

VIEWS AND OPINIONS OF THE DISPLACED FROM THE CROATIAN DANUBE BASIN TOWARDS THE SERBIAN POPULATION LIVING IN THE AREA

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UDK 316.647.5-054.74(497.5-11=862:=861)

Izvorni znanstveni rad

Primljeno: 15. 4. 1997.

The paper deals with the attitudes and opinions of Croatian displaced persons towards Serbian population living in the Croatian Danube basin, with regard to the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration, personal characteristics, intention of return, experience and relationship with the places of their exile and experience of war and exile. The data were processed by means of a non-parametric contingency analysis and relative frequency of the results. It was determined that the attitudes and opinions of the Croatian displaced populations towards Serbian population correlate with most of variables-predictors. The highest correlation was determined between the variables describing the traumatic experience of the war and exile and negative attitudes and opinions of the displaced on the possibility that the Serbs would continue to live in the Croatian Danube basin as well as on the prediction of their future conduct. The general conclusion is that negative attitudes and opinions of the displaced population based on the experience of war and exile and emotional attachment to their places of exile. It should be emphasised that the attitudes of the displaced are not dominated by the aggressive feelings that could influence the behaviour of the displaced. The displaced have formed their views primarily on condition that their personal and family safety would be ensured upon return. This should include a just, peaceful solution valuing morality and human dimension of the causes of their sufferings and traumatic experience as well as of the nature of the conflict. The results, thus, exclude the possibility that negative attitudes and opinions reflect any nationality-based prejudice.

1. INTRODUCTION

In January 1992, when aggression against the Republic of Croatia culminated and by hundred thousands inhabitants fled their homes and resettled in the regions of Croatia under the control of Croatian government, the Institute

for Applied Social Research conducted a research to investigate public opinion of Croatian citizens in non-occupied territories as well as of exiled population (Rihtar, 1993). For the purpose of this paper the answers of both populations; the residents and exiled, on two questions, will be mentioned. The first question was: "In your opinion, in what proportion the Serbs from Croatia support aggression against Croatia?" and the answers of exiled population were: 63.4% majority; 12.0% nearly half of them; 11.8% minority; 12.8% refrained from answering. The population living in the areas that were not affected by the war was less critical in their answers: 49.6% maintained that majority of Serbs from Croatia support aggression, 17.9% nearly half; 21.3% minority and 11.2% refrained from answering. The difference between the answers obtained from the exiled population and population living in peaceful regions of Croatia was statistically significant.

Second question was: "In your opinion, is it possible that Croats and Serbs would again live together in Croatia, after the war?" and 9.2% of the exiled agreed, 16.4% agreed, but on certain conditions, 59.6% disagreed and 14.8% refrained from answering. The population of peaceful regions of Croatia was, once more, statistically significantly less critical in their answers: 10.7% agreed; 34.1% agreed, but on certain conditions; 40.4% disagreed, and 14.7% refrained from answering (Rihtar, 1993). The author concluded that prevailing negative attitude of the displaced was reasonable when one had in mind that most of them have come from the areas with ethnically mixed population, and beside some indirectly received information they were in a position to become personally convinced of the attitudes and actions of their Serbian neighbours. Thus, their views were based on their experience and not prejudices. This explanation is additionally supported by the statistically significant difference between the opinion of the exiled and non-exiled population on the number of Serbs who could continue to live in Croatia.

In autumn 1994, the displaced were asked the following question: "Would you return in case that, after complete implementation of peace, your place would be returned to Croatia, but with local authority left to the Serbs?" According to their answers, in that case 75.8% of the displaced would never return to their homes of origin (Rogić et al, 1995). A consistency in the answers revealing distrust of the displaced in the Serbian co-citizens is obvious. Contrary to worldly experience with refugees, the distrust was stronger than the desire of displaced population to return to their native areas, although it has not lost its intensity over the six years spent in exile (Šakić et al, 1997). However, when asked about their intention to return in case that constitutional system would be reinstated in the occupied areas of Croatia, and with safety conditions ensured by the Croatian government, more than 90% of the displaced declared willing to return. According to the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration created by the international community, in most convenient conditions 60% of the displaced would return. The opinion that the Serbs would have to depart from that area was declared by 11% of the displaced. More complex analysis of the obtained

answers showed that for the displaced, a fundamental condition for their return is guaranteed safety, which has priority over a possibility that the Serbs would remain to live in the area (Šakić et al 1997).

International public that has not yet understood and accepted the fact on disintegration of former Yugoslavia, considered the relationships between Serbs and Croats from the point of view of Yugoslavia as an existing state, instead from the actual fact that the Serbs and the Croats are two sovereign nations living in two separate national states. In this context, the conflict between the Croats and Serbs is most commonly explained in terms of civil war, animosity of two Balkan tribes, or a religious conflict. Furthermore, the attitude of the Croats towards the Serbs based on the experience of their relationship during their joint living is usually confusedly explained in terms of relationship built on racial or tribal prejudices (Fukuyama 1994, Kaplan 1994).

