

## The Authoritarian Dynamics: Areas of Peace and Conflict and the Theory of Authoritarian Dynamics

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The basic assumptions of Karen Stenner's authoritarian dynamics theory are tested in this paper. The idea of the theory is that there is no difference in normal situations in tolerance between authoritarian and non-authoritarian individuals. Only the situation of normative threat leads to the fact that people with authoritarian predispositions react by increasing their intolerance. As a consequence, we can expect an increase in authoritarianism-tolerance correlation in situations of present threat compared with those without such threat present. In the paper, we empirically corroborate this increased correlation in the areas that have gone through interethnic conflicts, as among people who feel threatened by the return of refugees or by the European Union. These results are based on the data collected in the areas of intensive conflict during the wars of Yugoslav disintegration (Gospić, Plaški, Pakrac) compared with those that stayed peaceful (Vrbovsko, Rovinj, Daruvar).

**Key words:** authoritarianism, authoritarian dynamics theory, authoritarian personality, ethnic conflict, ethnic peace

One of the key topics of modern social psychology is the explanation of authoritarianism.\* Beginning with the classical study of Adorno and collaborators (1950), the goal was to explain why some people don't tolerate those who are different. This explanation has tremendous practical importance. The context and motivation for the Adorno study was the explanation of the rise of Nazism in Germany. From that time on we have had a whole array of examples of authoritarian and totalitarian movements that made the question posed by this classical study even more important. The

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\* This paper is the result of the research project "Social Integration and Collective Identity in Multiethnic Areas of Croatia", which has been carried out with the support of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia.

*Authoritarian Personality* triggered a continuous stream of research with constant conceptual and methodological improvements. I will not elaborate this whole development here but will concentrate on one conceptual innovation. This innovation has its roots already in the works of Fromm and Reich (1970). One of the key points of Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941) is that the appeal of Nazism to German workers can be functionally explained as a release from uncertainty, insecurity and lack of direction in people, which was produced by modern capitalism. The Nazi ideology freed workers from the feeling of threat imposed by modern society and promised security, with the Jews as scapegoats. Very similar ideas were developed by Reich who ascribed the roots of support for Hitler to the loss of security and identity prevalent in the Weimar republic. In the more recent literature, the same ideas have been developed by Staub (1989). Based on case studies of Nazi Germany, Turkey, Cambodia and Argentina, he argues that economic decline, social disorder and change lead to lower group esteem and frustration, because people feel that their way of life and their values are in danger. That creates a need to restore psychological security and the endangered self-concept. This is achieved by intensifying attachment to the in-group and by derogation of the out-groups. Under the right conditions of authoritarian culture and the presence of political leadership, that encourages ethnocentrism, nationalism and out-group aggression and this derogation can evolve into use of force and genocide. The process of derogation of out-groups is also a part of the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel and Turner, 1979, 1986), where the individuals with the threatened social identity seek to restore that identity by positively differentiating the in-group and denigrating the out-group.

What is common to these theoretical approaches is that they emphasize the importance of situational factors that act as triggers for expression of authoritarianism, violence and genocide. We can say that the conceptual contribution of these books was in shifting of emphasis from the personality traits toward the social context, situation, or to be more precise, of interaction between the context and personality traits.

Within this theoretical framework, we have had a whole array of empirical works confirming the connection with an increase in authoritarianism in threatening situations. Sales (1972) concluded that, in periods of presumed social threat, we have an increase of conversion to fundamentalist denominations. The same author finds that we have an increase in these periods in police budgets, harsher punishment for sex-offenders and a prevalence of power themes in TV and comic books (Sales, 1973). Doty, Peterson and Winter (1991) have found that the perception of threat is

correlated with power themes on TV and in comics, with an increase in censorship attempts, support for conservative political candidates, reports on KKK (Ku Klux Klan) activities and with the readiness to express prejudices in survey responses. In the detailed analysis of the rise of the radical right in Europe, Rydgren (2002, 2003) concludes that its growth can best be explained by the fragmentation of culture and widespread political discontent and disenchantment. That could be compared with the disillusionment and insecurity during the era preceding the rise of Nazism and Fascism. Altemeyer (1996) also finds correlation between perception of the world as dangerous and intolerant.

One summary of the research on authoritarianism in the former Yugoslavia was given by Šiber (1989). He came to the conclusion that authoritarianism is correlated with ethnocentrism and social distance and can, as such, create a predisposition for the expression of underlying national tensions. Another important characteristic of authoritarians is uncritical acceptance of ideologies, especially if advocated by sources accepted as legitimate and reliable. In accordance with these assumptions, the explanation of the successful mobilization for ethnic conflict and violence in the Yugoslav wars can be found, according to Županov, Sekulić and Šporer (1996), in widespread authoritarianism. Media monopoly allowed manipulation of the feelings of threat and authoritarian predispositions made people malleable and easily mobilized.

