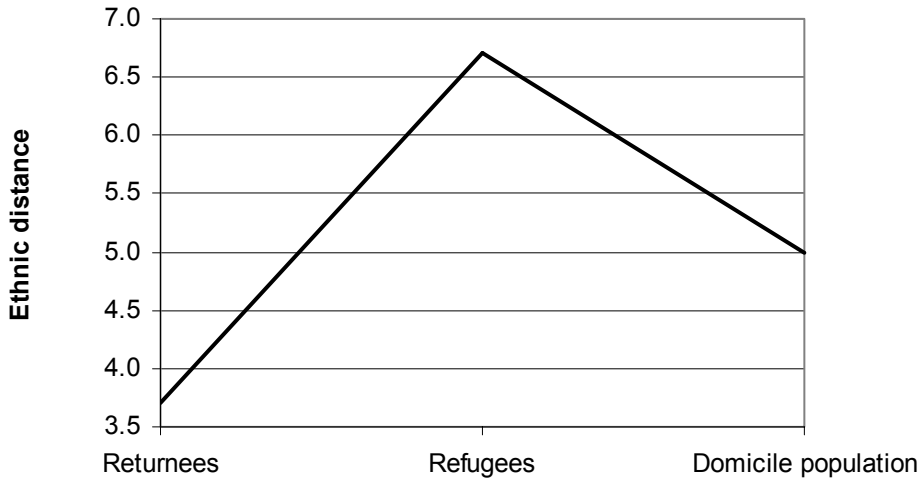
In order to respond to the question of possible statistically significant differences between refugees, returnees and the domicile population, we have compared these groups in respect to the overall social distance. The following table demonstrates the results of analysis of variance.

Table 15: *Social distance – differences of means between the members of various civil status*

| Returnee | Domicile population | Refugee | F(2,1501) | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3,83 | 4,94 | 6,73 | 29.570 | 000 |

The results of analysis of variance, as well as the results of post hoc tests (Tuckey's HSD) reveal that there are significant differences between all groups As the graph below demonstrates, the results confirm our expectations. Returnees have the weakest distance, while refugees have the strongest one.

Graph 5: *Ethnic distance*




These results demonstrate clearly that social distance is an important factor of return. It is clear that without changes of the public opinion, without work on the weakening of prejudice and formation of a more tolerant public opinion there will not be any important return. It is also clear that we are saying something quite ordinary, but we still wonder why there are no serious and systematic efforts on these issues.

## Relations between ethnic distance towards various ethnic groups

In addition to a simple description of the situation, we were interested if there was a congruity between the intensity of distances between various groups. This correlation would suggest the existence of some deeper source of this phenomenon. Besides, we were interested in the factors that directly or indirectly "affect" ethnic distance.

In the further text, we will take a look at the level of correlations between the degrees of manifestation of various stereotypes. The intensity of prejudice toward each particular ethnic group was calculated as the total score of refused relations. Since various ethnic groups were enemies in the Yugoslav conflicts of the 1990s, these correlations were calculated for each group separately.

Table 16: *Correlations between distances towards various ethnic groups in Bosniaks*

| | Roma | Albanian | Montenegrin | Croat | Serb |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Roma | 1 | ,602(**) | ,494(**) | ,446(**) | ,487(**) |
| Albanian | ,602(**) | 1 | ,445(**) | ,421(**) | ,365(**) |
| Montenegrin | ,494(**) | ,445(**) | 1 | ,757(**) | ,643(**) |
| Croat | ,446(**) | ,421(**) | ,757(**) | 1 | ,635(**) |
| Serb | ,487(**) | ,365(**) | ,643(**) | ,635(**) | 1 |

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tail test)
* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tail test)

Table 17: *Correlations between distances towards various ethnic groups in Croats*

| | Roma | Albanian | Montenegrin | Croat | Serb |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Roma | 1 | ,769(**) | ,683(**) | ,579(**) | ,694(**) |
| Albanian | ,769(**) | 1 | ,687(**) | ,555(**) | ,706(**) |
| Montenegrin | ,683(**) | ,687(**) | 1 | ,846(**) | ,712(**) |
| Croat | ,579(**) | ,555(**) | ,846(**) | 1 | ,589(**) |
| Serb | ,694(**) | ,706(**) | ,712(**) | ,589(**) | 1 |

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tail test)
* Correlation significant at the 0.05 (test 2-tail test)

Table 18: *Correlations between distances towards various ethnic groups in Serbs*

| | Roma | Albanian | Montenegrin | Croat | Serb |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Roma | 1 | ,594(**) | ,336(**) | ,494(**) | ,530(**) |
| Albanian | ,594(**) | 1 | ,237(**) | ,602(**) | ,646(**) |
| Montenegrin | ,336(**) | ,237(**) | 1 | ,302(**) | ,343(**) |
| Croat | ,494(**) | ,602(**) | ,302(**) | 1 | ,774(**) |
| Serb | ,530(**) | ,646(**) | ,343(**) | ,774(**) | 1 |

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tail test).
* Correlations significant at the 0.05 level (2-tail test).

These results are almost identical with the ones obtained by Adorno (1950) and Hyman and Sheatsley (1954). The highest congruence was in Croats. In Bosniaks, the correlations can be divided into two groups: the ones that reveal a general level of xenophobia (the correlation between the distances towards Roma and Albanians), and the ones that can be ascribed to the conflicts (the distances towards Serbs, Montenegrins and Croats). The correlations between these two sets are significantly lower than those within the sets. For their part, Serbs show outstanding correlations between the distance towards Montenegrins and distances towards other ethnic groups (which are much lower than the others). The correlations between the distances towards Bosniaks and Croats (and then towards Albanians) are highest.

## The correlates of ethnic distances

In the following section, we have tried to answer the question of the most important correlates of ethnic distance.

After a theoretical analysis, we have selected from our sample of variables those that might have been expected to be somehow related to ethnic stereotypes. Although our approach was not quite methodologically correct, we have constructed an aggregate measure of ethnic distance for each person by summing all the relations that a particular respondent had rejected towards the ethnic groups under scrutiny. The results are presented separately for each of the three ethnic groups.

Table 19: *Cross correlations between the total distance towards various ethnic groups and various variables mentioned as possible predictors of prejudice and stereotypes, for all three ethnic groups*

| | Ethnic distance Bosniaks | Ethnic distance Croats | Ethnic distance Serbs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Neuroticism | **,204(**)** | **,205(**)** | **,156(**)** |
| Extraversion | **-,141(*)** | **-,220(**)** | ,003 |
| Openness | **-,142(*)** | -,095 | -,088(*) |
| Agreeableness | -,083 | **-,358(**)** | **-,117(**)** |
| Conscientiousness | -,042 | **-,317(**)** | -,043 |
| IES total score on the impact of events scale | **,158(**)** | **,142(*)** | **,100(**)** |
| GSI SCL90 - Global severity index | **,176(**)** | **,306(**)** | **,154(**)** |
| Misanthropy | **,185(**)** | ,062 | **,175((**)** |
| Generalized competence | **-,253(**)** | -,108 | **-,141(**)** |
| Self-image | -,080 | **-,189(**)** | ,045 |
| Externality | **,218(**)** | ,021 | **,146(**)** |
| Life stressors | **,209(**)** | ,119 | ,022 |
| War-related life stressors | **,245(**)** | **,139(*)** | -,009 |
| Impoverishment | **,135(*)** | **-,262(**)** | -,045 |
| Total monthly income (7.4 kuna, 70 din, 2Km = 1 EUR) | -,108 | **,281(**)** | -,074(*) |
| Is the respondent employed? | -,063 | -,025 | -,061 |
| Education | **-,142(*)** | -,038 | -,073(*) |
| Number of children | ,069 | ,078 | ,043 |
| Objective indices of the experience of breach of human rights | ,044 | -,082 | ,015 |
| Actual residence (1-city, 2-village) | -,031 | -,012 | ,042 |
| Is the respondent a refugee? | **,235(**)** | **,143(*)** | **,193(**)** |

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tail test)
* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tail test)

The table contains a wealth of information. Firstly, the results confirm the findings from the literature about important variables. The results obtained in the Bosniak sample are most concordant with the predictions drawn from the literature, according to which poor psychological adjustment, manifested through anxiety, insecurity, low self-esteem, and general neuroticism predispose individuals to prejudice and stereotype (Allport, 1954; Bagley et al., 1979; Ehrlich, 1973; Levin & Levin, 1982; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Crocker et al., 1987; Wills, 1981; Tajfel i Turner, 1979). The results are also concordant with social theories (Brown, 1965, Duckitt, 1994; Glock et all., 1975; Bettelheim and Janowitz, 1964; Bagley and Verma, 1979; Hodge and Treiman, 1966; Appelgryn & Nieuwoudt, 1988; cf. Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972). Therefore, impression of global incompetence, external locus of control, war stressors and their consequences, exile, impression of economic decay, neuroticism, a global negative impression of others, inferior education, introversion and imperviousness to experience characterize persons with higher propensity for stereotype.

The results in the Croatian sample show some similarities but also some serious differences. The similarities are to be found in a strong presence of psychopathology and neuroticism, war stressors and their consequences, poor self-image, introversion and exile in persons with more pronounced stereotypes. The differences can be seen both in personal characteristics and social factors. Namely, in the Croatian sample, persons who have somehow profited from war, who have higher monthly income and who are more aggressive and less conscientious demonstrate stronger distance towards other ethnic groups.