Therefore it seemed that investigation of attitudes and opinions of displaced population from the Croatian Danube basin on certain aspects of future co-existence with their former neighbours of Serbian nationality, could serve as one of objective tests in order to argue or to discard the prejudices common in the world public. It can also provide an answer to the question whether the views of the displaced based on accurate facts that can be scientifically substantiated.

Although the analysis would be more complete if the views were compared to those of the Serbs presently living in the area of the Croatian Danube basin, with respect to displaced Croats and other Croatian citizens, the drawback of present analysis can be overcome by a cautious interpretation. The more so when having in mind that exiled Croats have been living outside their homes of origin for more than six years, and in parts of Croatia with low number of Serbs, so that their present interaction has been considerably reduced. Since the prejudices represent a category of attitudes that are frequently irrationally based, it could be assumed that displaced persons will not shape their views towards the Serbs mostly on their experience of war and exile, and their views will not be systematically related to the variables dealing with the doings of their yesterday's Serbian neighbours. Thus, we considered a particularly relevant analysis of the attitudes of the Croatian displaced based on rational facts obtained by a controlled scientific method.

2. THE AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

The investigation was based on the mentioned stereotype prevailing in the international public by which the attitudes of the Croats towards the Serbs have been explained primarily in terms of prejudices, and were by analogy ascribed to the Croatian refugees and displaced persons. The aim of this paper was to analyse some of these attitudes and opinions of the Croatian displaced per-

sons towards Serbian population living in the Croatian Danube basin, to discuss their relationship and possibility of living together in the future.

The attitudes and opinions of the displaced towards Serbian population were investigated in relation to five subgroups:

- some personal characteristics of the displaced
- the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration
- intention to return and conditions of their return
- experience and relationship related to the places of their exile, and
- experience of war and exile.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of major groups of variables

The analysed groups of variables include:

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards the Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin. Within this group the following variables will be analysed: opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin as established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration, predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented, personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin.

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced in view of the Plan. The variables included in this group are: conformity with the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration, general opinion of the displaced about the Plan, opinion of the displaced about the Plan in relation to military action.

Personal characteristics of the displaced. The following variables are included: sex, age, level of education, nationality, confession, marital status, occupation before exile.

Intention to return and required conditions. The variables involved in this group are: intention to return based on the Plan, intention to return regardless of the Plan but including certain required conditions, conditions relevant for the decision about return, intention to return in case of Serbian local authority, intention to return in case of UN local authority.

Experience and relationship towards the place of exile. This group includes following variables: period of life spent in the place of exile, relationship towards the place of exile as the only home, place to live in the future.

Experience of war and exile. The variables are: experience of war, conditions of accommodation in exile, employment in exile, present condition of houses

of the displaced, present residents of the houses that originally belonged to the exiled if housing conditions are acceptable.

In this analysis the variables from the group *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* will be used as variables-criteria, and those from other groups as variables-predictors.

3.2. Instrument, subjects, procedure

The questionnaire, sample of subjects and procedure have been described in the paper by Šakić et al. (1997).

3.3. Data analysis

The results obtained were expressed in relative frequencies and analysed by means of the non-parametrical contingency analysis. This was considered most adequate method of analysis since majority of questions were composed from qualitative attributes classified into certain number of categories. The C-coefficient of contingency indicates the degree of relationship between certain group of variables, and the Chi-square test the difference between them.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Relative frequencies of the results within individual groups of variables

The frequencies of answers obtained on individual questions – variables within mentioned groups serve as a general orientation among the data, in order to elucidate the relationship between the variables-criteria and variables-predictors. Majority of variables-predictors have already been described in the paper by Šakić et al. (1997) and will not be described here.

4.1.1. Attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin

The variables within this group are analysed on basis of the relative frequency values as shown in Table 1.

From the data given in the table the following conclusions can be drawn:

Majority of the Croatian displaced persons (64%) shared the opinion that in the Croatian Danube basin may stay all members of the Serbian nationality who have not committed any crime and who had been permanently living in that

area before the war. One third of the Croatian displaced (30.6%) maintained that not any of the Serbs could stay.