The next step in the formulation of the theory of authoritarian personality was made by redefining it in the direction of interaction between context and personality characteristics. One of the most systematic formulations of this theory can be found in the work of Feldman (2003). According to him, the main source of authoritarianism is the fundamental dilemma between the desire for order (which leads to conformism) and the desire for freedom (which leads to personal autonomy). But these fundamental differences are influencing different behaviour and attitudes only under the condition of threat. In the normal situation, the conformist and the “autonomist” will manifest the same attitudes and behaviour. Under the situation of perceived threat, the difference will arise with the conformists increasing their intolerance and prejudice. Similar results were obtained by Haddock, Zanna and Esses (1993). In their research, perceived value conflict was a predictor of prejudice only among those high on authoritarianism. The most extensive formulation and testing of these assumptions can be found in the work of Stenner (2005). The authoritarian dynamic is a process in which an enduring individual predisposition (authoritarianism) interacts with changing environmental conditions. The situation of threat and especially of

“normative threat” produces manifest expressions of intolerance. In this theory, authoritarianism is defined as a stable predisposition, which can be detected by an impressive coherence among individuals in the form of attitudes and behaviours rejecting diversity and insisting on sameness. The authoritarian predisposition produces attitudes and behaviours in different areas of social life and social interactions, enhancing sameness and minimizing diversity between people, beliefs and attitudes. This enhancement of uniformity requires control over “Others” and, in the final instance, even their coercion in order to minimize variation and increase sameness. The group authority is called upon in order to enforce this coercion. The author came to the conclusion that the most valid indicators of authoritarianism are child-rearing values. These child-rearing values are tapping the fundamental orientation toward authority/uniformity versus autonomy/difference, between the parental authority and child autonomy and between conformity to rules and thinking for oneself. By using the child-rearing values, the author argues that the tautology of many authoritarianism measures can be avoided. Namely, when we construct the indicators of authoritarianism by using the indices from the political area or that of race relations and then correlate our authoritarianism indicator to political or racial, ethnic or national attitudes, the result is tautological because we have the same indices within the assumed independent and dependent variables. By using the indices of this microcosm of family life, we avoid this danger.

The influence of threat on racial intolerance, political intolerance, moral intolerance and general intolerance (measured by F scale and RWA / Right Wing Authoritarianism/ scales) was explored using experimental and survey techniques. In the experimental situations, it was suggested by the experimenter to the subjects that belief diversity in society is increasing and that political leaders are of low quality. Reactions of authoritarians and non-authoritarians to these descriptions were compared. The perception of normative threat was taken in the surveys as an intervening variable. In general, the results show that the general theory is corroborated in both situations (experimental manipulation and surveys). When authoritarians are convinced by experimental manipulation that normative threat is present, their intolerance increases. In the surveys, when people with authoritarian predispositions perceive the normative threat, their intolerance also increases. However, the obtained results in the situation of non-existent threat were also in accordance with the theoretical prediction. When there is no experimentally manipulated or perceived normative threat, there is no difference in tolerance between authoritarians and libertarians. This fact explains the sometimes puzzling findings of the existence or non-existence of

authoritarianism-tolerance correlations. If the situation (of normative threat) is not taken into account, there is no reason to expect to find the difference. In the “normal” situations, the authoritarians are no less tolerant than libertarians. If a survey is undertaken in such non-threatening situations, the results are disappointing because no correlation between authoritarianism and tolerance occurs. Contrary to this, the correlation occurs in the situation of perceived normative threat.

### **Question, research design and variables**

#### ***Question***

Previous research indicates that the high intolerance and nationalism in the former Yugoslavia and Croatia actually did not precede the war and atrocities, but was more a consequence of these events. The current research presents expansion of the previous explanations by exploring the role of authoritarianism in the rise of national intolerance. Can we assume, in accordance with the authoritarian dynamics theory, that the observed rise in intolerance was mediated by authoritarianism? In that case, the observed difference diagnosed in the paper by Sekulić, Massey and Hodson (2006) could be explained by the fact that people with authoritarian predispositions increased their intolerance as a reaction to the threatening situation accompanying the dissolution of the state. The idea is a very simple one and based on comparison of threatening and normal situations with expectations that threatening situations will provoke people with authoritarian predispositions to express intolerance, whereas non-authoritarians will even increase their tolerant attitudes, as previous results by Stenner (2005) indicate. As a consequence, we will have an increased correlation of authoritarianism-intolerance based on the gap between those with present or absent authoritarian predispositions in situations of threat, whereas this gap will be non-existent in normal situations.

#### ***Threatening situations***

The contextual variable that is producing the difference between authoritarians and non-authoritarians is threat. In the original theory by Stenner (2005), not every type of threat will produce this difference. The type of threat that is relevant is normative threat, namely the perception that the group, community or society in question is threatened by deep polarization of opinions, ideological disagreements, or by leaders who don't express values that predominate in the community. Because the quest for sameness lies in the background of authoritarianism, everything that endangers that

sameness, to which the individual feels attached, will provoke an increase in authoritarianism. The whole theoretical framework is based on interaction between the situation (context) and the personality predisposition. In her book, Stenner (2005) measures threat using experimental manipulation and survey data. Subjects in the experimental situations were induced to exposure by classical normative threats like the increased polarization of public opinions. For example, they were presented with statements like “The American people disagree about a much wider range of issues and disagree much more strongly than at any time in the last thirty years”. Or they were confronted with the statement that the modern U.S. presidents have been “remarkably lacking in strength, vision, substance, intelligence and principle”. Exposure to such statements increased intolerance among those with authoritarian predispositions. Questions in the surveys dealing with leaders’ trait evaluations, perceptions of ideological distance from the major political parties, perceptions of ideological distance from “typical Americans”, and perceptions of belief divergence among “typical Americans” and “members of Congress” were used to distinguish between those who feel threatened by the existing situations and those who don’t.