This result refutes the influence of social decay (Bettelheim and Janowitz, 1964; Bagley and Verma, 1979; Hodge and Treiman, 1966; Appelgryn & Nieuwoudt, 1988; cf. Guimond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972 ), but gives some argument to agression theory (Donnerstein, Donnerstein, Simon, & Ditrichs, 1972; Leonard & Taylor, 1981; Genthner & Taylor, 1973; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939; Altemeyer, 1988; Berkowitz, 1989; 1990).

The results obtained in the Serbian sample are somewhat less clear (they are something “in between”), but are globally somewhat closer to the Bosniak sample. It is possible that a breakdown of the sample to Serbia and the Republika Srpska, and refugees and the domicile population, would yield a clearer picture.

From the theoretical point of view, it turned out that each theory contained a grain of truth. The influence of social factors is the most controversial, since in some cases it works in one direction while in other cases its direction is quite different. It would not have been possible without the existence of some mediating variable that defines the direction of the influence. Maybe we deal here with the normative nature of prejudice that changes relations between variables (Orpen, 1972, 1975). Frustration theory as the basis of aggressiveness is also seriously

shaken because upward social mobility was correlated with higher aggressiveness and more pronounced prejudice in the Croatian sample.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of our work point out to several important moments:

1) Social distance among ex-Yugoslav ethnic groups is still very high and represents a serious psychological obstacle to reconciliation;
2) Refugees have the strongest social distance;
3) A trend of a mild decrease of ethic distance was observed, either as a consequence of the method applied or as a consequences of genuine political changes;
4) There are serious internal psychological obstacles to repatriation and reconciliation;
5) Our results reveal the existence of a relation between individual pathology and social distance, which suggests that therapy of individual pathology represents also a therapy of social pathology.

Limitations of our work are mostly related to the sample structure. Namely, a hypertrophied representation of refugees (and especially of returnees) significantly displaces the assessed parameters in relation to the population parameters, which means that the trends described here have to be taken with caution.

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# REFUGEES AND MENTAL HEALTH - IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PROCESSES OF REPATRIATION AND INTEGRATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Persons who go to exile leave their homes, jobs, familiar social environments, friends, cousins or even the closest family members. They do so in order to avoid a life risk, in the conditions that are threatening either because of a direct danger or because of the proximity of armed conflicts. By the time they find a refuge in a new environment, these individuals have most often already been exposed to various stressors and have either witnessed the suffering of other persons or experienced threats for their own or the lives of their close ones. All of this can lead to various psychological difficulties in some individuals, and even to the development of psychiatric disorders that hinder adjustment to the new environment and prevent continuation of life in posttraumatic conditions, which, in that case, calls for assistance and therapy.

However, we have to bear in mind that the term "refugees" denotes a very heterogeneous group of individuals who significantly vary in their primary characteristics, personal stressful experiences and subjective reactions to them. Although a considerable number of individuals in exile can manifest certain characteristics of posttraumatic disorders, it is by no means all who develop stress-related disorders. Furthermore, the conditions in which these people live demand a continuous and often long humanitarian assistance that has to be well planned and must include various aspects. Finally, exile in itself represents a temporary experience, which means that both refugees and the host environment live under

the imperative of a "durable solution" that, most often, implies integration in the new environment, repatriation, or emigration to a third country.

This work purports to demonstrate the results of a research of some basic factors that might have influenced the decision on repatriation or local integration. These factors include: 1) the kinds of the traumatic war events our respondents have been exposed to, 2) their general psychological difficulties and posttraumatic psychopathology, 3) their personality characteristics or dimensions, and 4) their self-concept. But before we present our results, we will offer a brief review of some of the basic methodological problems of understanding of mental disorders in refugees. We will also offer some key elements of the understanding of the refugee context in the former Yugoslavia.

In the last few decades, psychological problems of refugees have attracted considerable attention, which means that we dispose now of important experience gathered through psychological research in emergencies. Our work relies on three basic sources: 1) findings about mental disorders of refugees in other regions of the world which were affected by the crises that triggered mass refugee movement, 2) findings about the ex-Yugoslav refugees who emigrated to third countries, and 3) results of the studies effectuated in the resettlement countries of the former Yugoslavia (primarily Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia & Montenegro).

## Methodological problems and the refugee context in the territory of the former Yugoslavia

The majority of studies of refugees were effectuated in developed resettlement countries. Although their results contain a plenty of valuable information, we have to bear in mind that more than 70% of refugees live in low-income countries, as well as in environments which face them with existential problems and even with the deprivation of essential needs and further political insecurity. All this has direct implications for the methods of psychological investigation (Pernice, 1994; Jacobsen and Landau, 2003).

However, the differences in relation to the studies of refugees in the developed western countries are not exclusively limited to the problem of existential vulnerability. We have to bear in mind that some of the refugees in Serbia & Montenegro still live in collective shelters (for more than ten years now), which means that their living conditions (and especially the conditions of family life and upbringing of children) are significantly different, quite simply, more difficult than other, "normal" conditions. Furthermore, a number of the refugees experienced exile several times, as in the case of the refugees from Croatia and B&H who had found a temporary safe haven in Kosovo only to be exiled again in 1999. Furthermore, the refugees in S&M were also exposed to the NATO bombing campaign in 1999, as well as to the turbulent political changes that occurred thereafter. (Lečić-Toševski and Draganić-Gajić, 2004). Nevertheless, even the

persons who found refuge in a third country faced stressful experiences, such as the problems of residence permission, change of habitation, unemployment, discrimination and social isolation (Silove, 2002; Papadopoulos et al. 2004; Kivling-Bodén and Sundbom, 2002; Pernice and Brook, 1996).

On the other hand, we think that the refugees who found refuge in one of the three countries created after the breakup of Yugoslavia – B&H, Croatia, S&M – were not exposed to such acute problems of acculturation as were the refugees who emigrated to the EU countries, the USA, Australia or Canada, if we consider some measurable ingredients of «culture» (such as language, behavior, names, clothing, food and religion). Or, in other words, they did not have to deal with the perception of an *other* culture, followed by a negative or a positive attitude, preferences, attachments, identification or other psychological states (Williams and Berry, 1991; Rudmin, 2003). However, during the Yugoslav conflicts of the 1990s, the question of cultural differences between the former Yugoslav ethnic groups was given a special, political, meaning and was used in a way that accentuated the differences, usually using them as an argument for the assessment of "higher" or "lower" level of development. This kind of argument, often used to instigate nationalistic passions, was sometimes backed by scientific, psychiatric and psychological circles (Kecmanović, 1999). Simultaneously, the speed of change that during the last few decades characterized globalization and the development of communications systems, transport and free market precluded any possibility of definition of a stable, unchangeable "culture" and thus placed all individuals (migrants or not) under the requirements of "acculturation" (Rudmin, 2003). In a more specific, psychiatric sense, there occurred a reinforcement of the assumption that the basic pathology is universal, that the prevalence of major disorders in various cultures is identical and that cultural differences are contained only in the differences of manifestation of disorders (Cheng, 2001).

## Traumatic events experienced by refugees

Experiences of refugees can differ significantly, but the kinds of traumatic events usually vary strongly and include various stressors, such as active participation in combat, accidental exposure to danger, captivity, torture, witnessing of murder or torture, personal injury and incapacitation. Diversity of traumatic events is especially characteristic of civil wars, because the frontline between the warring parties is often volatile and violence against civilians very frequent. This kind of situation was also present in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. In some of our earlier works, we have described the methodological problems of the measurement of war-related stressors (Jović et al. 2002), and of torture especially (Jović and Opačić, 2004).

There was a number of studies that demonstrated the existence of a relationship between wartime traumatic events and psychiatric disorders, especially

PTSD, and this relationship is especially important in the refugees who underwent torture or some form of violence (Jaranson et al. 2004; Mollica et al. 1998b; Mollica et al. 1998a; Miller et al. 2002; Bhui et al. 2003). Still, the correlations between stressors and the consequent psychopathology were relatively weak so that sometimes the "dose dependence" could not have been established (Yehuda and McFarlane, 1995). Therefore, when reflecting on the studies that failed to demonstrate this relationship (Kivling-Bodén and Sundbom, 2003; Weine et al. 1995), we have to, first of all, ask ourselves about their methods, and especially about their instruments of assessment of war stressors.

## Mental disorders in refugees

*The prevalence of psychiatric disorders*

Studies of the mental status of refugees from various regions of the world demonstrate very high rates of prevalence of mental disorders, especially posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other anxiety disorder. De Jong et al. have found that the rate of the prevalence of "serious mental health problems" in Rwandan and Burundese refugee camps was 50% (de Jong et al. 2000), but the measured rate of psychiatric disorders could go up to 90% (Kinzie et al. 1990). In fact, the rates of the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in refugees varied in various studies, depending on the applied assessment method. The most frequent way of assessment was by short self-assessment instruments, but in principle the prevalences remained high even when some more reliable instruments were used. Thus, the rates of life prevalence in the refugees from Butan examined by the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI), for any psychiatric disorder amounted to 56,1% (for the non-tortured refugees) and 88,3% (for the tortured refugees) (Van Ommeren et al. 2001). The life prevalence of PTSD was 14,5% for the first, and 73,7% for the second group. PTSD in refugee psychiatric patients had the highest prevalence rates – up to 46,6% (Lavik et al. 1996). Epidemiological population surveys in "post conflict, low-income countries", demonstrated that the PTSD prevalence continued to be several times higher than the supposed prevalence rate of the general population in the developed western countries. The established prevalence rates were 37,4% (for Algeria), 28,4% (for Cambodia), 15,8% (for Ethiopia) and 17,8% (for the Gaza strip) (de Jong et al. 2001). There was a certain, relatively low, number of refugees who could manifest trauma-related psychiatric disorders several years after the experience of exile (Steel et al. 2002-).

