

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## RESEARCH IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1: *Distances by the percentage of refusal, Milići<sup>54</sup> 2003*

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

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

<sup>54</sup> Milići is a town near Srebrenica, primarily inhabited by Serbs. We have transformed the data borrowed from Vujadinović et al. (2003)

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

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

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

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

## METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

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

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

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

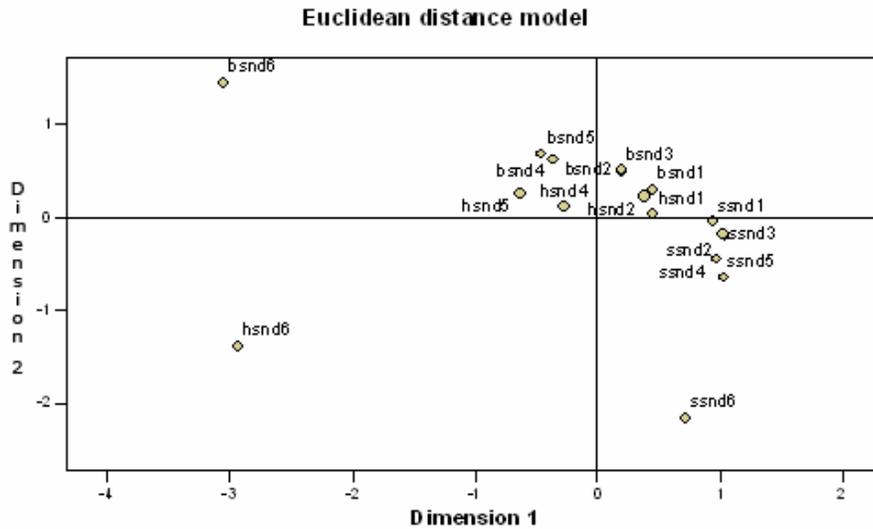
That is why we thought that formulation of statements in a negative, reverse way (“I would be bothered to marry...”, or “I would be bothered if he/she was my colleague”) is more clear and easier to interpret.

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

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

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

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



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

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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

**Ubiquity of the attitudes that reflect extreme chauvinism**

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

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

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

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

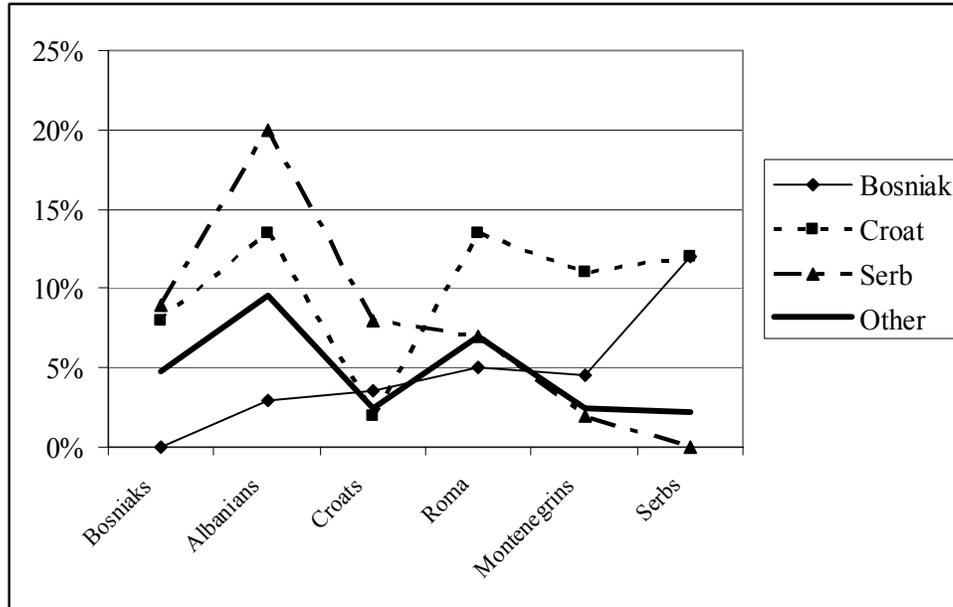
This trend becomes more visible when coexistence of various ethnic groups within one and the same state is in question.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Repatriation-relevant relations**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **When politics meddles into private life**