Table 1

Relative frequencies of the results for the group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* (N=1499)

Variable	%
Opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin	
All who have not committed any war crimes	24.7
Only some members of the Serbian nationality	39.3
Not one of the Serbs should stay	30.6
Something else	1.3
Don't know, cannot estimate	4.2
Decision whether the Serbs could remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin depends on	
Participation in the war against Croatia	16.2
The place of residence before the war	13.9
Both	68.8
Don't know, cannot estimate	1.4
Predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented	
Majority will emigrate	58.8
Majority will stay and adjust to the Croatian authority	12.1
Majority will stay and try to attain their state	13.3
Something else	2.3
Don't know, cannot estimate	13.4
Personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin	
Relative	18.3
Friend	10.6
Close neighbour	7.0
Not related	64.1

For most of the Croatian displaced (68.6%) who maintained that the Serbs who meet mentioned conditions could stay, other two conditions (that they have not committed any crime and that they had been living there before the war) were equally important.

Majority of the total sample of the displaced (58.8%) predicted that a great number of the Serbs would emigrate from the area of the Croatian Danube basin after the implementation of the Croatian authority. It should be mentioned that this data correspond to the opinion on the involvement of the ethnic Serbs from Croatia in the aggression against Croatia.

Majority of the Croatian displaced (64.1%) have no closer relations with the members of the Serbian nationality, 18.3% has relatives among them, and 17.6% have neighbours and close friends.

4.1.2. Intention to return and required conditions

Table 2

Relative frequencies of the results for the group of variables *intention to return* (N=1499)

Variable	%
Intention to return based on the Plan;	
I intend to return	57.6
I do not intend to return under determined conditions	24.9
I have not decided yet	13.3
I do not intend to return	4.2
Intention to return regardless of the Plan, but including certain required conditions	
As soon as possible – unconditionally	30.7
Respected conditions of the Croatian government	16.8
Acceptable living standard	14.9
Personal safety	11.5
Departure of Serbs	11.4
Departure of war criminals	1.9
Other conditions	2.1
I do not intend to return	3.1
I don't know	7.6
Intention to return in case of Serbian local authority;	
I would not return	89.7
I would return under other conditions	5.3
I do not intend to return regardless of local authority	2.5
I don't know, cannot estimate	2.5
Intention to return in case of UN local authority	
I would probably return	23.3
I would return under certain conditions	9.6
I would not return	63.3
I do not intend to return regardless of UN authority	3.8

From the data shown in the tables (Table 2 and 2a) the following conclusions can be highlighted:

In accordance with the conditions established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration 57.6% of the interviewed displaced persons are willing to return whereas 90.3% would return on condition that their requirements would be met, that is, independently of the Plan.

Most important conditions of return demanded by the displaced are complete implementation of the Croatian authority and personal and family safety. Follows the condition related to the renewal of devastated houses and possibility of employment. Of the least importance is departure of UNTAES and possibility of living without the Serbs.

In case of Serbian local control 89.7% of the Croatian displaced would not return and in case of UN authority 63.3%.

Table 2a
Relative frequencies of the results for the group of variables *required conditions of return* (N=1499)

Conditions relevant for the decision about return	Very significant	Partly significant	Insignificant	Don't know
Personal and family safety	97.0	1.2	0.5	0.8
Obtaining adequate help for restitution of lost properties	89.8	7.4	1.3	1.1
Possibility of employment or other means of obtaining the means to live	75.6	10.8	9.8	3.4
Completely established Croatian government	97.1	1.0	0.6	1.0
Possibility of living without Serbs	58.8	22.3	12.6	6.0
Departure of UNTAES and other UN military forces	47.5	22.5	17.6	12.0
Reconstruction of objects necessary for normalisation of life	92.7	4.3	1.4	1.1
Something else	1.5	0.3	2.5	54.7

4.1.3. Experience of war and exile

In addition to the group of variables described within another investigation (Šakić et al., 1997), related to participation in the war and possible suffering experienced by the interviewed or their family members, as well as possibility of employment in the exile, two additional variables were introduced in this group of variables: condition of the houses of the displaced, and present residents if the housing conditions are acceptable.

The data given in Table 3 indicate that:

Among the houses forcibly left by the Croatian displaced 51.5% of houses were pulled down or severely damaged, for about 18.1% of the houses the displaced had no available information, and only 14.7% remained undamaged.

Out of 33.3% of the houses that the displaced were informed on, and which were adequate for living, in 24.1% present residents are the members of Serbian nationality and in rest of the members of some other nationalities.

The greatest number of the exiled (37.9%) were given the use of houses or dwellings, 16.4% were accommodated in the camps, 15.6% in tourist accommodation, etc.

It could be concluded that in spite of relatively acceptable conditions of present accommodation, the exiled have experienced a great traumatic shock with a far-reaching consequences.