We know of no reliable data on the prevalence of psychiatric disorders in the refugees from the former Yugoslavia, either those who have emigrated to a third country or those who have found refuge in the region. Various results obtained in studies conducted in developed countries signal the existence of a high

prevalence of PTSD (even up to 74%) (Weine et al. 1998). For instance, a recent study has established a prevalence rate of 60.5% for the "probable presence of PTSD" in refugee Kosovo Albanians (Ai et al. 2002). A research on 81 refugees and internally-displaced persons in Croatia has reveled a much more modest PTSD prevalence of 20% (Marušić et al. 1998). A study of 47 Croatian war veterans demonstrated that 34% of the respondents (i.e. 16 individuals) manifested current PTSD (Kozarić-Kovačić et al. 1998). A study of refugees in Serbia, carried out by the Institute for mental health, found that 29,2% of the examined had PTSD (Lečić-Toševski et al. 1999). When only a selected sample of male torture survivors had been examined (N=60), diagnosis of stress-related disorders was set in 79,9% of cases (Ilić et al. 1998). A study of torture victims, carried out by International Aid Network, discovered the actual PTSD prevalence rate of 63.8%, but also established a 20.2% prevalence rate of lifetime PTSD, which, when summed, represents 84% of the PTSD life prevalence in this population (Špirić and Knežević, 2004).

The meaning of these numbers is a practical question. A short report by de Jong and Komproe (de Jong and Komproe, 2002-) pointed out a need to define the clinical importance of posttraumatic disorders, in order to define therapeutic needs and organize corresponding services. The authors referred to an earlier analysis of Narrow et al. (Narrow et al. 2002), where the prevalence of psychiatric disorders had been reduced by the significant 20%, when disability associated with morbidity had been assessed (measured by help seeking, life interference or use of medication associated with morbidity). A realistic assessments of the prevalence could help the planning of adequate strategies of assistance in complex crisis situations (Mollica et al. 2004).

*Categories of psychiatric disorders in refugees*

Although the majority of studies of psychopathology in refugees focused on PTSD, one should bear in mind that this population has high prevalences of other disorders as well, and especially the prevalences of depression, persistent somatoform pain disorder and dissociative disorders (amnesia and conversion) (Van Ommeren et al. 2001). One has to count with this fact when analyzing the reports where the prevalence of disorders was measured only by PTSD-specific instruments.

Exile and war imply many psychological problems that cannot be subsumed under the diagnosis of PTSD, and these are sorrow or grief, alienation and loneliness, loss of self-esteem, depression, anxiety, somatization, guilt and substance abuse (Arredondo-Dowd, 1981; Espin, 1987; Garcia-Peltoniemi, 1991; Rebhun, 1998). The very introduction of PTSD diagnosis into the DSM III classification (in 1980) inspired research that aimed to: a) ascertain alternative criteria for PTSD diagnosis, b) reexamine the validity of symptoms through various

kinds of stressors, c) reexamine the adequacy of the tripartite division of symptoms, and d) reexamine the minimum of symptoms necessary for diagnosis (Courtois, 2004)**.**

An additional goal of these studies was to elucidate the constellation of the trauma-related symptoms that were not included into PTSD diagnosis. These syndromes were variously labeled, as "*Complex PTSD"* (CP), or "*Complicated PTSD*". At the beginning of the 1990s, Roth et al. (Roth et al. 1997) have attempted to construct a standardized diagnostic interview for the verification of the *Disorders of Extreme Stress not Otherwise Specified* (DESNOS) concept.

Prospective studies with war veterans (Ford, 1999; Newman et al. 1995), children victims of violence (Ford and Kidd, 1998), and abused women (Pelcovitz and Kaplan, 1995), have confirmed the clinical validity of the CP concept. The field research, carried out in 1991 and 1992, demonstrated that these disorders were trauma-related and that there was a high comorbidity with PTSD (Roth et al. 1997). Although a comorbidity between PTSD and DESNOS existed in 92% of cases (Ford, 1999), the authors believed that there are fundamental differences between the two diagnoses and that the symptoms of DESNOS can be found in situations when the PTSD criteria are not met, especially in childhood abuse cases (Roth et al. 1997). In the Tenth version of The International classification of diseases (ICD-10), a special place was given to the category of „Permanent personality change after catastrophic experience" (F62.0) (World Health Organization, 1992), which can serve as a basis for the understanding of the complex picture of chronic disorders described in the picture of DESNOS or CP.

The CP/DESNOS concept includes seven distinct areas of change frequently related to early trauma (Herman, 1992b; Herman, 1992a): 1) changes of regulation of affective impulses, 2) amnesia, depersonalization and other dissociative phenomena, 3) changes of self-perception (Courtois, 2004; Pearlman, 2001), 4) changes of the perception of the perpetrator, 5) changes of relations with others – lack of trust and impossibility of intimate attachment, 6) somatization and other medical problems, and 7) changes of the value system. In this section, we will deal more closely with changes of the perception of the self, i.e. changes of self-concept.

Before leaving the theme of diversity of mental disorders in refugees, we have to remark that wartime stressors and subsequent exile can deteriorate the general status, conditions of therapy and protection of human rights of the chronically mentally-ill, who in crises situations usually represent a neglected population category (Silove et al. 2000). Moreover, exile indirectly affects development of mental disorders by intensifying factors such as poor antenatal health and nutrition, suboptimum perinatal care, increased risk of birth injuries, infantile malnutrition, early separation from care givers, neglect and understimulation of children, exposure to chronic communicable diseases that

affect the brain, the risk of traumatic epilepsy and exposure to extreme and repeated stress (Silove et al. 2000).

*Longitudinal development of mental disorders, and adjustment in exile*

A considerable number of refugees suffer from PTSD-related symptoms, which is related to the destructive influences that traumatic events and the conditions of life in exile had on their mental health (de Jong et al. 2000; Lavik et al. 1996). These persons can be especially sensitive to negative events in exile such as existential and housing problems, not only because of their individual characteristics but also because of their situation. Posttraumatic pathology (which reduces adaptation abilities) and poor social conditions in exile create a sort of "vicious circle", given the fact that a higher posttraumatic symptom level at follow-up was associated with a pattern of negative living conditions such as open unemployment, social isolation, and a high dependence on social welfare (Kivling-Bodén and Sundbom, 2002). A study of Kosovo refugees in Sweden revealed that the PTSD prevalence in exile, measured in two time points, grew from 45% (in the first measurement) to 78% (in the second measurement, after 18 months) (Silove and Ekblad, 2002). A second Swedish study identified the factors of the risk of aggravation of posttraumatic psychopathology as "severe life-threatening trauma and present life in exile with unemployment and unresolved family reunion" (Lie, 2002). This is in accord with our earlier studies of internally-displaced persons from the Prizren area, which have demonstrated that in two time points (with two years of distance), within the same population (but, unfortunately, not with the same examinees), the levels of psychopathology in exile had significantly increased (Tenjović et al. 2004; Tenjović et al. 2001).

A study of the Bosnian refugees settled in collective shelters in Croatia, carried out in two time points (1996 and 1999), demonstrated that the persons who had initially met depression or PTSD diagnostic criteria (45% of the sample) did so after three years as well, while 16% of the initially asymptomatic respondents developed one or both of the disorders in the meantime (Mollica et al. 2001-).

*Mental disorders and somatic health*

Stress-related disorders, and especially PTSD, differ from other psychiatric disorders by their strong potential to cause poor somatic health. This is facilitated by some psychological and physiological specificities such as adrenergic stimulation, sympathic hyper reactivity, endocrinological abnormalities, opioid disregulation and probable disorders of the immune system, as well as by some specific psychological or psychopathological characteristics such as hostility, depression, alcohol/drug abuse and malnutrition – which can all have serious additional consequences for somatic health (Friedman and Schnurr, 1995).

As for the assessment of the effects of mental disorders on the general mental and somatic functioning, it has been demonstrated that PTSD had the same impact on the general mental functioning as major depressive disorder, but that PTSD was related to much more severe somatic damage than major depressive disorder, panic disorder and generalized anxiety disorder. This effect, as demonstrated by canonical regression analysis, was unique to PTSD and was not related to age, gender or some other comorbid anxiety disorder. This means that an efficient therapy of PTSD can directly affect corporal health as well (Zayfert et al. 2002).

## Personality characteristics and stress-related disorders

Until the 1990s, the relevant scientific literature was dominated by a firm belief that PTSD is "a normal reaction to abnormal events". When repeated empirical evidence revealed that trauma alone cannot explain the appearance of PTSD and that individual differences in reaction to traumatic events are significant, there appeared an interest for risk factors or any other vulnerability indicators. In fact, this represented a shift of interest towards more complex, multivariate etiological studies. Simultaneously, the interest was imposed by practical reasons. Since the majority of traumatic situations (wars and civil, peacetime disasters) affect considerable numbers of individuals, it became highly important to identify the persons in high risk and thus reduce the number of persons receiving unnecessary assistance (Roy-Byrne et al. 2004). There appeared a number of studies that contained the so-called "meta-analyses" of the risk factors of development of PTSD (Brewin et al. 2000; Ozer et al. 2003), as well as studies that used a more complex methodology for the determination of the factors that predicted development of PTSD (King et al. 1998; King et al. 1996; King et al. 2000; King et al. 1999; Shalev et al. 1997; Shalev et al. 1996). In view of the requirements of our present work, we will limit ourselves to a brief review of personality characteristics measured by personality inventories (instruments for the assessment of personality characteristics or dimensions), leaving aside "the fixed markers" (gender, age, race), or the factors of premorbid adjustment.