### **Friendship**

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

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

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

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

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

Table 14: *Percentages of Serbian refusal of friendship with members of other ethnic groups – a comparative analysis*<sup>55</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Marriage**

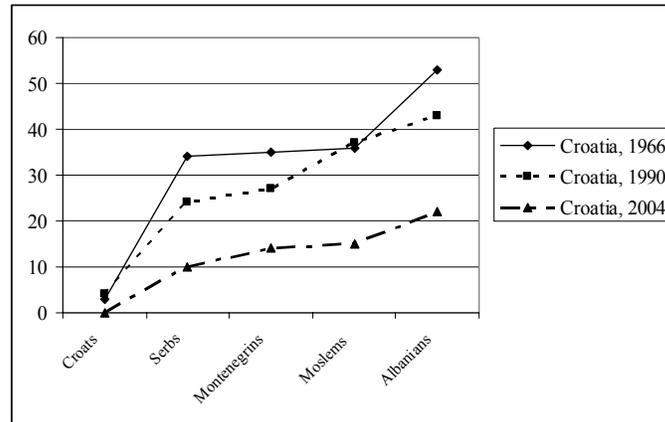
There is a conviction that inter-ethnic marriages were very frequent in the SFRY (25 % in Croatia, Mijatović, 1995; 36% in B&H - Biro, 2005)<sup>56</sup>. This is very often used as an argument for the thesis that the SFRY was a country of good inter-ethnic relations. It is quite certain that these relations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

---

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

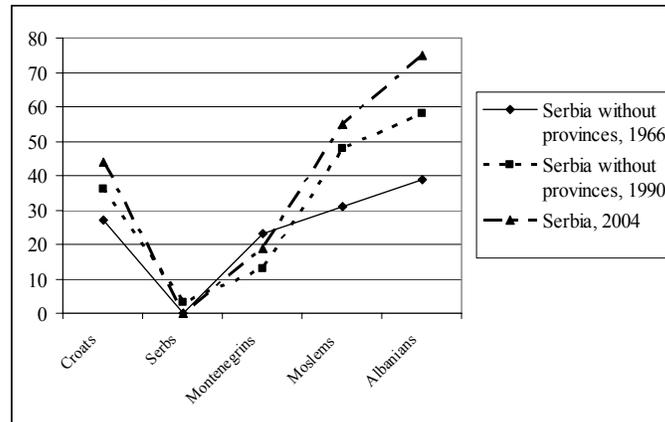
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Graph 3: Percentages of the refusal of marriage with members of particular ethnic groups in Croatia<sup>57</sup> - a comparative review



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

Graph 4: Percentages of the refusal of marriage with members of particular ethnic groups in Serbia<sup>58</sup> - a comparative review



<sup>57</sup> We have modified the values for 1966 and 1990 that we had borrowed from: Pantić, D.(1991) Nacionalna distanca građana Jugoslavije u Bačević, L.J.(ed) Jugoslavija na kriznoj prekretnici, IDN, Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje.

<sup>58</sup> We have modified the values for 1966 and 1990 that we had borrowed from: Pantić, D.(1991) Nacionalna distanca građana Jugoslavije u Bačević, L.J.(ed) Jugoslavija na kriznoj prekretnici, IDN, Centar za politikološka istraživanja i javno mnjenje.