Table 3

Relative frequencies of the results for the group of variables *experience of war and exile*

Variable	Categories	%
Condition of the houses of the displaced	Undamaged	14.7
	Slightly damaged	15.8
	Considerably damaged	15.7
	Destroyed	35.8
	Don't know	18.1
Present residents in the house of the displaced	Serbian family or individual from the same place	11.9
	Non-Serbian family or individual from the same place	1.1
	Serbian immigrants from Western Slavonija, Lika or Kordun (after actions Flash or Storm)	10.1
	Serbian immigrants from Srbija or Bosnia and Herzegovina	2.1
	Someone else	8.2
	Not known	22.4
	House inadequate for living	44.1
Present accommodation	Hotel, tourist camp	15.6
	Resort	1.0
	Refugee camp	16.4
	Own house	4.3
	Rented apartment/house	6.0
	Apartment /house given for use	37.9
	Subtenance	2.0
	Accommodation at relatives, friends	6.0
	Inappropriate	0.2
	Other	10.7

4.2. Contingency analysis of results

Contingency analysis refers to the relationship of some variables from the group *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* with the variables from other groups of variables-predictors. In order to obtain more reasonable and systematic insight into the data, the presented results included most important indicators of general trends. From the same reason only principal statistical indicators which show correlation or difference between the pairs of variables and level of significance were given.

4.2.1. The group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* with regard to *attitudes and opinions of the displaced in view of the Plan*

Before analysing the relationship between these two groups of variables it should be noted that the displaced reported familiarity with the Plan and based their attitudes and opinions accordingly (Šakić et al., 1997).

Table 4

Correlations of *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* with regard to *attitudes and opinions of the displaced in view of the Plan* (N=1499)

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced toward the Serbs		Attitudes and opinions					
		Conformity with the Plan	General opinion of the plan				Peaceful against military solution
			Confirms with the interests of the displaced	Positive influence to the future of Croatia	More protects interests of Serbs than of Croats	Terms of implementation of the Plan prolonged	
Opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f. C P	16 0.26 0.01	16 0.31 0.01	16 0.22 0.01	16 0.22 0.01	16 0.16 0.01	12 0.33 0.01
Predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented	d.f. C P	16 0.26 0.01	16 0.30 0.01	16 0.21 0.01	16 0.29 0.01	16 0.22 0.01	12 0.23 0.01
Personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f. C P	12 0.10 n.s.	12 0.09 n.s.	12 0.12 0.04	12 0.12 n.s.	12 0.08 n.s.	9 0.16 0.01

General trends of the relationship between these two analysed groups of variables can be summarised as follows:

The relationship between the variable *opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin as established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration* and all variables from the group *attitudes and opinions of the displaced in view of the Plan* is marked by statistically significant and moderate correlations. The trends of correlations indicate that the displaced who agree with the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration are more tolerant in view of the possible stay of the Serbs who have committed no crime during the war. The displaced who believe that the Plan protects interests of the Serbs more than of

Croats proved more intolerant towards the stay of the Serbs and in particular towards those who had not lived in the area before the war or who have committed crimes during the war. The displaced who peaceful solution consider a better solution than military action proved more tolerant towards the possible stay of the Serbs who have committed no crime.

The variable *predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented* is also statistically significantly correlated with *attitudes and opinions of the displaced in view of the Plan*. The correlations are moderate, and general trend shows that the displaced who maintain that majority of Serbs will depart from the area agree with the Plan to a greater extent and support it more than those who believe that the Serbs will stay in the area and persist in their efforts to create their own state within Croatia. This latter group are the displaced more inclined to accept the solution of military action instead of that proposed by the Plan.

The variable *personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin* was not found to greatly influence the variables from the group *attitudes and opinions of the displaced in view of the Plan*. The exception is only a poor but statistically significant correlation between close relations with the Serbs and opinion that peaceful solution instead of military action should be accepted; those who have close personal relationships with the Serbs were inclined although not manifestly to accept the peaceful solution.

4.2.2. The group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* in relation to *personal characteristics of the displaced*

Table 5

Correlations between the group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* in relation to *personal characteristics of the displaced* (N=1499)

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced toward the Serbs		Personal characteristics					
		Sex	Age	Education	Nationality	Confession	Marital status
Opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	4	16	24	12	8	12
	C	0.09	0.23	0.23	0.19	0.16	0.17
	P	n.s.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented	d.f.	4	16	24	12	8	12
	C	0.17	0.23	0.22	0.18	0.18	0.17
	P	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	3	12	18	9	6	9
	C	0.07	0.16	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.26
	P	n.s.	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01

The data given in the table can be interpreted as follows:

The variable *opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin as established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration* poorly but statistically significantly correlates with all personal characteristics of the displaced, except sex. The trends of correlations point to the fact that older and more educated population of the displaced were more ready to accept that the Serbs who have not committed any crime during the war, might continue to live in the area. On the contrary, younger displaced persons are more likely to believe that those Serbs who will stay in the area will persist on their efforts to attain their own state in Croatia. In the total population of the interviewed displaced persons, Croats and Hungarians in comparison to Serbs, are less tolerant regarding the possibility that Serbs could continue to live in the area, and more ready to believe that they will fight for their state also in the future.

