Perspectives of Return Sustainability in Rural Areas of Podrinje

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ABSTRACT

The return of refugees and internally displaced persons is an activity in which all individuals are provided with the opportunity to return voluntarily, safely and with dignity to their homes that they had to leave during the conflict. Even after more than a decade, the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons is generally very topical [1]. Even eighteen years after the war, there are still many problems related to IDPs. It's not just the return process that's problematic. Displaced persons face various challenges related to access to employment, public services, education and infrastructure [2]. In Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter BiH), during the 1992-1995 war, 2.2 million people were forced to flee their homes [3]. Upon return, returnees should seek restitution or compensation and should receive strong reintegration and rehabilitation support to build a livelihood and contribute to long-term economic and political development. Safe and voluntary return includes a guarantee of return choices and security for those who choose to return. The aim of the study was to examine the views of returnees on the problems in society faced by the population / returnees in three different time periods, in 1992, after return and today, to improve the conditions for sustainable return. Unemployment is ranked in the top three as the most significant problem of the population returning to their homes. The justice system, the problem of minorities, public funding, security, the slow EU accession process and climate change are not considered by returnees as significant problems for sustainable return.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, refugees are defined as persons who are outside the country of their nationality for well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality or social group or political opinion [4]. Internally displaced persons are defined as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or compelled to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations or natural disasters. or man-made disasters that have not crossed an internationally recognized state border. "This definition is derived from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs," Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", 2004 [5].

By Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the signatories reaffirmed their commitment to respect the rights of refugees and displaced persons, in particular the right to return, as well as the right to restitution and / or compensation [6].

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the forced displacement that accompanied it, created not only strong divisions between different ethnic groups, but also within the ethnic group [7].

The economic structure points to the fact that in terms of quality, with the arrival of refugees and displaced persons, it has worsened the overall socio-economic situation and high unemployment [8]. Follow-up of returnees soon revealed worrying tendencies that many of them, namely, sooner or later, and for various reasons, go to new migrations [9]. The return of displaced people depends on their age, education, occupation, place of residence [10].

Return alone is not enough, it must be sustainable. Many will agree with this statement, however how to provide measurable indicators of sustainable return. The current situation in BiH is the result of socio-economic and political changes that have occurred primarily in the last twenty years (post-war society, transition, political crises). Apart from the war, which radically changed the social and economic structure, the transition process in BiH has not yet been officially completed. Therefore, no consensus has been reached on the issues of priorities related to sustainable development. The goal of rural development policy in BiH should be balanced territorial development, ie reducing the differences between territories with favorable versus territories with unfavorable living conditions. Rural development policy in BiH should take into account the heterogeneity of economic and living conditions [11]. Agriculture in BiH, in general, acts as a sectoral companion, not as a leader in economic development. If BiH accelerates its activities on harmonization of its legislation with EU legislation in the field of agriculture and rural development, funds that could be used from pre-accession funds would be added to existing domestic investments and thus contribute to faster agricultural development and better living conditions for rural population [12]. It is necessary to organize professional trainings and actions to acquire the ability of the rural population to engage in various craft and other economic activities that are suitable for a particular rural area. The low level of application of information technologies among the rural population and institutions can be eliminated through the creation of an information system for the transfer of agricultural knowledge (Agricultural Knowledge Information System - AKIS).

All these ways can be realized through the provision of various forms of education for the rural population, as well as enabling easier access of resources in the rural area [13].

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS OF WORK

The study subject was part of the returnees population to their pre-war homes. The research included one number - a sample of returnees. The sample consisted of 230 returnees to the Republika Srpska entity, the Middle Podrinje region (Zvornik, Milići, Vlasenica, Bratunc and Srebrenica). There were 163 male respondents (70.9%) and 67 female (29.1%) respondents. The lower age limit of the subjects was 20 years, and the average age was 45.59 ± 14.99. Respondents were of different educational levels, from primary education to completed master's studies, and was dominated by secondary education, found in 129 (55.7%) returnees.