The most frequent finding of the studies that made use of the instruments measuring the characteristics comparable with the dimensions of the Big-five model,[59] was that the persons who had developed PTSD had higher neuroticism than the persons without PTSD (Casella and Motta, 1990; Chung et al. 2003; Cox et al. 2004; Holeva and Tarrier, 2001; Jaycox et al. 2003; Lauterbach and Vrana, 2001; Lawrence and Fauerbach, 2003; Lee et al. 1995; McFarlane, 1996), or that they were higher on neuroticism and introversion (negative extraversion) (Bunce et al. 1995; Fauerbach et al. 2000; Fauerbach et al. 1996), which can mean that

[59] Most frequently Eysenck's EPQ or some of the previously mentioned instruments with the five-structure, and much less frequently some measure of neuroticism.

these personality dimensions can have a predictive value for the development of PTSD. We have found only one study that has discovered a significant relationship between PTSD and one additional personality dimension: agreeableness (A) (with N and E) (Talbert et al. 1993). However, the relationship between neuroticism and PTSD does not have to be so simple, since it is always possible to conclude that these studies "measured the consequences rather than the causes of PTSD" (Bramsen et al. 2000).

In two genuinely prospective studies on war veterans, increased values in the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) were predictive for the development of PTSD in Vietnam War veterans (Schnurr et al. 1993), while the pre-combat neuroticism was predictive for the development of PTSD in Second World War veterans (Lee et al. 1995). A study of the Dutch soldiers who had participated in peace-making missions in the former Yugoslavia matched their profiles in the Dutch version of the MMPI with posttraumatic pathology (Bramsen et al. 2000). The results have demonstrated that posttraumatic pathology had the highest correlations with the total number of stressors[60], personality characteristics (namely, "Negativism" and "Psychopathology"),[61] and respondent age.

A prospective study carried out in our country, on a sample of students from the Belgrade university, before and after the NATO bombing campaign, represents one of the few prospective studies that made use of the NEO PI-R on the civilian (albeit selected) population in several time points – before the trauma, immediately after the trauma and a year later (Knežević et al. 2005). The survey is a consequence of a good practice of regular psychological testing of students at the Department of psychology, while the unfortunate circumstances of 1999 served as an experimental context for prospective studies. Some findings of this study deserve attention for several reasons. First of all, *Neuroticism* (N) before the trauma (the bombing) had statistically significant (although low) correlations only with intrusion (from the Impact of events scale - IES), in both time points, but not with avoidance. No other dimension correlated with the IES measures, except *Openness* (O) that revealed a correlation with intrusion after the first year. This was a seemingly unexpected result, since it was logical to conclude that openness to experience (which, in theory, represents an increased capacity of processing of the most diverse kinds of experience) also facilitates the processing of unwanted, traumatic events. Nevertheless, the authors have offered some possible explanations of this phenomenon, from which we shall here stress the fact that O was high in the whole sample, which means that high levels of O perhaps acquire a predictive value. In their conclusion, the authors stated that it was "possible to

[60] Measured by a simple list of 13 items, without psychometric verification, except the test-retest reliability.
[61] The names of the scales come from the Dutch version of the MMPI.

speculate whether studies that measure posttraumatic personality tend to overestimate the relationship between personality traits and posttraumatic stress because of posttraumatic changes of personality or partiality that affects all the assessments effectuated in the same time" (Knežević et al. 2005).

## Self- concept and exile

The problem of self-concept (and especially the problem of self-esteem) of refugees and immigrants has been discussed in a series of works (Ben-Porath, 1991; Espin, 1987; Hovey and Magaña, 2000; Hovey and Magaña, 2002; Finch et al. 2000; Noh et al. 1999; Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Koomen and Frankel, 1992; Westermeyer et al. 2000). Most frequently, it turned out that refugees had a weak self-esteem. This finding is ascribed to different reasons, such as loss of social position (downward social mobility), since many refugees had to accept the jobs for which they were overqualified, i.e. the jobs much inferior to the ones they had in their home country (Ben-Porath, 1991). The situation resembles to the one we have in our country. For instance, many BBAs, MAs, PhDs or engineers work in the flea market.

A second possible reason is change of gender roles. Namely, it happens frequently that women find jobs before men (Ben-Porath, 1991; Espin, 1987), which in many cases threatens the traditional role of men as breadwinners, which, in turn, enfeebles their self-esteem. A third possible reason is maladjustment to the new culture and drift to the minority position, frequently followed by a rejective attitude of the domicile population (Espin, 1987; Finch et al. 2000; Noh et al. 1999; Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Koomen and Frankel, 1992). The so-called "acculturative stress", low self-esteem, inefficient social support, lack of control over personal choices (i.e. impossibility of choice) and shift from the rural to the urban way of life are some of the factors significantly related to anxiety and depression disorders (Smith et al. 2002; Papageorgiou et al. 2000; Hovey and Magaña, 2000; Hovey and Magaña, 2002).

In spite of the existence of very strong stressors, it is by no means all refugees and emigrants who develop psychological disorders. On the other hand, the majority of these individuals experience in exile more or less difficulties that could hardly be labeled as pathological. In difference with the majority of other findings, Slodnjak et al. (Slodnjak et al. 2002) have in their study of 265 adolescent refugees from Bosnia found that they were less depressed and had higher self-esteem than their 195 Slovenian peers. Except that they expressed more sorrow and more concern about the future, the refugees did not manifest more behavioral problems or poorer school achievement. The authors concluded that interpretation of the relationship between depression and exile trauma has also to take into account cultural factors.

Some personal resources that might facilitate the overcoming of difficulties, such as resilience, experience of coping with adversity, imagination, internal locus of control, general self-esteem and impression of personal competence also play a prominent role (Beiser, 1990; Nicassio, 1985; van der Veer, 1998; Ahearn F., 2000).

Opačić (Opačić, 1995) has demonstrated that the system of self-evaluation plays a direct or indirect role in the following processes:

1. maintenance of a positive balance of well-being in time perspective;
2. maintenance of consistency through various roles in the regulation of aspirations, expectations and values (the choice of motives and their duration and intensity);
3. prediction of the effects of one's own and other people's behavior;
4. interpretation of the consequences of one's own and other people's behavior (locus of control);
5. choice of partners, friends and role-models (evaluation of others);

Opačić's statements are corroborated by some additional findings about the relationship between self-esteem, on the one hand, and locus of control (Elbedour et al. 1993; Knoff, 1986), hostility (general negative attitude toward others) and general satisfaction with life, on the other hand (Kaplan, 1982; Rosenberg, 1985). Results have demonstrated that the persons with a lower self-esteem are more likely to have a negative locus of control, a more negative attitude toward others and a lower general satisfaction with life.

## RESULTS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In this work, which bears the title of a preliminary report, we have decided to offer a review of the part of our research that refers to the differences between examined groups of refugees and returnees, leaving aside the complex relations with the domicile population, ethnic divisions or some more complex analyses of the significance of predictive factors. Our goal, therefore, was to discover the possible differences between refugees and returnees and ascertain whether these differences could be interpreted as an important psychological factor that affects the decision on repatriation or local integration.

The method and the procedures of investigation, the description of the sample and the instruments used in this study are described elsewhere in the monograph.

## War stressors in refugees and returnees

Insight into the frequency of the traumatic events that our respondents had been exposed to and group differences, demonstrated in Table 1, offer some very valuable information:

1) there is a relatively important number of respondents from all three groups who had been exposed to some war-related stressful event(s);
2) all inter-group differences are significant, with the difference between refugees and returnees existing in 11 of the 20 enlisted categories of stressful events;
3) high percentages in the domicile population reveal a high exposure of this population category to war-related stressful events.

If we take the cumulative value of the frequency of exposure to all categories of stressors, all intergroup differences are statistically significant ($F_{tot}(2,1499)= 29,664$; $p=0,000$), and the same goes for the refugee-returnee differences ($F_{tot}(2,1499)= 26,751$; $p=0,000$). Quite simply: returnees had generally been exposed to a lesser number of various traumatic events than were the actual refugees.

If we analyze the categories of stressors on which refugees' and returnees' frequencies differ, assuming that the *kind* of war experience could also influence the decision on repatriation, we reach some very interesting conclusions. First of all, there are no statistically significant differences of the frequency of exposure to direct assault on the respondent (categories 3-6), serious injury in the course of war, "kidnapping or abduction" or "imprisonment". On the contrary, there are some very clear differences of the frequency of combat participation (No. 14), torture (No. 17), lack of food, water or shelter (No. 10 and 12), and injury or loss of a close person (No. 9, 15 and 16).