The variable *predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented* is statistically significantly correlated to all personal characteristics of the displaced. The trends of correlations show that women, younger and more educated, as well as Croats and Hungarians more assuredly declared that majority of Serbs will emigrate and that those of them who would remain would try to create their state again.

The variable *personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin* was statistically significantly correlated with all personal characteristics except sex. The trends of correlation indicate that more educated, the displaced of the Serbian nationality and divorced, had more frequently close relationships with the Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin.

4.2.3. The group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* in relation to *intention to return and required conditions*

A general trend of the relationship between the variables related to attitudes of the displaced and those investigating their readiness to return can be seen from the data shown in Table 6.

The principal characteristics of the investigated relationship can be summarily described as follows:

1. a) The variable *opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin as established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration* is statistically significantly correlated with the variables *intention to return based on the Plan* and *intention to return regardless of the Plan*, but including certain required conditions.

Table 6
Correlations between the group of variables attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship toward Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin in relation to intention to return and required conditions

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced toward the Serbs	Intention to return		Conditions of return										Serbian authority		UNTAES authority		
	Based on the Plan	Independently of the Plan	Safe living	Material aid	Employment	Croatian authority	Living without Serbs	Departure of UNTAES	Renewal	Other							
Opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	32	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	28
	C	0.21	0.28	0.29	0.26	0.26	0.31	0.39	0.35	0.32	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.20
	P	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	0.01
Predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented	d.f.	32	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	28
	C	0.20	0.19	0.09	0.12	0.19	0.12	0.29	0.32	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.12
	P	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	0.01	n.s.	0.01	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	24	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	21
	C	0.08	0.17	0.19	0.12	0.11	0.18	0.25	0.21	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.15
	P	n.s.	n.s.	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	0.01	0.01	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	0.01

Analyses of the trends of correlations point to a general trend of withdrawal from the intention to return based on the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration in case that in the area would continue to live the Serbs who have committed crimes during the war and those who had not lived there before the war.

b) The variable *opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin as established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration* moderately and statistically significantly correlates with various circumstances evaluated as playing a relevant role in the decision on return. Individual analyses of statistical indicators show that opinion of the displaced that only those Serbs could remain to live in the area who were not involved in the war crimes and who had been living there before the war is highly correlated with the variable from the group *conditions relevant for the decision about return* (related to their personal and family safety, complete implementation of the Croatian control and departure of UNTAES). In other words Croatian displaced persons associate their personal and family safety only with the implementation of Croatian government and departure of the criminals of war from the Croatian Danube basin, which also implies their intention to return.

2.a) The variable *predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented* is statistically significantly correlated with only some of the variables from *intention to return and required conditions*. Intention to return based on the Plan was statistically significantly correlated to the hope that majority of Serbs will emigrate or that those who will stay have not been involved in the war crimes or had been lived in the area also before the war.

b) The variable *predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented* is statistically significantly correlated with the variables related to solution of existential problems, possibility of living without Serbs and departure of UNTAES. With respect to other variables from the group *intention to return and required conditions* statistical significance was not found.

3a) The variable *personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin* was not correlated to the variables intention to return based on the Plan and intention to return regardless of the Plan, but including certain required conditions, which points to the fact that displaced persons regardless of their relationship with the Serbs – relatives, friends or neighbours, consider other circumstances as of primary importance when their return is in question.

b) The variable *personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin* is poorly but statistically significantly correlated with the variables from the group of variables *conditions relevant for the decision about return*, related to safety of living, possibility of living without Serbs, complete implementation of the Croatian control and departure of UN-

TAES with a tendency that greater attention to these questions is given by the displaced who are not in any way related to the Serbs than those who are connected with them with relative, friendly or neighbour-type of ties.

4.2.4. The group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* in relation to *experience and relationship towards the place of exile*

Table 7

Correlations between the group of variables *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* and *experience and relationship towards the place of exile*

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced toward the Serbs		Period of life spent in the place of exile	Experience of the place of exile	Future prospects
Opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	180	12	8
	C	0.52	0.13	0.18
	P	0.01	n.s.	0.01
Predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented	d.f.	180	12	8
	C	0.47	0.12	0.18
	P	0.01	n.s.	0.01
Personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	135	9	6
	C	0.43	0.11	0.11
	P	0.01	n.s.	n.s.

From the data presented in the table the following conclusions can be drawn:

The variables from the group *attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin* was statistically correlated with the variables from the group *experience and relationship towards the place of exile*. The analysis of trends of relationships indicates that those who had been living in the place of exile for a longer period of life and who would like to return there proved slightly more tolerant towards the Serbs who committed no crime than the displaced who had lived in the place of exile relatively shortly, or immigrated into the place some time before the exile and are indecisive about the return.