In any research, there is always a question of whether the fact that the results do not fit the expectations derived from the theory is a consequence of the theory being wrong, or that the indicators used are not a good measure of the concepts that are part of the theory. For example, Stenner (2005) has found that personal threat does not increase intolerance among authoritarians to the extent that normative threat does. (Interestingly, personal threat does increase intolerance among non-authoritarians; however, we are not discussing here the details and consequences of this finding because it lies outside of the scope of our interest in this case.)

In order to avoid the second danger, (that we fail to corroborate the theory because of inadequate indicators) it is very important how we operationalize them. The main problem in our research is the operationalization of the situation of threat. If we create indicators that fail to capture the difference between the threatening and non-threatening situations, we cannot expect the assumed difference between authoritarians and non-authoritarians to emerge.

### ***Measurement of threat***

We will use two ways to measure threat. One will be the “natural experiment” of comparing a sample of territories in Croatia in which local conflict occurred during the last war with those in which peace was preserved. In that way, we will be applying one of the experimental meth-

ods used by Stenner (2005), but in the form of the “natural” and not the laboratory experiment. The second measure is based on a set of survey questions dividing the sample into those who feel threatened and those who don't.

### ***Areas of peace and areas of conflict***

The data used here were obtained from six multiethnic towns/municipalities in Croatia: Gospić, Plaški, Vrbovsko, Pakrac, Rovinj and Daruvar. Our sample was made up of 809 respondents from these six areas. We are concentrating on the relations between the Croatian majority and Serbian minority, although significant proportions of other minorities are present in some of these areas (for example Italians in Rovinj and Czechs in Daruvar). Gospić, Plaški and Pakrac were areas of very intensive conflict during the disintegration of Yugoslavia. It should be mentioned that these are also areas in which national conflicts were present during the Second World War. Unlike them, Vrbovsko, Rovinj and Daruvar are multiethnic areas in which either peace was preserved throughout the 1990s (Rovinj and Vrbovsko) or, despite the warfare in the immediate vicinity and accompanying social disturbances, co-existence was maintained (the case of Daruvar).

We interpreted the fact of occurrence of local conflict as the occurrence of threat. It cannot be taken for granted that this can be regarded automatically as a measure of threat in the sense required by the theory. Firstly, it is not a normative threat in the symbolic sense but an actual conflict. We can indirectly assume that the visible conflict in the local community is interpreted by those affected as normative threat. The second reason is that it is questionable if the feeling of normative threat arises only (or to the same extent) in the communities where conflict occurred. We can assume that, even in the communities where local conflict did not happen, the fact of the surrounding conflict was enough to provoke the feeling of threat. In other words, it is questionable whether the difference between occurrences of conflict on the local level is the independent variable provoking different feelings of threat. The fact of the general war in the surrounding areas could also act on the feeling of threat, erasing the difference between areas in which direct conflict occurred and those in which it didn't. It is possible that authoritarians are reacting not to the events in the immediate surroundings but to the general situation. On the other hand, if we were to find difference between these areas in the expected direction, that would be a strong confirmation of the validity of the theoretical assumption.

### ***The main hypothesis***

We interpret the fact that people went through conflict in their area of living as the activation of threat. According to the hypothesis, authoritarians living in the conflict areas would become less tolerant than in the areas where the direct conflict did not occur. Consequently, the correlation of the authoritarian predisposition and the measures of tolerance will be greater in the areas that went through conflict than in the peaceful areas.

### ***Indicators of authoritarianism and different forms of tolerance***

We will be using two different measures of authoritarianism. One will be an index of authoritarianism<sup>1</sup> and the other the question of child-rearing practices.<sup>2</sup>

We will use the index of individual tolerance,<sup>3</sup> the index of national exclusion,<sup>4</sup> and the index of stereotype<sup>5</sup> as dependent variables. As the measures of threat we used two basic measures. The first one was, as mentioned above, the peace and conflict areas. The assumption is that the situation of conflict will act as a threat and activate intolerance among individuals with authoritarian predispositions. As a consequence, the difference between authoritarians and non-authoritarians will be greater in

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<sup>1</sup> The index of authoritarianism was obtained in two steps. In the first step, a principal component analysis of 19 statements was performed. A second factor explaining 11.71% of variance and comprising 7 statements was obtained and labelled authoritarianism. The statements are: People without a leader are like a man without a head, The most important thing for children is to learn to obey their parents, Care about the family must be the main goal of every state, There are two kind of people in the world – strong and weak, A strong state is something that we all need, The main goal of the state is to ensure order, The state must play a larger role in managing the economy. The scale has Cronbach Alpha .711.

<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Stenner, we extracted one question: The most important thing for children is to learn to obey their parents.

<sup>3</sup> The individual tolerance index was based on agreement with five statements: It does not bother me if I have to co-operate at work with members of different nationalities; I choose friends with regard to their character and not their nationality; I have good relations with my neighbours regardless of their nationality; I am visited by and have coffee parties with neighbours of different nationalities; I am helping my neighbours regardless of their nationality.

<sup>4</sup> The index of national exclusion is based on three questions: It's good that people of different nationalities marry; It's good that we have separate classes in school for members of different ethnic groups; It's not good that people of different nationalities make friendships.

<sup>5</sup> The index of stereotypes is constructed on the basis of acceptance or rejection of seven statements claiming that members of different ethnic groups are equally industrial, honest, tolerant, pious, polite, approachable, and conflict-avoiding.



conflict areas and, as a result, the correlation of authoritarianism and our measures of tolerance, national exclusion and stereotypes will be higher in conflict areas.