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

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

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

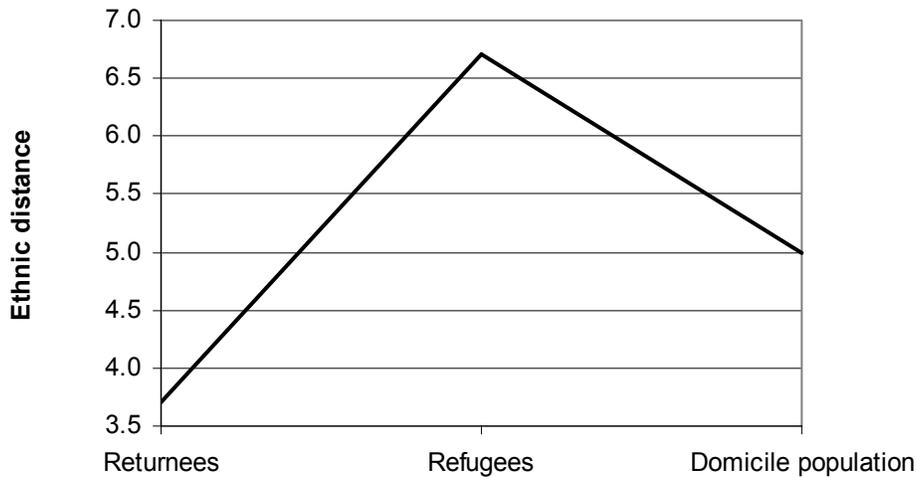
In order to respond to the question of possible statistically significant differences between refugees, returnees and the domicile population, we have compared these groups in respect to the overall social distance. The following table demonstrates the results of analysis of variance.

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

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

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

Graph 5: *Ethnic distance*



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

### **Relations between ethnic distance towards various ethnic groups**

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

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

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

	Roma	Albanian	Montenegrin	Croat	Serb
Roma	1	,602 <sup>(**)</sup>	,494 <sup>(**)</sup>	,446 <sup>(**)</sup>	,487 <sup>(**)</sup>
Albanian	,602 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,445 <sup>(**)</sup>	,421 <sup>(**)</sup>	,365 <sup>(**)</sup>
Montenegrin	,494 <sup>(**)</sup>	,445 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,757 <sup>(**)</sup>	,643 <sup>(**)</sup>
Croat	,446 <sup>(**)</sup>	,421 <sup>(**)</sup>	,757 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,635 <sup>(**)</sup>
Serb	,487 <sup>(**)</sup>	,365 <sup>(**)</sup>	,643 <sup>(**)</sup>	,635 <sup>(**)</sup>	1

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

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

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

	Roma	Albanian	Montenegrin	Croat	Serb
Roma	1	,769 <sup>(**)</sup>	,683 <sup>(**)</sup>	,579 <sup>(**)</sup>	,694 <sup>(**)</sup>
Albanian	,769 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,687 <sup>(**)</sup>	,555 <sup>(**)</sup>	,706 <sup>(**)</sup>
Montenegrin	,683 <sup>(**)</sup>	,687 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,846 <sup>(**)</sup>	,712 <sup>(**)</sup>
Croat	,579 <sup>(**)</sup>	,555 <sup>(**)</sup>	,846 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,589 <sup>(**)</sup>
Serb	,694 <sup>(**)</sup>	,706 <sup>(**)</sup>	,712 <sup>(**)</sup>	,589 <sup>(**)</sup>	1

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

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

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

	Roma	Albanian	Montenegrin	Croat	Serb
Roma	1	,594 <sup>(**)</sup>	,336 <sup>(**)</sup>	,494 <sup>(**)</sup>	,530 <sup>(**)</sup>
Albanian	,594 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,237 <sup>(**)</sup>	,602 <sup>(**)</sup>	,646 <sup>(**)</sup>
Montenegrin	,336 <sup>(**)</sup>	,237 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,302 <sup>(**)</sup>	,343 <sup>(**)</sup>
Croat	,494 <sup>(**)</sup>	,602 <sup>(**)</sup>	,302 <sup>(**)</sup>	1	,774 <sup>(**)</sup>
Serb	,530 <sup>(**)</sup>	,646 <sup>(**)</sup>	,343 <sup>(**)</sup>	,774 <sup>(**)</sup>	1

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

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

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

### The correlates of ethnic distances

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CONCLUSIONS

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

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

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

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