The variable *predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented* was also statistically significantly related with the variables *period of life spent in the place of exile* and *place to live in the future*. It was noted that with respect to the period of life spent in the place of exile, those who had lived for a longer period and who intend to return there were more frequently of the opinion that majority of Serbs would emigrate than those who had lived in the place of exile for a short period of time or were indecisive about the return to the place of their exile. This latter group of displaced were more inclined to believe that the Serbs who will remain to live in the area will try to attain their own state in Croatia.

Table 8
Correlations between attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship toward Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin and experience of war and exile (N=1499)

Attitudes and opinions of the displaced toward the Serbs	Experience of war										Experience of exile	
	Present con- dition of house	Croatian army	Police units	Detained	Invalid	Wounded	Psychical trauma	Employ- ment	Accom- modation			
Opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	16	12	12	12	8	12	12	12	12	36	
	C	0.18	0.20	0.14	0.24	0.13	0.10	0.22	0.18	0.22	0.22	
	P	0.01	0.01	n.s.	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented	d.f.	16	12	12	12	8	12	12	12	12	36	
	C	0.17	0.18	0.14	0.17	0.23	0.11	0.30	0.21	0.23	0.23	
	P	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.01	n.s.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin	d.f.	12	9	9	9	6	9	9	9	27		
	C	0.18	0.10	0.07	0.19	0.10	0.09	0.18	0.15	0.15	0.15	
	P	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	0.01	n.s.	n.s.	0.01	0.01	0.01	n.s.	n.s.

The variable *personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin* is correlated only with the variable *period of life spent in the place of exile*; closer relations with the Serbs had those who had been living longer in the place of exile. This variable was not found to be correlated with the experience of the place of exile and intention to return.

4.2.5. Attitudes and opinions of the displaced, and their relationship towards Serbian population in the Croatian Danube basin in relation to experience of war and exile

From the data obtained (Table 8) the following conclusion can be drawn:

The variable *opinion on the possibility that ethnic Serbs remain to live in the Croatian Danube basin as established by the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration* was statistically significantly correlated with *present conditions of the houses of the displaced* and *experience of war* as indicators of the war experience and conditions of accommodation in the exile as well as *employment* as indicators of the *experience of exile*. More critical towards the possible stay of the Serbs were the displaced whose houses and dwellings were pulled down or damaged as well as those who themselves, or whose family members participated in the war, who were detained or suffered a psychical trauma. On the other hand more critical towards the stay of Serbs were the displaced with no permanent employment in the exile or who were not adequately accommodated.

The variable *predictions on the conduct of Serbian population after the Croatian authority would be implemented* was correlated with all indicators of the war experience except one and with both indicators of the experience of exile. The displaced whose houses were pulled down, who participated in the war, were detained, wounded or suffered a psychical trauma were more inclined to believe that majority of Serbs will emigrate and that those who continue to live there would try to attain their own state in Croatia. The same trend was observed in those who had no permanent employment in the exile and whose accommodation was not satisfactory.

The variable *personal relationships of the displaced with the ethnic Serbs living in the Croatian Danube basin* was poorly but statistically significantly correlated with the present conditions of houses of the displaced, indicators of the experience of war – detainment and psychical trauma, and the indicator of the experience of exile – employment. Among the displaced who were closely related to the Serbs, there is less number of those with pulled or damaged houses, they were less frequently detained and suffered psychical traumas in a small number. On the other hand they were also less frequently permanently employed in the exile.

9. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Analysis of the relative frequencies of the results obtained for the attitudes and opinions of the displaced related to the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration and to the ethnic Serbs living in the area, showed general trends which can be summarised as follows:

Asked about their personal opinion on the possibility that the Serbs would remain to live in the area of the Croatian Danube basin, majority of the Croatian displaced (64%) answered that only those member of the Serbian nationality could stay who had committed no war crime and had been living in the area before the war. This opinion corresponds to the opinion stating the number of Serbs from Croatia who were involved in the aggression against Croatia, expressed in the beginning of 1992, immediately after the exile (63.4%) (Rihtar, 1993). It also corresponds to the prediction about the number of Serbs who are expected to emigrate (58.8% of the displaced believes that majority of Serbs will leave). In other words, opinion of the displaced on the possible stay of the Serbs consistently corresponds to their opinion on the involvement or non-involvement of the Serbian population in the aggression against Croatia which have not changed over the years spent in exile.