It can be argued that peace/conflict areas do not sufficiently distinguish between situations of existence or non-existence of threat. Namely, the whole of Yugoslavia was an arena of conflict and people felt threatened regardless of whether the conflict occurred in their area or a neighbouring one. The point is that we are assuming that the feeling of threat was higher in the areas of conflict, but we don't have the independent indicators showing this to have been the case. In order to check the theory, we used two different measures of threat that are not connected with the difference between peace and conflict areas and the former conflict in Yugoslavia. These measures are oriented toward the feeling of threat under some contemporary situations and developments. We checked how people feel threatened by the return of refugees and how they feel threatened with the prospects of entering the European Union. Again, the idea of the theory is that the feeling of threat (from the return of refugees or Croatia entering the EU) will activate the authoritarian predisposition and these people will be more intolerant, exclusionist and stereotyping. In other words, the correlation of authoritarianism and intolerance, and exclusionism and stereotyping will be greater among those who feel threatened (by the return of refugees or the prospect of entering Europe) than by those who don't feel that way.

## The results

When we compare the areas where the conflict occurs with the "peaceful" areas, we find a statistically significant difference in the authoritarianism levels.

**Table 1. Differences in authoritarianism between peaceful and conflict areas**

<i>Peace/conflict</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>		<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Peace</i>	422	3.77	.03097	Equal variances assumed	.001
<i>Conflict</i>	386	3.92	.02913	Equal variances not assumed	.001

As we can see, the level of authoritarianism (the mean) is higher in conflict than in peaceful areas. This difference of 0.15 points on the 1 to 5 scale is not large but is statistically significant. The explanation of substantive reasons for this difference will not occupy us here. On the one hand, it could be the consequence of conflict (the level of authori-

tarianism rising among the people in the areas passing through conflict). On the other hand, we can construct the opposite explanation that the authoritarianism was already higher in the conflict areas and was one of the factors causing the conflict. Alternatively, the difference could be the result of the differential migration with less authoritarian people leaving the conflict areas and moving to the more peaceful areas. It is difficult without longitudinal data to adjudicate between these different hypotheses. To find the answer is not important from the standpoint of the problems preoccupying us here. What we are interested in is the question of whether the correlation between authoritarianism and tolerance is higher or not in the conflict areas than in the peaceful areas. In order to have the complete answer to the “authoritarian dynamic” hypothesis we should have the data before and after the conflict. According to the hypothesis, the correlation would be non-existent before the conflict and would emerge as significant in conflict areas (but not in the peaceful areas) after the conflict. We don’t have the data before the conflict, but we can check if the post-conflict data are in accordance with the theoretical expectations.

In order to obtain the answers to our hypotheses, the data in the Table 2 are presented. The table shows Pearson  $r$ , first between individual authoritarianism and tolerance, national exclusion and the stereotyping index. We have the results in the first row for the total sample, while in the second and the third rows the result is partitioned into the peace and conflict areas according to descriptions previously presented. In the second part of the table, the whole procedure is repeated but, instead of the authoritarianism index, the child-rearing question is used as an indicator of authoritarianism.

Does the obtained data support the authoritarian dynamics theory? The general answer is a qualified yes. Namely, the theory assumes that, in a situation of threat (the assumed threat situation here is the conflict to which the area was exposed), the correlation of authoritarianism (measured here using the authoritarian index) and tolerance measures (measured here using three indexes of tolerance, national exclusion and stereotyping) will be higher than in the areas not going through the conflict process. The correlations in *all* cases are as expected by the theory, namely, higher in the areas that went through conflict. What is clouding the interpretation is the fact that all correlations are low and, except in two or three cases (depending on criteria), do not reach a statistically significance level.

**Table 2. The correlation of authoritarianism and tolerance, stereotyping and national exclusion in peaceful and conflict areas**

<i>Sample</i>	<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Total	Authoritarianism index	Tolerance index	-.091	(.010)	807
Peace	“	“	-.056	(.124)	421
Conflict	“	“	-.077	(.066)	386
Total	“	National exclusion index	.014	(.686)	807
Peace	“	“	-.027	(.287)	422
Conflict	“	“	.015	(.385)	385
Total	“	Stereotyping index	.041	(.247)	806
Peace	“	“	-.034	(.245)	421
Conflict	“	“	.089	(.041)	385
Total	Child-rearing questions	Tolerance index	-.056	(.113)	805
Peace	“	“	-.010	(.418)	420
Conflict	“	“	-.061	(.115)	385
Total	“	National exclusion index	.022	(.526)	805
Peace	“	“	.007	(.441)	421
Conflict	“	“	.013	(.400)	384
Total	“	Stereotyping index	.019	(.598)	804
Peace	“	“	-.015	(.377)	420
Conflict	“	“	.034	(.351)	384

We should not be confused by the signs pointing in different directions, because the direction depends on the question formulation. For example, the first correlation between authoritarianism and individual tolerance is in the conflict areas  $-.056$  and in peaceful areas  $-.077$ . This result is in accordance with the theoretical expectation because the greater scale values are pointing in the direction of greater tolerance. That means that the correlation of intolerance (lower tolerance) and authoritarianism is greater  $-.077$  in the conflict areas than in peaceful areas, where the correlation is  $-.056$ . If we look at the significance test we can see that the correlation is not significant in the peaceful areas while it almost reaches the  $.05$  significance level in the conflict areas. Two others scales in the first panel of Table 1 show different directions. They are pointing toward greater national exclusionism and greater stereotyping. The shifts from the negative to the positive sign in

both cases are again in accordance with the theoretical expectation, because that means that the correlation of authoritarianism and national exclusionism and stereotyping is becoming positive in conflict areas, whereas it is negative and statistically insignificant in the peaceful areas.