Table 1: *War stressors in refugees and returnees*

| | | P% N=527 | I% N=501 | D% N=463 | Tot% N=1501 | $F_{tot}(2,1499)$ | P= | $F_{ip}$ (1027,1) | P= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Serious accident in the course of war | 7,99 | 12,57 | 7,99 | 9,52 | 4,084 | ,017 | 5,969 | ,015 |
| 2. | Natural disaster in the course of war | 0,37 | 2,40 | 0,22 | 1,00 | 7,505 | ,001 | 8,037 | ,005 |
| 3. | Non-sexual assault by known person | 3,72 | 5,79 | 2,16 | 3,93 | 4,263 | ,014 | 2,477 | ,116 |
| 4. | Non-sexual assault by unknown person | 11,52 | 10,18 | 7,13 | 9,72 | 2,836 | ,059 | ,483 | ,487 |
| 5. | Sexual assault by known person | 0,19 | 0,20 | 0,22 | 0,20 | ,006 | ,994 | ,003 | ,960 |
| 6. | Sexual assault by unknown person | 0,37 | 1,20 | 0 | 0,53 | 3,471 | ,031 | 2,316 | ,128 |
| 7. | Imprisonment | 10,41 | 8,58 | 4,97 | 8,12 | 5,067 | ,006 | 1,003 | ,317 |
| 8. | Life-threatening disease | 4,83 | 7,39 | 1,08 | 4,53 | 11,302 | ,000 | 2,970 | ,085 |
| 9. | Sudden death of a close person | 8,74 | 15,17 | 6,48 | 10,19 | 11,033 | ,000 | 10,371 | ,001 |
| 10. | Lack of food or water | 24,72 | 32,93 | 19,65 | 25,90 | 11,510 | ,000 | 8,609 | ,003 |
| 11. | Disease without possibility of getting therapy | 10,04 | 9,78 | 4,10 | 8,12 | 7,310 | ,001 | ,019 | ,890 |
| 12. | Lack of shelter | 24,91 | 41,92 | 11,45 | 26,43 | 62,660 | ,000 | 34,964 | ,000 |
| 13. | Serious injury | 8,74 | 10,78 | 3,89 | 7,92 | 8,285 | ,000 | 1,232 | ,267 |
| 14. | Combat or shelling | 61,15 | 70,26 | 61,34 | 64,25 | 5,951 | ,003 | 9,597 | ,002 |
| 15. | Knowledge of murder or violent death of a close person | 36,62 | 45,31 | 28,73 | 37,08 | 14,466 | ,000 | 8,163 | ,004 |
| 16. | Disappearance or kidnapping of a friend or family member | 28,62 | 33,93 | 12,31 | 25,37 | 33,421 | ,000 | 3,410 | ,065 |
| 17. | Torture | 7,62 | 11,58 | 3,46 | 7,66 | 11,371 | ,000 | 4,722 | ,030 |
| 18. | Kidnapping, abduction | 9,11 | 9,18 | 2,38 | 7,06 | 11,329 | ,000 | ,002 | ,967 |
| 19. | Other life-threatening war experience | 35,32 | 32,53 | 24,84 | 31,16 | 5,264 | ,005 | ,893 | ,345 |
| 20. | Feeling of fear or peril because of witnessing to a war-related event | 10,41 | 14,37 | 7,34 | 10,79 | 6,277 | ,002 | 3,777 | ,052 |

P=returnees; I=refugees; D=domicile population

These findings partially coincide with our earlier (still unpublished), seemingly paradoxical results that distress provoked by personal injury is relatively less important than distress caused by war-provoked deprivation, exactly like the experiences from the categories 10 and 12. The experience of torture,[62] in perfect accord with the results of earlier studies, was correlated with very high levels of posttraumatic pathology, and it is therefore by no means surprising that torture survivors are more frequent among those who have decided to remain in exile.

[62] We are quite aware that it was not identical with the experience of imprisonment

Moreover, there is a surprisingly high number of returnees who underwent torture, although they are statistically significantly less numerous when compared to refugees. This result is to be taken as especially important since it corroborates the idea that even the most traumatized individuals - who underwent the most severe forms of abuse at the hands of the opposite side - are to some extent, although in presently unclear circumstances, ready to return to their pre-war homes. We say "unclear circumstances", simply because we have not yet elucidated all the factors that conjointly affect the decision on repatriation.

Still, in our opinion, the most remarkable difference is the one of injury or loss of a closed person, given the fact that there is a higher number of people who had that experience among refugees. Unfortunately, the question that defines the category 14 ("shelling or participation in combat"), does not enable us to discriminate between the persons who actively participated in combat (as members of regular or irregular forces) and the civilians who had been exposed to combat by sheer coincidence (for instance, because being unable to leave a location under attack). A better discrimination between the two groups would have informed us if the persons who underwent these experiences were more reluctant to repatriate because they feared persecution, arrest or condemnation.

If we are to venture to portray, on the basis of these scant data, the kind of war-related experience that a typical refugee or returnee underwent, we might say that a typical refugee is a person who was more likely to have combat exposure or combat participation, and who, because of war, had experienced hunger, unprotected escape, frequent torture and loss of close persons. On the other hand, a typical returnee is a person who had equally been assaulted, arrested (and perhaps injured), but underwent less frequently these previously enlisted experiences.

## Posttraumatic psychopathology in refugees and returnees

Table 2 contains the average values and standard deviations on three distinct IES-R scales, as well as the total values on this instrument, for all of the three groups under scrutiny. The table also contains the values obtained in the SRD-10, as well as the significances of all intergroup differences, and between refugees and repatriates especially.

Table 2: *Posttraumatic symptomatology in refugees and returnees, measured by the IES-R and SRD-10*

| | $M_p$ | $SD_p$ | $M_i$ | $SD_i$ | $M_d$ | $SD_d$ | $M_{tot}$ | $SD_{tot}$ | $F_{tot}$ (1074,2) | P= | $F_{ip}$ (767,1) | P= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INTRU | 1,6936 | 1,10903 | 1,7506 | 1,15888 | 1,6178 | 1,16192 | 1,6896 | 1,13993 | 1,091 | ,336 | ,481 | ,488 |
| AVOID | 1,7625 | ,93036 | 1,6705 | 1,02168 | 1,5809 | ,95968 | 1,6821 | ,96972 | 3,213 | ,041 | 1,696 | ,193 |
| HYPER | 1,5102 | 1,07268 | 1,5828 | 1,18832 | 1,3705 | 1,05208 | 1,4927 | 1,10617 | 3,051 | ,048 | ,786 | ,376 |
| IES-R | 5,0639 | 2,88056 | 5,3164 | 3,10964 | 4,7206 | 3,00841 | 5,0497 | 2,99877 | 3,895 | ,021 | 1,665 | ,197 |
| SRD-10 | 1,0510 | ,91468 | 1,1710 | 1,06441 | ,8472 | ,84174 | 1,0298 | ,95177 | 9,597 | ,000 | 2,818 | ,094 |

INTRU=Intrusion subscale; AVOID=Avoidance subscale; HYPER=Hyperirritability subscale; IES-R= Total IES-R score; SRD-10=Total SRD-10 value; M=Mean value, SD=Standard deviation; P=Returnees; I=Refugees; D=Domicile population

We have to remark that the differences of the IES-R values of these two groups are not statistically significant, either on the subscales or on the instrument as a whole. There is, however, a small, mildly significant difference between the groups on the SRD-10. On the other hand, *all groups* reveal mutual differences on the avoidance and hyper-irritability subscales, as well as in the total IES-R values and there is also a clear, statistically very significant difference on the SRD-10.

The next question we tried to answer was whether we could assess the frequency of clinically important stress-related disorders in the respondent sample on the basis of the measured values. The instrument we used to measure posttraumatic simptomatology (the IES-R) does not make possible diagnosing of PTSD. However, it is possible to use the IES-R as a screening instrument that can identify the individuals with clinically important symptom levels. These persons very likely have PTSD and can be subsequently diagnosed by additional methods and clinical interview. An earlier, much more common version of this instrument was frequently used for this purpose (Sundin and Horowitz, 2002).

All our previous experience with the use of the "cut-off score" on the IES for diagnosing of PTSD reveals that this instrument does not have a good balance between sensitivity (the number of those who have a diagnosis and were detected as such) and specificity (the number of those who have not the diagnosis and were detected as having it). If the border value is set too high, sensitivity becomes insufficient (i.e. a large proportion of those with PTSD are not diagnosed), while, if the value is set too low, the proportion of the persons with PTSD diagnosis becomes hypertrophied.

In difference with the classical calculation of the border value, canonical discriminant analysis, among other things, makes possible prediction of group membership. This is obtained by the use of Fisher's classification coefficients. The bigger the number of the variables that serve as the basis of classification, the better the obtained classification. A major shortcoming of this procedure is that the

establishment of the regression equation demands a previously established accurate definition of diagnostic categories.

In order to calculate classification coefficients, we used the already existing data on 145 beneficiaries of the IAN Centre for rehabilitation of torture victims, for whom, aside from the data on the IES-R, we also had information from clinical interview, as well as the values on the *Clinician Administered PTSD Scale* (CAPS).[63] On the basis of the CAPS results, we have defined two groups: 1) the group with current PTSD and 2) the group without PTSD. Items from the IES-R were used as predictors for the establishment of group membership. In this way, we have obtained a canonical correlation of 0,628, significant at the 1‰ level[64]. On the basis of this function, 75.9% of cases were correctly classified (sensitivity 81%, specificity 69.5%), which represents the best possible linear classification this instrument can yield. Obtained in this manner, Fisher's classification coefficients were then used in our sample of 1502 respondents. That is how we used the IES-R items to assess the number of persons with PTSD in our sample.