The survey used the Opinion Assessment Scale on the most common problems faced by the society in returnee places, created for this

research. The scale consists of 16 variables: unemployment, poor business environment, low standard, crime, corruption, youth departure, political disagreements, political instability, inadequate government, judicial system, interethnic mistrust, minority problem, public funding, security problem, slow accession process EU and climate change, which for the respondents represented a potential problem facing society. Respondents were supposed to rank these variables in such a way that in the first three places they single out those that they consider to be the three most important problems in relation to other variables. The variables are ranked on a scale with numbers from 1 to 3: 1 = first in importance; 2 = second in importance; 3 = third in importance. When coding data for statistical processing, variables that were not ranked among the three most important were marked with the number 4. The most important problems were ranked by respondents for three different periods: for 1992, the period after returning to the place of pre-war residence and today.

The collected data were processed in the computer package SPSS for Windows. Descriptive analysis was performed, frequencies and percentages were calculated, and significant differences in results were tested by the Friedman test.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tables 1 to 16 present the results of the research, frequencies and percentages of respondents' answers - ranking of the most important problems that society (returnees) face in the three periods, and the results of the Friedman test.

Respondents in a very significant number rank unemployment in the first three places as a problem of the population, in relation to other problems, for all three periods to which the survey refers. Thus, 122 (53%) respondents in 1992, 192 (83.5%)) for the period after return and as many as 208 (90.4%) respondents for today's period rank employment on this basis, which shows a trend of significant growth from period to period. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results at the level of significance p = 0.002 Table 1. Of particular concern are the results for the period to date, indicating the need for urgent action on the employment of returnees to improve the conditions for sustainable return.

Poor business environment, in relation to other problems in terms of importance, was ranked so that 135 (59.1%) respondents said in 1992, 99 (43%) for the period after return and 101 (43.9%) respondents today rank this variable in the first three places as a problem of the population, which shows that the respondents also consider the bad business environment to be a very pronounced problem in all three periods, but they also notice differences. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p = 0.001 Table 2. The problem of a bad business environment is related to the problem of unemployment, so solving it would significantly solve this problem.

The low standard (salaries and pensions) was ranked so that, out of a total of 230 respondents, 57 (24.8%) for 1992, 72 (31.3%) for the period after return and only 22 (9.6%) respondents today rank this variable in the top three as a population problem, based on which it is observed that respondents believe that the lowest standard (salaries and pensions) was after return, and today the best. This most likely refers to the opinion only of returnees who have a certain income, which confirms the previous conclusions that it is important to improve the business environment, ie to employ as many people as possible. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results and this variable Table 3.

Crime, in relation to other problems by importance, is ranked so that only 25 (10.9%) respondents for 1992, or 19 (8.3%) for the period after return and 14 (6.1%) for today ranks this variable in the first three places as a population problem, ie respondents generally consider crime to be a significant problem in no period. There is no statistically significant difference between the ranking results at the level of significance p <0.05 Table 4.

Corruption is ranked so that only 6 (2.6%) respondents consider it a problem for the period in 1992, and already 42 (18.3%) for the period after return and 31 (13.5%) today rank it in the first three places as a population problem, indicating that corruption as a problem has emerged in recent decades. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results for these three periods at the significance level p = 0.000 Table 5.

Departure of young people is ranked so that only 4 (1.7%) respondents for 1992, but already 60 of them (26.1%) for the period after return and as many as 102 (44.3%) for today rank this variable in the first three places as a problem of population, in relation to other problems in importance. The reason for this may be the connection with the bad business environment and unemployment of the population. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p = 0.000 Table 6.

Political disagreements are ranked so that 64 (27.8%) respondents for 1992, 44 (19.1%) for the period after return and 33 (14.4%) today rank them in the top three as a population problem in relation to other problems in importance. Respondents see a reduction in political disagreements as time goes on, which can be positive indicators for the future. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p = 0.000 Table 7.

Political instability is ranked so that 76 (33%) respondents for 1992, 81 (35.2%) for the period after return and 68 (29.6%) for today single out this variable in the first three places as a population problem, in relation to to other issues in importance, indicating a consensus on continuing political instability over the past 30 years. There is no statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p <0.05 Table 8.

Inadequate government is ranked so that 24 (10.4%) respondents for 1992, 11 (5.7%) for the period after return and only 5 (2.2%) respondents for today single out the first three places as a problem population, in relation to other problems in importance. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the respondents are more satisfied with the authorities today than in the previous period. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p = 0.000 Table 9.