That means that in all three cases in the first panel of the Table 1 (using the index of authoritarianism as the measure of underlying authoritarianism), the data are “behaving” exactly according to the expectations produced by the authoritarian dynamics theory. The correlations between the index of authoritarianism and intolerance, national exclusionism and stereotyping are higher in the areas that went through conflict than in the areas where conflict was absent. The theory postulates that, in a situation where threat does not exist (we are assuming that the areas where the conflict was avoided present such non-threatening situations), there will be no differences in expressing intolerance and similar anti-minority attitudes between non-authoritarians and authoritarians. The threatening situation (in our case the areas that were passing through conflict) triggers fears among authoritarians and that pushes up the authoritarianism and intolerance, exclusionism and stereotyping correlations.

This interpretation ignores the statistical significance and is based on the “right” direction of the correlation coefficients. For example, neither authoritarianism and the national exclusionism correlation in peaceful areas, nor in the conflict areas, reaches statistical significance.

The same result holds for the second part of the Table 1 when the question about child-rearing values is used as an indicator of authoritarianism. None of the observed coefficients reaches the statistical significance levels. But all of them are “behaving” in accordance with theoretical expectations, meaning that the correlation of authoritarianism and dependent variables (intolerance, exclusion and stereotyping) is higher in the conflict areas than in the peaceful ones. In the case of intolerance, it rises from  $-.010$  to  $-.061$ , in the case of national exclusionism it is from  $.007$  to  $.013$  and in the case of stereotyping from  $-.015$  to  $.034$ .

In spite of the low value of the observed coefficients, we can conclude that the relationship in all six observed cases is in the direction predicted by the theory. In the areas that did not go through conflict, the correlation of authoritarianism with the indicators of intolerance, exclusion and stereotypes is smaller than in the areas that went through conflict. The theory says that threat (in our case, the occurrence of conflict during the war operations) will have a different influence on people with authoritarian predispositions than those without them. “The authoritarians” will become more intolerant (and more favourably predisposed towards exclusion, and

more stereotyped). Conflict will have an opposite effect on those who are non-authoritarians, who will activate their inclinations toward tolerance (and also become less inclined toward exclusion and less stereotyped). And it looks as though this is exactly what was happening. As a consequence, using two measures of authoritarianism (the authoritarianism index and the question about the child-rearing practices) in each particular case and three different measures of attitudes – tolerance, exclusion and stereotyping – the correlations went in the predicted way, that is, they increased as a result of conflict. The explanation for this observation in accordance with the theory is that people with authoritarian predispositions reacted to conflict with an increase in intolerance, exclusion attitudes and stereotypes. In situations with no conflict, these predispositions stayed latent and were not mobilized. As a consequence, the correlation of authoritarianism and the attitudes increased in the conflict areas, when compared with the areas that stayed peaceful. That also means that the dichotomy of peace and conflict areas operates as a valid indication of the normative threat dimension that, according to the authoritarian dynamics theory, is the only valid conceptualization of the variable operating as mobilization of the authoritarians.

### ***Feeling of threat***

We tested the same problem using different measures of threat. This time threat was not measured by comparing local situations of conflict and peace, but rather indicators of perception of threat, ignoring the contextual situation in which that perception occurs. We divided the population on the basis of the feeling of threat. The feeling of threat was measured in two dimensions. The first one was the threat felt by the return of refugees. The second dimension was the feeling of threat at the prospect of joining the European Union.

It is worth noting that there is a significantly different distribution of these two different threats in the observed populations. In general, people do not feel threatened by the return of refugees. What is interesting is that the feeling of threat caused by the return of refugees is greater in peaceful than in the conflict areas.

This fact is interesting, especially taking into account that the national structure of the conflict areas was drastically changed in comparison with the peace areas. In Gospić for example, the share of Serbs fell from 31% in 1981 to less than 5% in 2001, in spite of the significant rise in the total population by almost 50% from 8,785 to 12,980. It has been the other way around in the peaceful area of Vrbovsko, the proportion of Serbs having

increased from 31% to 36% in the same period, despite the decline in the total population from 7,344 to 6,047. That reflects a general trend with local variations, in which the areas of conflict are characterized by significant decline of ethnic Serbian population, while that is not the case in the peaceful areas. The number of Serbs declined in smaller proportions or even, as in Vrbovsko, increased. Their proportion in Plaški fell from 86% to 46%, and in Pakrac from 30% to 17%. In the situation of the significant decline of population from 1,127 to 860, the proportion of Serbs has increased from 3% to 19% only in Saborsko. In Rovinj, in the situation of population expansion from 11,271 to 14,234, the proportion of Serbs fell from 5% to 3.5% (from 557 to 500 in absolute numbers). There was a significant decline in Daruvar in proportions from 24% to 14% in the situation of a significant increase in population from 9,661 to 13,243.

