

RESEARCH METHODS

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CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH

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

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

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

TARGET POPULATION

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

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

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

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

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

527 respondents in our research had the returnee status.

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

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

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

LOCATIONS

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

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

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO		CROATIA		BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	
Central municipalities of Belgrade	110	Benkovac	49	Banjaluka	55
Zemun	50	Karlovac	31	Bihać	6
Obrenovac	10	Knin	90	Bratunac	23
Barajevo	8	Lipik	42	Brčko	11
Lazarevac	7	Obrovac	11	Doboj	7
Mladenovac	6	Osijek	34	Kladanj	10
Sopot	6	Pakrac	63	Milići	112
Pančevo	5	Vojnić	9	Municipalities in Sarajevo	100
Stara Pazova	29	Vukovar	114	Srebrenica	50
Novi Sad	7	Zadar	27	Tuzla	273
Zaječar	10	Other	27	Vlasenica	10
Kraljevo	8	No data	3	Živinice	5
Užice	5	TOTAL	500	Other	30
Other	27			No data	4
No data	14			TOTAL	696
TOTAL	302				

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

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

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

SAMPLE

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

Civic status

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

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

The overall sample was comprised of 56.0% of men and 44.0% of women. Among the returnee population represented in the sample, men accounted for 57.5% and women for 42.5%. Given that the refugee and local population sample has been harmonised with the returnee one, a similar percentage of men and women is represented in these samples (54.2% men, 45.8% women in refugee sample and 56.1% men, 43.9% women in local population sample).

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

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

Ethnic origin

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

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

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

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

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

Age

Average age of the respondents was 47 years and 6 months.

Detailed description of the age distribution in various countries/entities is given in the table below:

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

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

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

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

Urban - rural

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marital status

In the overall sample, as well as in the three respective sub-samples (returnees, refugees and local population) married respondents are dominant (from 60.8% among local residents to 67.9% among refugees), followed by single individuals (from 16.6% among refugees to 23.1% among returnees), widows/widowers (from 9.9% among returnees to 11.9% among local population), while the smallest percent of the respondents were divorced (from 4.4% among refugees to 7.4% among local population).

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

Table 8: *Marital status of respondents*

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

Number of children

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

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

Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs
2.08	1.78	1.66

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

Returnees	Refugees	Local population
1.66	1.94	1.67

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

Returnees	Refugees	Local population
1.19	1.68	1.20

Education status

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

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

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

INSTRUMENTS

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

We have used the following instruments:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This instrument recorded two types of information:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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