The opinion on the stay of Serbs and predictions about their behaviour in the future differ with regard to sex, age, educational level and nationality. The trends of correlations show that women, younger and more educated displaced, Croats and Hungarians distrust Serbs more than other interviewed, and believe that they will proceed with the efforts to attain their own state in Croatia. It should be mentioned that attitudes and opinions of the Croatian displaced population corresponded with those of Hungarian displaced, they were both more critical towards the Serbs living in the area of the Croatian Danube basin than displaced members of Serbian nationality. Taking into account that Croats suffered most in the aggression and that the Serbs were aggressors confirms that Croatian displaced formed their views on basis of their actual experience with the Serbs during aggression and not on the prejudice developed on account of nationality.

A half of the displaced agreed and the other half disagreed with the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration. The reasons of disagreement are primarily related to their estimation that the Plan protects Serbs more than Croats and other non-Serbian population and that period for implementation of the Plan is too long. Independently of the Plan and on condition of complete implementation of the Croatian control in the Croatian Danube basin, 90.3% of the displaced would return, in correspondence with the Plan 60.9% would return, 89.7% do not agree to return in case of Serbian local authority, and 63.3% in case of UN local authority. These data illustrate the fact that Croatian displaced put their personal safety and safety of their families in front of all other motives of their return. That security is mostly associated with complete implementation of the

Croatian authority and departure of the Serbs who have committed war crimes and who had not been living in that area before the war. These conditions are required by all displaced but those who have close relationships with the Serbs, relative or any other emotional-type of relationships in particular, are slightly less resolute.

Experience of the place of exile as the only homeland was declared by the great majority of the displaced. Those who were living longer in the place of exile and who intend to return were less tolerant towards the possibility that the Serbs would remain to live there (and hope that majority of Serbs will emigrate) than those who had lived in the place of exile a shorter period of their lives and who do not intend to return. Although it could not be stated with great reliance whether for some of them their decision not to return in the place of exile resulted from their fear of Serbs, their increased suspicion that the Serbs remaining in Croatia would try to attain their state in Croatia speaks in favour of this assumption.

The experience of war and exile influenced certain attitudes and opinions of the displaced towards Serbian population in the area in the sense that less tolerant are those who were affected by the war (they or their family members suffered in the war or had a psychical trauma, whose houses were pulled down and who are living in inadequate conditions in present exile. When contributed by the fact that less afflicted by the war were those who had closer relationships with the Serbs and that they prove more tolerant towards their stay the experience-based attitudes of the displaced are contributed by another empirical evidence.

As a part of general discussion the data describing general mood of the displaced should be reported. Pessimism and fear that future will bring no improvement was declared by 28.9% of the displaced, 43% were optimistic, and 27.7 could not estimate. According to contingency analysis the opinion on the possible stay of the Serbs and their conduct in the future, was poorly but statistically significantly correlated to the general mood. More critical were pessimistic displaced persons, predicting that majority of Serbs will stay and that they will persist with their efforts to attain their state. This points to the conclusion that pessimism and fear from future are associated to their previous experience of the relationship with the ethnic Serbs from the Croatian Danube basin.

6. CONCLUSION

To summarise, a general outline of the conclusions drawn on basis of the analyses of obtained data will be given:

The formerly occupied part of the Croatian Danube basin had been inhabited by the mixture of ethnic population groups. The Croats were in majority, Hun-

garians and Serbs were the most numerous national minorities. During the years 1991 and 1992, the Croatian majority, other non-Serbian population groups and an insignificant number of the members of Serbian nationality were subject to the aggression of the Serbian minority. The aggression involved genocide and ethnic cleansing over the non-Serbian population (Šakić et al. 1993a, 1993b). Five years later, legal and political mechanisms were established in order to ensure the return of the displaced from that area to their homes of origin. After the dramatic experience of the war and exile, the Croatian displaced consistently persisted in their attitudes and opinions on the Serbs who continued to live in the area of the Croatian Danube basin, which were originally formed on basis of their own experience with the Serbs during aggression. Basic characteristics of their attitudes and opinions related to the Serbs, as well as predictions on their future conduct, point to the fear as a consequence of past sufferings and traumas of the displaced and their families. Therefore, as a precondition of their return they demand guaranteed personal and family safety, which, according to their expectations can be realised only by the normal functioning of the protective system of the Croatian state. They completely distrust the possibility of local Serbian authority, and in this case they do not intend to return. In case of UN local authority, majority of the displaced refuse to return as well, because they maintain that in accordance to the Plan of Peaceful Reintegration, UN protects the interests of the Serbs more than of Croats.