**Table 3. % of respondents who thought that the return of refugees and those exiled would negatively influence some aspect of social life<sup>6</sup>**

<i>Aspect of life threatened</i>	<i>Peace</i>	<i>Conflict</i>
Traditions and customs	22.99	15.76
National identity	23.46	15.50
Language and dialect	22.27	13.18
Employment	24.17	17.57
Entrepreneurship	25.36	17.83
Living standard	24.41	15.50
Functioning of local government	26.54	15.76
Activity of political parties	27.49	18.60
Security (public order)	25.12	13.70

It is extremely difficult to find an explanation as to why people feel more threatened with the prospect of the return of refugees in the peaceful areas. One possible reason could be one that showed up in the in-depth interviews (not discussed in this paper) where people in the peaceful areas described those who had left as “trouble-makers” and were afraid of their return. On the other hand, we can conclude that the feeling of threat from the return of refugees is not particularly high. In the worst case in the peaceful areas, 26% of respondents evaluated that the return

<sup>6</sup> The question was: Evaluate how the return of refugees influences different aspects of community life in your community. Then different dimensions were numerated, such as traditions and customs; national identity etc. The respondents could choose between negative influence, non-influence and positive influence. Here is the percentage of those choosing a negative answer.

would endanger the functioning of local government. On average,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population, or even around 85% in the conflict areas, did not see such return negatively, while some even evaluated that the return could have some positive effects. (Close to half of respondents claimed that the return would have positive effects on different spheres of social life.) In general, we can say that positive attitudes prevailed over negative ones regarding the refugees return. This prevalence is only less intensive in the peaceful areas.

Regarding perceptions on the consequences of Croatia becoming a member of the European Union, we can observe as follows: 75% of respondents in conflict areas and 79% in peaceful areas claimed that the attractive real estate would be bought up by foreigners when Croatia joined Europe; Croatian citizens would become servants in their own country was the claim of 48% of respondents in the conflict areas and 50% in the peaceful areas. There is only somewhat more optimism regarding Croatian culture, customs and tradition. Thirty-one percent of respondents in conflict areas and 25% in the peaceful areas believe that they will be destroyed with Croatia joining the European Union. We can conclude that people feel threatened by joining Europe and that there is no difference between peaceful and conflict areas in this regard. We should not be confused by the signs pointing in different directions, since the direction depends on the question formulation. We are concentrating here on the analysis of the negative dimension of “joining Europe”, ignoring some positive dimensions that are also getting wide support such as, for example, the fact that people believe that international esteem for Croatia will be increased. That is the opinion of almost 50% of respondents in conflict areas and 40% in peaceful areas.

Returning to the authoritarian dynamics theory, we ask the question of whether the feeling of threat (in the first instance, perception of threat in the return of refugees) increases intolerance, exclusion attitudes and stereotypes in those being authoritarian more than in those who are not. As a consequence, we can expect the correlation of authoritarianism and intolerance, exclusion and stereotypes being higher among those who feel threatened than those who do not.

This differences between conflict and peaceful areas are presented here only as illustration. We are more interested in the prediction derived from the theory indicating that the authoritarianism-tolerance correlation among those perceiving threat will be higher than among those who don't. The data show the correlation of authoritarianism and tolerance, national exclusion and stereotypes among those who feel threatened and those who don't.

**Table 4. Threat of return<sup>7</sup> and attitudinal variables**

<i>Threat</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Not threatened	Authoritarianism index	Tolerance index	-.029	(.258)	519
Threatened	“	“	-.111	(.124)	111
Not threatened	“	National exclusion index	-.008	(.432)	520
Threatened	“	“	.055	(.282)	111
Not threatened	“	National stereotypes index	-.006	(.449)	518
Threatened	“	“	.105	(.136)	111

Very similarly to the instance when we compared peace and conflict areas, none of the correlation coefficients reach statistical significance. We can interpret the obtained data from that standpoint, that is, that authoritarianism and our indices of tolerance, exclusion and stereotypes are not significantly correlated and that we cannot corroborate the theory. But, on the other hand, even if none of the coefficients reach significance in all of the three observed cases when we compare those who feel threatened and those who don't, the magnitude of the coefficients turns in the theoretically expected direction. Namely, the correlation of authoritarianism and our dependent variables is always greater and in the expected direction when more people feel threatened than those who do not. In the first case of the relationship of threat and tolerance, the difference is the correlation of -.029 if the people don't feel threatened and -.111 if they do. Because that is actually the index of tolerance, the meaning of these coefficients is that the correlation is more negative among those who feel threatened. In the case of the two other indices, the situation is that the coefficient changes from negative to positive. That means that when people do not feel threatened there is no difference between authoritarians and non-authoritarians and, actually, that authoritarians are even marginally less exclusive than non-authoritarians. On the other hand, a perception of threat leads to differentiation in national

<sup>7</sup> The threat of return variable was constructed on the basis of nine items asking respondents how the return of refugees would reflect itself on different dimensions of community life. (See the previous footnote.) Those obtaining the score from 5 to 9 (meaning that they see negative effects of return in five or more dimensions of social life) are treated as “threatened by the return”. We have 111 such respondents. On the other hand, we have 519 not threatened. The rest of the sample are in the middle of the scale (neither threatened nor positive towards return) and are omitted from the analysis.



exclusion attitudes among authoritarians but not among the non-authoritarians and, as a consequence, we have a jump in correlation from  $-.008$  to  $.055$ , meaning that, if they perceive the threat, authoritarians are more exclusive than non-authoritarians.. The difference between those who feel threatened and those who don't is even greater in the case of stereotypes. The correlation between authoritarianism and stereotypes is  $-.006$  among those who do not feel threatened and it jumps to  $.105$  among those who feel threatened. Thus, the conclusion is that, when people feel threatened, those who are authoritarians react by increasing their intolerance, and, consequently, the correlation between authoritarianism and intolerance, and exclusion and stereotypes is greater among those who feel threatened than among those who do not. We could argue that the data confirm the theory.