Table 3 demonstrates the percentages of respondents classified on the basis of this procedure

Table 3: *Presence of posttraumatic pathology in respondents – classification according to the IES-R border value*

| | Current PTSD | Without current PTSD | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Returnees | 192<br>(35,7%) | 346<br>(64,3%) | 538<br>(100,0%) |
| Refugees | 177<br>(35,3%) | 324<br>(64,7%) | 501<br>(100,0%) |
| Domicile population | 127<br>(27,4%) | 336<br>(72,6%) | 463<br>(100,0%) |
| Total | 496<br>33,0% | 1006<br>67,0% | 1502<br>100,0% |

Table 3 makes possible to see the percentages of the examined groups that might correspond to the stress-related prevalence or, at least, serve as a rough estimate of the real prevalence. Relatedly, we have to remark that: a) there is a repeated finding of high values of the indicators of existence of posttraumatic psychopathology in all groups; 2) although intergroup differences do exist, returnee-refugee differences are not significant. The importance of these findings will be discussed later on.

The values obtained on the SCL-90-R and the significance of all intergroup differences (and especially the significance between refugees and returnees) are

[63] A structured interview for the assessment of PTSD symptoms which represents the "golden standard" in PTSD diagnosing

[64] These results will be demonstated elsewhere in the monograph.

demonstrated in Tables 4 and 5. Although all intergroup differences are significant for the majority of the questionnaire scales, refugees and returnees vary significantly on only two scales: *Hostility* (HOS) and *Psychoticism* (PSY). This becomes clearer if we consult the original interpretation of the meaning of these scales (Derogatis, 1994). The *Hostility* dimension refers to "thoughts, feelings or actions that are characteristic of the negative affect state of anger". It reflects the qualities such as aggression, rage, irritability and resentment. The *Psychoticism* dimension is constructed in a way so as to represent a continuous dimension of human experiences "from mild interpersonal alienation to dramatic psychosis".

Table 4: *Psychiatric symptomatology in refugees and returnees, measured by the SCL-90-R*

| | $M_p$ | $SD_p$ | $M_i$ | $SD_i$ | $M_d$ | $SD_d$ | $M_{tot}$ | $SD_{tot}$ | $F_{tot}$ (2,1166) | P= | $F_{ip}$ (1,792) | P= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOM | 49.88 | 10,185 | 50.67 | 12,150 | 48.71 | 10,370 | 48,961 | 10,934 | 4.327 | .013 | 2,378 | ,123 |
| O-C | 45.19 | 8,186 | 45.57 | 8,933 | 44.22 | 8,384 | 44,128 | 8,510 | 3.488 | .031 | ,261 | ,610 |
| I-S | 48.42 | 8,060 | 49.38 | 9,058 | 47.81 | 8,081 | 47,743 | 8,408 | 2.618 | .073 | ,908 | ,341 |
| DEP | 46.25 | 7,561 | 46.58 | 8,568 | 44.93 | 8,454 | 45,259 | 8,205 | 4.485 | .011 | ,179 | ,672 |
| ANX | 46.58 | 9,092 | 47.89 | 10,259 | 45.61 | 8,890 | 45,700 | 9,446 | 4.732 | .009 | 2,147 | ,143 |
| HOS | 50.35 | 8,232 | 51.94 | 9,837 | 51.34 | 9,393 | 50,540 | 9,149 | 2.251 | .106 | 4,542 | ,033 |
| PHOB | 49.89 | 7,204 | 50.91 | 8,349 | 48.54 | 7,863 | 48,994 | 7,843 | 8.528 | .000 | 1,946 | ,163 |
| PAR | 50.69 | 8,891 | 51.07 | 9,965 | 49.29 | 9,462 | 49,561 | 9,441 | 2.947 | .053 | ,311 | ,577 |
| PSY | 44.70 | 8,704 | 46.33 | 9,825 | 44.34 | 9,164 | 44,283 | 9,246 | 4.464 | .012 | 4,430 | ,036 |
| ADD | 48.15 | 8,553 | 49.06 | 10,430 | 47.14 | 9,306 | 47,031 | 9,447 | 4.074 | .017 | 1,110 | ,292 |

SOM=Somatization; O-C=Obsession-compulsion; I-S=Interpersonal sensitivity; DEP=Depression; ANX=Anxiety; HOS=Hostility; PHOB=Phobic anxiety; PAR=Paranoid ideation; PSY=Psychoticism; ADD=Additional items; M=Mean value, SD=Standard deviation; P=returnees; I=refugees; D=domicile population

Table 5 contains the values and significance of differences between refugees and returnees on the SCL-90-R indexes. The significance of differences between refugees and returnees on the PST (*Positive Symptom Total*) and GSI (*Global Severity Index*) indexes, with the first group scoring significantly higher than the second one, on both indexes, means that refugees reported more symptoms than returnees and revealed a higher symptom severity level[65].

[65] The PST is a mesure of the number of symptoms assesed as positive by the respondent, while the GSI represents the sum of all values divided by the numer of questions (N = 90).

Table 5: *Values and differences in the SCL-90-R indexes*

| | $M_p$ | $SD_p$ | $M_i$ | $SD_i$ | $M_d$ | $SD_d$ | $M_{tot}$ | $SD_{tot}$ | $F_{tot}$ (2,1137) | P= | $F_{ip}$ (1, 768) | P= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSI | ,8419 | ,62296 | ,9854 | ,80179 | ,7729 | ,66828 | ,8643 | ,70211 | 8,741 | ,000 | 7,812 | ,005 |
| PST | 41,0913 | 23,2913 | 43,6930 | 25,7429 | 37,1165 | 24,2832 | 40,6149 | 24,5182 | 6,699 | ,001 | 2,169 | ,141 |
| PSDI | 1,7289 | ,53431 | 1,8283 | ,66006 | 1,7192 | ,54778 | 1,7567 | ,58199 | 3,949 | ,020 | 5,341 | ,021 |

GSI=Global severity index; PST=Positive symptoms suffering index; PSDI=Positive symptoms total; M=Mean value, SD=Standard deviation; P=returnees; I=refugees; D=domicile population

## Personality characteristics of refugees and returnees

As Table 6 demonstrates, although there are some intergroup differences on the *Neuroticism* (N) and *Openness* (O) scales, there are no significant differences between refugees and returnees. However, differences again became significant when the domicile population group was taken into analysis. If we compare the values of the domicile population and refugees only, the difference on these two scales becomes much clearer (*Neuroticism*: $F_{i\ d}(1,760)= 5,203$, p=0,023; *Openness*: $F_{i\ d}(1,760)= 6,134$, p=0,013). As the latest finding will not be comment here, we only have to remark that we have not established significant differences between returnees and refugees in the personality characteristics measured by the given instrument.

Table 6: *Values of the NEO FFI domains and significances of intergroup differences*

| | $M_p$ | $SD_p$ | $M_i$ | $SD_i$ | $M_d$ | $SD_d$ | $M_{tot}$ | $SD_{tot}$ | $F_{tot}$ (2,1160) | P= | $F_{ip}$ (1,777) | P= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | 31,968 | 6,846 | 32,532 | 8,326 | 31,125 | 8,692 | 31,873 | 7,991 | 3,005 | ,050 | 1,072 | ,301 |
| E | 38,708 | 5,954 | 38,950 | 5,734 | 39,073 | 6,577 | 38,907 | 6,095 | ,364 | ,695 | ,332 | ,565 |
| O | 36,175 | 4,724 | 36,251 | 4,788 | 37,128 | 4,975 | 36,514 | 4,844 | 4,650 | ,010 | ,051 | ,822 |
| A | 39,708 | 4,182 | 40,026 | 4,290 | 39,820 | 4,676 | 39,849 | 4,383 | ,524 | ,592 | 1,099 | ,295 |
| C | 44,419 | 5,964 | 44,971 | 6,324 | 45,193 | 6,610 | 44,854 | 6,303 | 1,576 | ,207 | 1,572 | ,210 |

N=Neuroticism; E=Extraversion; O=Openness; A=Agreeableness; C= Conscientiousness M=Mean values, SD=Standard deviation; P=Returnees; I=Refugees; D=Domicile population

## Self-concept in refugees and returnees

Bearing in mind the previously exposed results, one could assume that refugees, returnees and the domicile population, taken as groups, will vary in their general image of the self (*self-image*), impression of general competence (*self-efficacy*), degree of disenchantment with human nature (*misanthropy*), impression of control over one's own life (*locus of control*) and general satisfaction with one's own life (*well-being*). Excepting the results obtained by Slodnjak et al. (Slodnjak et

al. 2002), we can expect that the domicile population will have a higher self-esteem, a stronger feeling of personal competence, a stronger impression of control over one's own life, less hostility and a globally stronger general satisfaction with one's own life. It can equally be assumed that returnees (when compared to refugees) will have a stronger feeling of personal competence and a more internal locus of control.

The results exposed in Table 7 partially confirm these assumptions.

Table 7: *Values of the self-concept dimensions and significances of intergroup differences*

| | $M_p$ | $SD_p$ | $M_i$ | $SD_i$ | $M_d$ | $SD_d$ | $M_{tot}$ | $SD_{tot}$ | $F_{tot}$ (2,1035) | P= | $F_{ip}$ (1,777) | P= |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-image | 3,348 | ,571 | 3,421 | ,553 | 3,394 | ,625 | 3,386 | ,583 | 2,044 | ,130 | 4,268 | ,039 |
| General competence | 3,479 | ,606 | 3,388 | ,724 | 3,625 | ,698 | 3,494 | ,682 | 14,989 | ,000 | 4,799 | ,029 |
| Externality | 3,204 | ,613 | 3,328 | ,656 | 3,140 | ,681 | 3,225 | ,653 | 10,599 | ,000 | 10,028 | ,002 |
| Misanthropy | 3,254 | ,673 | 3,293 | ,725 | 3,194 | ,776 | 3,248 | ,724 | 2,251 | ,106 | ,794 | ,373 |
| Quality of life | 4,198 | ,772 | 4,229 | ,767 | 4,463 | ,728 | 4,290 | ,766 | 17,657 | ,000 | ,432 | ,511 |

M=Mean value, SD=Standard deviation; P=Returnees; I=Refugees; D=Domicile population

Although the expected tendency was present, we could not affirm that the three groups under scrutiny significantly varied in their general attitude toward others. All that we could conclude on the basis of arithmetic means was that all the three groups have a negative image of human nature. Similarly, we could not discover any difference in their general self-image. On the other hand, there were some differences in the global impression of personal competence, perception of control over one's own life and general assessment of life quality. In this respect, the lowest results were found in refugees, followed by returnees and then by the domicile population, with the exception of assessment of the general quality of life, estimated as being poorest in returnees and not in refugees.