Croatian displaced founded their attitudes and opinions on the experience of war and exile. Their predictable behaviour depends on the degree of justice included in the resolution of their problem. Although they have been living in the exile for six years, and their motivation to return home has not diminished, their conduct reflects no desire of revenge but a stable insistence on a fair resolution and personal safety. In this context their negative attitudes and opinions related to the members of the Serbian nationality issue primarily from the conduct of the Serbs during the war and exile. The fact is that negative attitudes cause a passive resistance and withdrawal from their intention to return regardless of very high motivation, and by no means the desire for a revenge. As can be also confirmed by the trends of results obtained in this study, no explanation based on national prejudice and possibility of revenge is not acceptable and empirically as well as scientifically founded. The return of the displaced from the Croatian Danube basin is a test for the international community and its ability that international standards of human rights would be justly implemented through its institutions. A recommendation of how to achieve peaceful solution is therefore that it should follow the principle of righteousness instead of tolerance that does not value the moral and human dimension of the real causes and the nature of war against Croatia.

Translated by Vesna Hajnić

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STAVOVI I MIŠLJENJA PROGNAKNIKA IZ HRVATSKOG PODUNAVLJA PREMA SRPSKOM PUČANSTVU U TOM KRAJU

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U radu je analiziran odnos stavova i mišljenja hrvatskih prognanika iz hrvatskog Podunavlja prema srpskom pučanstvu u tom kraju, s obzirom na njihovo mišljenje o Planu mirne reintegracije, osobne karakteristike, namjeru povratka, doživljaj i odnos prema mjestu odakle su prognani te ratno i prognaničko iskustvo. Za obradu podataka korišten je neparametrijski postupak kontingencijske analize i relativne frekvencije rezultata. Ustanovljeno je da su stavovi i mišljenja prognanika prema srpskom pučanstvu povezani s većinom varijabli – prediktora, s time da je najjača povezanost ustanovljena između varijabli koje opisuju traumatsko iskustvo rata i progonstva te negativnih stavova i razmišljanja prognanika o mogućem ostanku Srba u hrvatskom Podunavlju kao i predviđanja njihovog ponašanja. Opći zaključak je da su negativni stavovi i mišljenja temeljeni na ratnom i prognaničkom iskustvu te na zavičajnom odnosu prema mjestu progonstva. Pritom u prognanika ne dominiraju agresivni stavovi i mišljenja koji bi mogli utjecati na njihovo buduće ponašanje, nego stavovi i mišljenja koji se odnose na jamstvo njihove sigurnosti pri povratku, temeljeno na pravednom mirnom rješenju koje uvažava moralnu i humanističku dimenziju uzroka njihovog stradalničkog i traumatskog iskustva, kao i biti sukoba. Rezultati, dakle, isključuju predrasude temeljene na nacionalnom podrijetlu kao razlogu negativnih stavova i mišljenja prognanika te ih čine znanstveno neodrživima.

EINSTELLUNGEN UND ÜBERLEGUNGEN KROATISCHER VERTRIEBENER AUS DEM KROATISCHEN DONAUTAL ZUR DORTIGEN SERBISCHEN BEVÖLKERUNG

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Die Arbeit widmet sich der Analyse von Einstellungen und Überlegungen kroatischer Vertriebener aus dem kroatischen Donautal zur serbischen Bevölkerung dieser Gegend und setzt sie in Bezug zu den Kriterien der geplanten friedlichen Reintegration, den persönlichen Merkmalen der Vertriebenen, der Absicht der Rückkehr, der Verbundenheit mit dem Heimatort, der Kriegserfahrung und der Erfahrung als Vertriebene. Die Angaben wurden im nicht-parametrischen Verfahren der Kontingenzanalyse und relativen Ergebnisfrequenz bearbeitet. Es erwies sich, dass die Einstellungen und Überlegungen der Vertriebenen zur serbischen Bevölkerung mit den meisten der genannten Variablen bzw. Kriterien in Verbindung stehen; jedoch am stärksten vertreten sind Kriterien, die die traumatische Kriegserfahrung und die Vertreibung betreffen, ferner die negative Einstellung der Vertriebenen zum möglichen Verbleib der Serben im kroatischen Donautal und Prognosen über das zukünftige Verhalten der Serben. Die allgemeine Schlussfolgerung lautet, dass die negativen Einstellungen und Überlegungen auf die Kriegs- und Vertriebenenenerfahrung sowie die Verbundenheit mit dem Heimatort zurückgehen. Hierbei dominieren keineswegs aggressive Denkweisen, die das zukünftige Verhalten der Vertriebenen beeinflussen könnten, sondern Überlegungen zur verbürgten persönlichen Sicherheit bei der Heimkehr, die auf der gerechten und friedlichen Lösung des Konflikts gründet – einer Lösung, die der moralischen und humanistischen Dimension der Ursachen für die traumatische Erfahrung der Vertriebenen als auch für das Wesen des Konflikts selbst Rechnung trägt. Die Ergebnisse schließen also Vorurteile aus, die auf der Nationalzugehörigkeit als dem Grund für negative Einstellungen und Überlegungen unter den Vertriebenen begründet wären, und entlarven diese als wissenschaftlich unhaltbar.