The judicial system is ranked so that only 11 (4.8%) respondents for 1992, 6 (2.6%) after return and 1 (0.4%) today single it out in the top three places as a population problem, in in relation to other problems in terms of importance,

ie they almost do not consider it a problem Table 10.

Interethnic mistrust is ranked so that as many as 140 (60.0%) respondents for 1992, 32 (13.9%) for the period after return and 33 (14.3%) for today single it out in the first three places as a population problem, in relation to other problems by importance. It is encouraging to learn that respondents think that it has decreased by 45% after return and today, compared to 1992, which can significantly affect the improvement of the overall living environment in these areas. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p = 0.000 Table 11.

Problems with minorities are ranked so that 13 (5.7%) respondents for 1992 and 15 (6.5%) period after return rank them in the top three places as a population problem, compared to other problems in importance, and today no respondents. There is a statistically significant difference between the ranking results in these three periods at the level of significance p = 0.001 Table 12.

Security problems are ranked so that only 2 (0.8%) respondents for 1992 after the period after return, and 4 (1.7%) for today singles out the first three places as a problem of the population, compared to other problems in terms of importance, ie, in the opinion of returnees, they generally do not represent a significant problem in any period Table 13.

Public funding is ranked so that only 1 (0.4%) respondents for the period 1992 and 5 (2.2%) respondents for today single it out in the first three places as a population problem, in relation to other problems in importance, ie it can also be concluded that, in the opinion of returnees, it is not a problem at all in any period Table 14.

The slow process of joining the EU is ranked so that only one respondent for the period after return and for today singles it out in the first three places as a problem of the population, compared to other problems in importance, ie also not a problem in any period Table 15.

Climate change is ranked so that only 5 (2.2%) respondents today single them out in the first three places as a population problem, in relation to other problems in terms of importance, ie they do not represent a problem in any period Table 16.

Table 1. Unemployment

Unemployment	1992		After return		Today	
	F	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	92	40,0	144	62,6	95	41,3
2. by importance	22	9,6	35	15,2	74	32,2
3. by importance	8	3,5	13	5,7	39	17,0
4. not ranked	108	47,0	38	16,5	22	9,6
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100
$\chi^2 = 12{,}85$; df = 2; p = 0,002						

Table 2. Poor business environment

Poor business enviroment	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	58	25,2	27	11,7	27	11,7
2. by importance	65	28,3	64	27,8	68	29,6
3. by importance	13	5,7	8	3,5	6	2,6
4. not ranked	94	40,9	131	57,0	129	56,1
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0
$\chi^2 = 13{,}08$; df = 2; p = 0,001						

Table 3. Low standard (salaries and pensions)

Low standard (salaries and pensions)	1992		After return		Today	
	F	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	20	8,7	6	2,6	2	0,9
2. by importance	16	7,0	48	20,9	6	2,6
3. by importance	21	9,1	18	7,8	14	6,1
4. not ranked	173	75,2	158	68,7	208	90,4
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0
$\chi^2 = 34{,}14$; df = 2; *p* = 0,000						

Table 4. Crime

Crime	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	3	1,3	4	1,7	5	2,2
2. by importance	9	3,9	11	4,8	3	1,3
3. by importance	13	5,7	4	1,7	6	2,6
4. not ranked	205	89,1	211	91,7	216	93,9
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100
$\chi^2 = 3{,}35$; df = 2; *p* = 0,19						

Table 5. Corruption

Corruption	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	1	0,4	15	6,5	10	4,3
2. by importance	3	1,3	10	4,3	13	5,7
3. by importance	2	0,9	17	7,4	8	3,5
4. by importance	224	97,4	188	81,7	199	86,5
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100
$\chi^2 = 30{,}16$; df = 2; *p* = 0,000						

Table 6. Departure of young people

Departure of young people	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	1	0,4	5	2.2	62	27.0
2. by importance	2	0,9	21	9.1	23	10.0
3. by importance	1	0,4	34	14.8	17	7.4
4. not ranked	226	98.3	170	73.9	128	55.7
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100
χ^2 = 138,16; df = 2; *p* = 0,000						

Table 7. Political disagreements

Political disagreements	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	10	4.3	5	2.2	12	5.2
2. by importance	40	17.4	10	4.3	8	3.5
3. by importance	14	6.1	29	12.6	13	5.7
4. by importance	166	72.2	186	80.9	197	85.7
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100
χ^2 = 18,93; df = 2; *p* = 0,000						