Differences between refugees and returnees are of more interest to us. Our assumptions about the general competence and locus of control have been confirmed. The difference in the perceived quality of life has disappeared, which means that that the general difference between these three groups can be ascribed to the difference between refugees and returnees, on the one hand, and the domicile population, on the other hand.

Although it is methodologically questionable to analyze partial differences when the global ones are absent, it is remarkable that, when compared to returnees, refugees have a significantly better self-image, and this is something worth analyzing. Refugees, therefore, are those who more often have a positive opinion about their welcome in the host environment and their personal appearance, strength and intelligence, but simultaneously feel that they are not able to achieve much and make significant changes in their lives. This gap between the global self-

esteem and the global competence is bridged through externalization of the reasons that caused their actual situation. Although their attributions of reasons are largely correct, we cannot but remark that the same reasons existed with returnees as well. It seems that this self-impression of refugees represents a reflection of their defense position ("I am good, but the world is bad"). It is, therefore, an inauthentic self-image that we have here – an image not founded on personal successes and achievements but defenses and devaluation.

## Subjective assessment of psychological state and help seeking

Table 8 summarizes answers to the questions from the General questionnaire about psychological status, help seeking and needs for assistance, before the war and in the moment of study. These data basically speak about a dramatic difference between the pre-war assistance needs and the assistance needs in the moment of study. Graphs 1 and 2 offer a visual presentation of this change.[66] The results do not call for an additional explanation and their importance will be discussed soon.

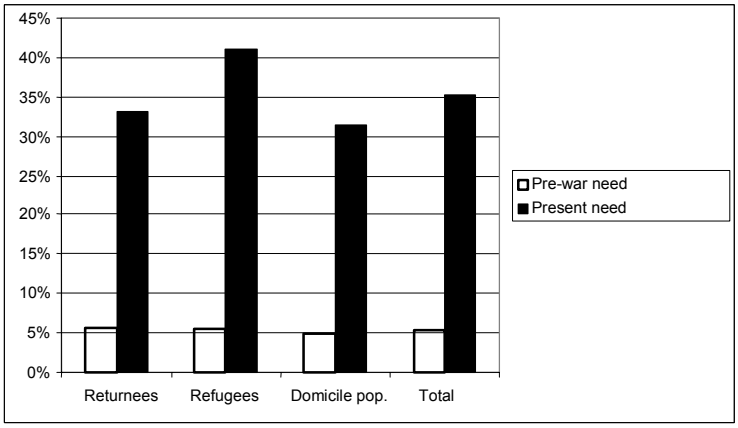
Table 8: *Subjective assessment of psychological state, and data on help seeking*

| QUESTION | | P | I | D | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Before the war/exile, did you feel a need to consult a doctor because of your psychological problems? | yes | 5,6% | 5,4% | 4,8% | 5,3% |
| | no | 94,4% | 94,6% | 95,2% | 94,7% |
| 2. Before the war/exile, did you consult a doctor because of your psychological problems? | yes | 3,9% | 4,6% | 3,3% | 4,0% |
| | no | 96,1% | 95,4% | 96,7% | 96,0% |
| 3. Used you to take tranquilizers before the war/exile? | yes | 7,5% | 8,4% | 6,4% | 7,5% |
| | no | 92,5% | 91,6% | 93,4% | 92,5% |
| 4. Do you feel a need to talk with an expert about your present psychological state? | yes, a great need | 8,9% | 11,1% | 6,6% | 8,9% |
| | yes, but not such a great need | 24,3% | 30,0% | 24,8% | 26,4% |
| | don't know | 15,1% | 13,6% | 13,6% | 14,1% |
| | no | 51,8% | 45,3% | 54,9% | 50,6% |
| 5. Do you take tranquilizers now? | yes | 29,2% | 29,8% | 27,0% | 28,7% |
| | no | 70,8% | 70,0% | 73,0% | 71,2% |
| 6. When compared with the pre war/exile period, your present psychological state is: | much worse | 18,1% | 22,0% | 13,1% | 18,1% |
| | somewhat worse | 41,1% | 43,9% | 37,6% | 41,1% |
| | the same | 33,6% | 30,1% | 44,8% | 35,4% |
| | somewhat better | 5,4% | 3,8% | 3,6% | 4,4% |
| | much better | 1,7% | ,2% | ,8% | ,9% |
| 7. When compared with the pre war/exile period, you feel that your present life situation is: | much worse | 52,6% | 48,0% | 34,8% | 45,6% |
| | somewhat better | 30,9% | 36,7% | 41,1% | 36,0% |
| | the same | 11,0% | 11,2% | 18,4% | 13,4% |
| | somewhat better | 4,7% | 4,0% | 4,6% | 4,4% |
| | much better | ,7% | | 1,1% | ,6% |

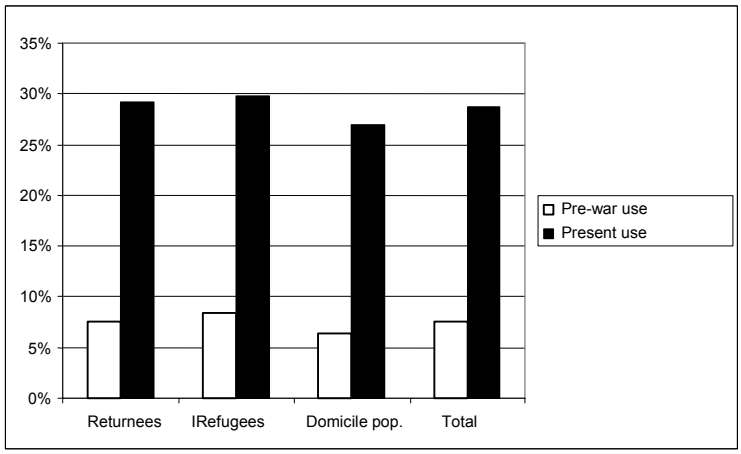
P=Returnees; I=Refugees; D=Domicile population

[66] We summed all the positive answers (in various degrees) to the question No. 4 ("Do you feel a need to talk with an expert about your present psiychological state?")

Graph 1: *Subjective impression of the need for psychological help*




Graph 2: *Use of psychotropic medication*




## DISCUSSION

Before we start discussing particular results, and before we offer their tentative synthetic interpretation, we have to express a general impression that we had in the whole course of the study – impression of a persistent poignancy of war events and of disastrous effects of the psychological consequences of war, years after experiencing trauma. This study, which is, we believe, methodologically solid and sufficiently comprehensive to represent, at least partially, the picture of the psychological reality of the posttraumatic condition of the former Yugoslavia, offers insight into the scope of human suffering and ordeal that took place in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Two thirds of our respondents (64,25%) were, in their

own words, exposed to combat or shelling, while huge percentages of the respondents reported "murder or violent death of a close person" (37,08%), or "disappearance or abduction of a friend or family member" (25,37%). Even the most extreme forms of trauma, such as imprisonment and torture, were expressed in significant percentages (7,66% and 8,12%). A third of the respondents precisely (33%) reported the symptoms of PTSD, the severity of which could be classified as current PTSD. In other words, it can roughly be stated that these individuals suffer from stress-related disorders! Almost a third of the respondents (28,7%) use tranquilizers, while a saddening minority experiences their situation as the same (13,4%) or somewhat better than their pre-war situation (4,4%). Therefore, we have to conclude again that the real psychological consequences of war experiences should be understood as a permanent aggravating factor in the processes of reconciliation, repatriation and adjustment in the posttraumatic period – a factor that can maintain its destructive influence even decades after the original traumatic experience. As so many times before, we are faced with the fact that war suffering cannot be "forgotten" or denied politically, socially or medically. After immensely destructive experiences of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, only real and comprehensive insight into various aspects of the posttraumatic life of the population and skillfully designed programs of social assistance, empowering, prevention and rehabilitation can lead to a genuine healing.

In the psychiatric/psychological sense, we do not have relevant epidemiological data for the assessment of real needs. Namely, we lack data on the most frequent comorbidity disorders (depression; substance abuse), as well as data on chronic, particularly disabling disorders such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Besides, our study did not include children and the young and our research and sample design could suggest that perhaps some other high-risk groups have been omitted as well. Our attempt to ascertain the rates that would serve as indexes of the prevalence of stress-related disorders can serve as a rough orientation. Still, if we compare our data on drug intake (table 8, item 5) with the percentage of the respondents classified by this method into the group with current PTSD (table 3), we can see that deviations are reduced to few percents (4% in the whole sample). This can speak in favor of the validity of the chosen method of assessment and its practical value in the process of screening in similar research situations. But, much more important, these results reveal huge percentages of the population exposed to psychological suffering. Strategically, the findings represent yet another proof of the necessity of realization of serious epidemiological studies that would ascertain the real psychological/psychiatric consequences of the Yugoslav wars in the posttraumatic period. We also have to make one critical remark: the absence of similar studies in the three countries where we have effectuated our survey cannot be justified by the lack of financial or human resources since, as far as we know, these have generously been used for programs of often unclear practical value and utility. Ideally, the real data on the human

consequences of the Yugoslav wars could reveal yet another part of the real price of the political projects of the 1990s, paid by thousands of the dead and permanently disabled.