We made the same analysis in the next panel, but used the feeling of threat from Europe as the indication of feelings of threat.

**Table 5. Threat from Europe<sup>8</sup> and attitudinal variables**

<i>Threat</i>	<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Not threatened	Authoritarianism index	Tolerance index	.086	(.291)	43
Threatened	“	“	-.131	(.023)	233
Not threatened	“	National exclusion	.069	(.331)	43
Threatened	“	“	-.014	(.414)	233
Not threatened	“	National stereotypes	.214	(.084)	43
Threatened	“	“	.042	(.262)	232

It would seem at first glance that only the first set of two correlations is in accordance with our theory. Namely, among those who feel more threatened the correlation of authoritarianism and tolerance is higher ( $-.131$ ), the negative sign indicating that they are less tolerant than those

<sup>8</sup> The index of the threat from Europe was constructed on the basis of the perceived negative consequences of joining Europe. Five items were used: destruction of Croatian customs and tradition, danger for the Croatian language, foreigners will buy up property, Croats will become servants in their own country, Croatia will be swamped by foreign workers. The Likert type scale was used for answers from 1, meaning non-acceptance of the statement, to 5 meaning full agreement. Those whose average answer was between 4 and 5 ( $N=233$ ) were treated as threatened by Europe and those between 1 and 2 as non-threatened ( $N=43$ ).

who don't feel threatened (.086). However, it looks as though the second two sets of correlations are contrary to that expected by the theory. Namely, the correlations of authoritarianism and national exclusion and national stereotypes are higher among those who do not feel threatened. (We are again ignoring the statistical significance.) We will show that, actually, these two correlations are in accordance with the theory and that only the authoritarianism tolerance correlation requires explanation as an exception.

We should step back for a moment and return to the original authoritarian dynamics theory. In the part of the book when the changing conceptions of "us" and "them" is analyzed, the author shows that, in experimental situations where the threat is represented by aliens, authoritarians decrease their level of racial intolerance. Namely, the aliens are a "new enemy", different from the racial minority. A new boundary between "us" (now including the racial minority) and "them" (aliens) is drawn. If we return to the basic idea of tolerance, we should remember that its basic component is rejection of difference. At the same, whoever is different can change, depending on the situation and on the characteristic of the threat. Europe, like the aliens in Stunners' experiments, redraws the boundaries between "us" and "them". When threatened by Europe, the exclusion of local minorities, (the items speaking about interethnic marriages, mixing of people in schools and interethnic friendships) goes down, because these are now "our" people and we all are equally threatened by the dangerous Europe. The same probably holds for the stereotypes about national groups. We assume that when asked these questions, people answer within the frame of "local" national groups. They decrease their stereotyping of "local" minorities when they feel threatened by certain "aliens" from Europe, who will buy up property and endanger local culture. Under the pressure of the "common enemy" (in this case, Europe), national exclusion and stereotyping is less correlated with authoritarianism among those who feel threatened than among those who don't. The "ad hoc" interpretation for the fact that the authoritarianism-tolerance correlation does not behave in that way could be that tolerance is a deeper personality structure, which stays intact when attitudes that are nearer to the "surface", such as exclusion and stereotypes, are changing under changed conditions. Basically, we obtain the same picture treating the question about child-rearing practices as independent.

**Table 6. The correlation between the question on child-rearing practices and tolerance, national exclusion and national stereotyping**

<i>Threat</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>Stat. Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Not threatened	Child-rearing practice	Tolerance	-.009	(.418)	517
Threatened	“	“	-.018	(.426)	111
Not threatened	“	National exclusion	.002	(.483)	518
Threatened	“	“	.011	(.453)	111
Not threatened	“	Stereotyping index	-.017	(.347)	516
Threatened	“	“	-.082	(.197)	111

None of the coefficients reach the level of statistical significance, but the differences between threatened and non-threatened are exactly in the direction predicted by the theory. Namely, the correlation coefficients between the authoritarianism independent variables of tolerance, national exclusion and stereotypes among those threatened are higher than among the non-threatened. In the situation of threat (measured by the perceived threat of the return of refugees), authoritarianism (measured by the authoritarian index or just the question of child-rearing practices) triggers intolerance, stereotyping and national exclusion.

The situation is different again when the threat is represented by “joining Europe”.

**Table 7. The correlation of authoritarianism and tolerance, exclusion, and stereotypes when people feel and don't feel threatened by the Europe-joining process**

<i>Threat</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>N</i>
Not threatened	Child-rearing practice	Tolerance	-.047	(.382)	43
Threatened	“	“	-.035	(.300)	233
Not threatened	“	National exclusion	-.029	(.427)	43
Threatened	“	“	.019	(.389)	233
Not threatened	“	Stereotyping index	.032	(.420)	43
Threatened	“	“	.007	(.455)	232

If we accept the theoretical expectations that those having an authoritarian predisposition are becoming more tolerant toward minorities under this specific threat, we can see that two of the observed pairs of correlations are behaving in the expected way. Those who feel threatened are showing less negative correlation with tolerance and lower correlation with stereotyping. The exception is the correlations with national exclusion, where those who feel threatened are showing a higher authoritarianism-exclusion correlation.