Table 8. Political instability

Political instability	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	13	5.7	8	3.5	9	3.9
2. by importance	24	10.4	14	6.1	14	6.1
3. by importance	39	17.0	59	25.7	45	19.6
4. not ranked	154	67.0	149	64.8	162	70.4
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100
χ^2 = 1,20; df = 2; *p* = 0,55						

Table 9. Inadequate government

Inadequate government	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	2	0,9	1	0,4	2	0,9
2. by importance	8	3,5	6	2,6	1	0,4
3. by importancei	14	6,1	6	2,6	2	0,9
4. not ranked	206	89,6	217	94,3	225	97,8
Ukupno	230	100,0		100,0	230	100,0
χ^2 = 14,50; df = 2; *p* = 0,001						

Table 10. Judicial system

Judicial system	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	1	.4	0	0,0	0	0,0
2. by importance	8	3.5	2	.9	0	0,0
3. by importance	2	.9	4	1.7	1	0,4
4. not ranked	219	95.2	224	97.4	229	99.6
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0

Table 11. Interethnic mistrust

Interethnic mistrust	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	21	9,1	9	3,9	3	1,3
2. by importance	24	10,4	6	2,6	3	1,3
3. by importance	95	41,3	17	7,4	27	11,7
4. not ranked	90	39,1	198	86,1	197	85,7
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0
χ^2 = 148,98; df = 2; *p* = 0,000						

Table 12. Problems with minorities

Problems with minorities	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	4	1.7	0	0,0	0	0,0
2. by importance	4	1.7	1	.4	0	0,0
3. by importance	5	2.2	14	6.1	0	0,0
4. not ranked	217	94.3	215	93.5	230	100,0
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0
χ^2 = 14,20; df = 2; *p* = 0,001						

Table 13. Security issues

Security issues	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	1	0,4	1	.4	1	.4
2. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	.9
3. by importance	1	0,4	1	.4	1	.4
4. not ranked	228	99,1	228	99.1	226	98.3
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0

Table 14. Public funding

Public funding	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
2. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
3. by importance	1	0,4	0	0,0	5	2,2
4. not ranked	229	99,6	230	100,0	225	97,8
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0

Table 15. Slow EU accession process

Slow EU accession process	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
2. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
3. by importance	0	0,0	1	0,4	1	0,4
4. not ranked	230	100,0	229	99,6	229	99,6
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0

Table 16. Climate change

Climate change	1992		After return		Today	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
2. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0
3. by importance	0	0,0	0	0,0	5	2.2
4. not ranked	230	100,0	230	100,0	225	97.8
Total	230	100,0	230	100,0	230	100,0

4. CONCLUSION

Surveys of returnees' opinions on the conditions of sustainable return showed that respondents ranked unemployment in the first three places as the most significant problem of the population, compared to all other problems, for all three periods covered by the survey, especially recently. Respondents also consider the bad business environment to be a very pronounced problem in all three periods, which is directly related to unemployment. Low standards are not ranked as a significant problem nowadays, which most likely refers to the opinion only about returnees who have a certain income, which confirms the previous conclusions that it is important to improve the business environment, ie to employ as many people as possible. They generally do not consider crime to be a significant problem in any period, but they believe that corruption is present in the period after return until today, which is the case with the departure of young people. Returnees believe that there are political disagreements, but they are decreasing as time goes on, but there is still a pronounced political instability. Respondents are more satisfied with the authorities today than they were thirty years ago. It is encouraging to learn that respondents believe that interethnic mistrust has decreased by 45% after return and today, compared to 1992, which can significantly affect the improvement of the overall living environment in these areas. The judicial system, the problem of minorities, public funding, the security problem, the slow process of EU accession and climate change are not considered by returnees to be significant problems for achieving sustainable return. present in the public media space show no interest.

Based on the research, it can be concluded that it is necessary to provide jobs by employing re in municipal and state institutions as well as stimulating self-employment by opening independent crafts such as: craft shops, rural tourism, starting agricultural production (dairy farms, cattle fattening, sheep and goat farming, founding orchards) and production in a protected area.

Current research should focus on the results of the implemented recommendations and measures in terms of creating sustainable return.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participant's written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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