Our results reveal that the persons who remained in exile vary in the kind and number of traumatic experiences but not in posttraumatic pathology. Differences on the *Hostility* and *Psychoticism* scales of the SCL-90-R point out to possible differences in impression and management of aggressive impulses, as well as to differences in social withdrawal and isolation. Although these characteristics can also bee seen in the PTSD picture, they correspond much more to chronic, permanent personality changes, described within the complex PTSD or DESNOS constructs. This opinion is substantiated by a mild (but still significant) difference in stress-related dissociative symptomatology, measured by the SRD-10 scale. If, therefore, we were to issue a judgment on the kind of psychopathology that could, at least partially, influence the decision on repatriation, we would have to divert our attention from PTSD in its clinically defined form (as measured by the IES-R) to some more complex patterns of permanent post-catastrophic personality change. Correspondingly, our NEO-FFI findings reveal that there are no significant differences between refugees and returnees on personality dimensions, which are innate, as it is assumed.

When these results are supplemented with data on self-concept (and this concept is one of the possibly most important indicators of permanent post-catastrophic personality change), intergroup differences become much more visible. The complex interaction of impression of personal competence, self-esteem and locus of control, which we have obtained here, suggests that, in the course of time, the actual exile can become the *psychological* exile. In other words, passivity, impossibility of active participation in the creation of one's own life and dependence on external (usually adverse) circumstances can lead to a "vicious circle", the exit from which is sought not in the transformation of the actual condition but in the quest of an another support and rationalization of passivity. Although this picture is set deeply in the social field (and its causes are perhaps unbreakably related to other vital circumstances that affect personal decisions, including the one on repatriation), our results suggest that psychological factors must not be neglected.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In short, we can say that there are significant psychological differences between returnees and the persons who decided not to repatriate. These differences lie in the domain of traumatic experiences, as well as in the domain of psychopathology that in all probability belongs to the area of permanent post-catastrophic personality change. Besides, our results make possible to form a clearer picture of the magnitude of the problem. They also call attention to the need

to investigate the psychological/psychiatric consequences of war sufferings through serious epidemiological studies. Moreover, it seems that the totality of our results offers a rather clear picture of the directions that future psychosocial programs for refugees should take. The priorities reside in an active confrontment with posttraumatic sequelae and development of long-term goals for the establishment of internal locus of control, which implies assumption of the responsibility for the development of one's own potentials and enhancement of global competence through development and realization of a life plan that would consist of small steps and clearly operationalized goals.

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# MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Among ten countries in the world with the largest number of refugees per capita in 2004 there are two states from our region: Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro. Every sixth inhabitant of former SFR Yugoslavia has lived to become a refugee or an internally displaced person. This ratio is twice as high (33.54 %) if we take into account only the population of the region that refugees originate from.

The war in the region has led to significant changes in its ethnic structure. Changes in Croatia are primarily a consequence of the declining number of Serbs, given that in the period between two population census exercises it was left without 380 000 Serbs or around 65% of the pre-war Serbian population. It is still not possible to respond to issues of ethnic homogenization in the Federation BIH and Republika Srpska, since a post-war population census has not yet been held, but in all likelihood the situation in these entities of BIH is not much better. With regard to Serbia, ethnic homogenization has occurred primarily in Vojvodina, northern Serbian province, through the arrival of Serb refugees from Bosnia and Croatia as well as to a lesser extent through the declining number of national minority members, especially Croats and Hungarians. Ten years after, it is not very likely that the processes of repatriation and return of refugees and internally displaced would lead to any re-establishment of the pre-war ethnic mixture.

On 31st January 2005 in Sarajevo, ministers of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro have signed a *Declaration on the Return of Refugees*. By this declaration the three states have confirmed their readiness to create adequate conditions for return, as well as provide support to those who have decided to remain in current countries of asylum. The international community, UNHCR, EU and OSCE were invited to assist the governments in seeking durable solutions for refugees in the region, through return or integration programmes until the end of 2006.

*The idea of return* finds different acceptance among refugees currently residing in different countries/entities. The largest proportion of those wishing to return to their pre-war homes is among Bosniaks presently living in Federation BIH. Far less respondents willing to return were registered in Republika Srpska and in Croatia. About 1/5 of respondents still do not have a clearly formed decision on return/integration; they probably represent the most vulnerable part of the refugee population and the target group towards which further programmes and strategies for resolving the refugee problem should be directed.

Potential returnees stress basic security, basic social care and economic prosperity as the key conditions that, if fulfilled, would to the greatest extent positively influence their decision to return to the country of origin. More or less the same conditions are cited in decision-making on potential integration.

Those who have returned point out that the key factor in making the decision had been the restitution of private property in the country of origin, which indicates that efforts should be enhanced with regard to reconstruction of damaged property as well as restitution of tenancy rights and illicitly occupied property. The next important factor is a satisfactory level of personal and economic security of the family.

*The economic situation* in the region is generally very poor. Regardless of certain limitations with respect to the sample, the fact that 57% of respondents are below the poverty line is cause enough for concern. As expected, the best situation is in Croatia and the worst in Republika Srpska, where the unbelievable 82% are below the poverty line. The "lead group" in poverty are returnees to Republika Srpska, of which 85% is poor. At a time when the general trend is that of decreasing classical humanitarian aid, these results show that the need for this type of assistance should not be disregarded.

Besides a continued and sufficient engagement of the international community, the return process requires a sincere commitment of local political authorities to the ideas of multiethnicity, civil society and respect for human rights. Hence the fact that an average number of *human rights violations* among the sample of our respondents is over 2.4 gives rise to increased concern. Main areas of human rights violations identified in this research correspond to the incidents already pointed out by international and local NGOs. Illicit possession and destruction of property, detention and arrest without a warrant, humiliation and torture have not circumvented any of the territories from which refugees originate, while the sense of being subjected to *discrimination on ethnic grounds* is still highly present in many spheres of public and social life. Rights of refugees and returnees are at much higher risk of violation than the rights of population that has not migrated. These tendencies are visible both during and after the war.

The trust of all categories of respondents in state structures that are supposed to ensure protection of human rights is very low, while the effectiveness of criminal law mechanisms is even lower. Moreover, state bodies are cited as some of the most frequent perpetrators of human rights violations. The topic of relations between citizens and state institutions in transition countries deserves additional attention and a special focused research.

Psychological factors constitute an important group of factors that should be taken into account very seriously. The results show grave inner psychological obstacles to return of refugees and reconciliation. There are clear and distinctive differences in the perception of the country of origin between returnees and those refugees who have not yet returned. Returnees perceive their country of origin as

their own, while refugees feel the same way about their host country. This leads to conclusion that *socio-psychological factors* are highly important in making the decision about return or integration.

*Social distance* among the region's nations is still very high and poses a serious psychological obstacle to reconciliation. Between 10% and 25% of respondents show extreme distance toward members of other ethnic groups, especially those they had been in conflict with. The distance is the highest among refugees and the lowest among returnees. However, there is a slow trend of decrease in this distance, either as a consequence of the applied method or due to real political changes. Research results show us the link between individual psychopathology and social distance, which leads to conclusion that by treating individual pathology we also partly treat the social one.

The *psychological status* of the population in the region is probably best described by the fact that up to 29% of respondents are currently taking tranquilizer medication. Based on most conservative estimates, between 35% and 36% of refugees and displaced meet the criteria for being diagnosed with the posttraumatic stress disorder. General psychopathology is much more present among forced migrants than among local population.

There are differences between returnees and those who have not decided to return, both with regard to the type of traumatic experience and to the general perception of own competence and control over one's life.

The value of data obtained is limited by the sample structure and these cannot be considered as representative of the general population; namely, the proportion of refugees, especially returnees in the overall sample is several times higher than their number within the general population.

It seems that the overview of results gives a clear picture of directions *that refugee programmes should take*.

Psychosocial programmes should prioritize the work on active dealing with posttraumatic sequelae, establishing the internal locus of control, resuming the responsibility for one's own life and fulfilling own potentials, as well as strengthening the feeling of global competence through creating and implementing a life plan made of small steps and clearly operationalised goals.

Economic empowerment programmes, education and re-qualification are important preconditions for enabling people to actively face life in a transformed post-war community and in times of rapid changes and transition.

The pilot-research on human rights status of refugees and returnees shows that such research is feasible and useful. By applying the human rights status questionnaire on a representative sample of respondents would allow collection and systematic follow-up of relevant data on violations of human rights of vulnerable groups in the region. Refugees and returnees are indubitably under particular risk

of this and still require special non-institutionalised aid in protection and exercising their rights both in the country of origin and the country of current residence.

All aforementioned data indicate that the issue of displacement, of repatriation in particular, represents a complex security-political, socio-economic, legal and psychological problem requiring a concerted action in several areas. As confirmed by the experience in the region, partial attempts can rarely yield significant results. Regrettably, at the time when local political resistance to return has begun to wane and possibility has opened for safe and sustainable return, the donors - without the help of which refugees and displaced could hardly resolve their status – have started pulling out from the region and winding down their assistance to return programmes. We hope that the results of this research would prompt them to reconsider some of their strategic decisions.

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