### **Conclusions**

The authoritarian dynamics theory states that there is no difference between those with authoritarian predispositions and those without regarding different attitudes expressing tolerance toward the “others”, when there is no normative threat present. The situation of normative threat acts differently upon authoritarians and non-authoritarians. The authoritarians raise their general intolerance and, in these situations, the correlation of different tolerance measures and authoritarianism increases. This is not expected to happen among those not having this authoritarian predisposition. There is also a prediction that under a specific threat that could be perceived as a “common enemy” authoritarians react by decreasing their intolerance toward “internal others”, who are then becoming allies against the new common enemy.

We used two basic indicators of threat in our research. One is the division between the areas in which there was an open conflict (threat situation) and in which there was none (non-threatening situation). In addition to this quasi-experimental manipulation, we used survey data to detect those who felt threatened by the return of refugees and by the process of joining Europe (ignoring the distribution of those who felt threatened between the peace and conflict areas).

Authoritarianism was measured on two ways. Firstly, by using the question of child-rearing practices (very similarly to Stenner) and also using an index of authoritarianism developed on the basis of factor analysis of a larger number of value questions and the obtained factor, which can be labelled as authoritarianism.

We used three indices as dependent variables, also obtained by the factor analytical procedure of tolerance, national exclusion and national stereotyping. The following table summarizes the key information obtained from all the comparisons of correlations coefficients between authoritarianism and attitudes toward the “others” in threatening and non-threatening situations. This is indicated whether the switch of the correlation coefficient happens in accordance with the authoritarian dynamics theory, or not.

**Table 8. Indicating the difference of authoritarianism and tolerance, exclusion and stereotypes in threatening and non-threatening situation as theoretically expected**

<i>Threat indicator</i>	<i>Authoritarianism</i>	<i>Dependent variable</i>	Is the difference of the correlation coefficient between threatening and non-threatening situations in accordance with the theoretical explanation?
Peace/conflict area	Authoritarianism index	Tolerance index	<i>Yes</i>
	“	National exclusion	<i>Yes</i>
	“	Stereotyping index	<i>Yes</i>
	Child-rearing practice	Tolerance index	<i>Yes</i>
	“	National exclusion	<i>Yes</i>
	“	Stereotyping index	<i>Yes</i>
Threat from refugees	Authoritarianism index	Tolerance index	<i>Yes</i>
	“	National exclusion	<i>Yes</i>
	“	Stereotyping index	<i>Yes</i>
Threat from Europe	“	Tolerance Index	<i>No</i>
	“	National exclusion	<i>Yes</i>
	“	Stereotyping index	<i>Yes</i>
Threat from refugees	Child-rearing practice	Tolerance	<i>Yes</i>
	“	National exclusion	<i>Yes</i>
	“	Stereotyping index	<i>Yes</i>
Threat from Europe	“	Tolerance	<i>Yes</i>
	“	National exclusion	<i>No</i>
	“	Stereotyping index	<i>Yes</i>

Table 8 shows that of the 18 pairs of correlations (differences between threatening and non-threatening situations) 16 pairs are behaving in accordance with our theoretical predictions and only two pairs contrary to expectations. This proportion is far too high to have been obtained by chance. On the other hand, some alternative explanations are always possible with this type of data, but we are not entering into that aspect because of space limitations. Since so many of the observed facts are exactly in accordance with our theory (leaving aside the question of statistical significance and

discussing only the direction in which the coefficients are pointing), we are arguing that the data are pointing toward the acceptance of the authoritarian dynamics theory. The substantial interpretation is that the threatening situation is prompting those with authoritarian predispositions to increase their intolerance, exclusion and stereotypes and, consequently, the correlation of authoritarianism with these dependent variables increases.

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## **Autoritarna dinamika: područja mira i sukoba i teorija autoritarne dinamike**

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U radu se testiraju neke osnovne postavke teorije autoritarne dinamike Karen Stenner. Ideja je teorije da u normalnim situacijama nema razlike u toleranciji između autoritarnih i neautoritarnih osoba. Tek situacija normativne opasnosti dovodi do toga da oni s autoritarnim predispozicijama reagiraju s povećanom netolerantnošću. Posljedica je da možemo očekivati veću povezanost između autoritarnosti i tolerancije u situaciji opasnosti nego kad je nema. U ovom se radu empirijski potvrđuje da je korelacija autoritarnosti i tolerancije veća u onim područjima koja su prošla kroz međunacionalne sukobe kao i kod onih ljudi koji percipiraju da su više ugroženi povratkom izbjeglica i pridruživanjem Europskoj uniji. Kao empirijska podloga korišteni su podaci sakupljeni u područjima koja su bila izložena ratnim sukobima tijekom dezintegracije Jugoslavije (Gospić, Plaški, Pakrac) za razliku od onih u kojima takvih sukoba nije bilo (Vrbovsko, Rovinj, Daruvar).

**Ključne riječi:** autoritarnost, teorija autoritarne dinamike, autoritarna ličnost, etnički sukob, etnički mir