

## Vojvodina in Europe – Models of Territorial Identification of the Citizens of Vojvodina\*

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The 2002 survey showed that determining the degree of respondents' identifying with the local, regional or larger territorial communities can be a valuable general indicator for understanding some other variables, especially those which refer to examining the attitudes towards the present state and prospects of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Republic of Serbia (see LAZAR, MARINKOVIĆ 2003). Therefore, the same research instrument was applied to the survey in 2006<sup>1</sup>, which provided the opportunity not only to compare these two researches, but also to have a continual insight into the above stated preferences of the population of Vojvodina.

In the research conducted in the autumn 2006, the respondents were also asked to rank their devotion to certain territorial communities on a 1–6 scale, i.e. to determine to which extent they are attached to them (Table 1):

Level of identifying with:	2006		2002	
	Mean	rank	Mean	rank
Place of residence	2.13	I	2.75	II
Vojvodina	2.65	II	2.58	I
Sub-region (Bačka, Banat, Srem)	3.12	III	3.40	IV
Serbia	3.34	IV	3.25	III
The Balkans	4.77	V	4.78	VI
Europe	4.92	VI	4.35	V

Table 1

The results show that in 2006 the surveyed citizens of Vojvodina were most attached to their place of residence (village or city), while Vojvodina – which used to be at the top of the list in 2002 – is now ranked as second. A similar change occurred also with the succeeding pair: Serbia used to occupy the third place – above the respondents' sub-region, while in 2006 these territorial communities switched places. The Balkans and Europe are at the bottom of the list, but again the same change took place after 2002, as in this year Europe was listed before the Balkans, which used to be the last.

\* The presented results are collected during the research project financially supported by the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

<sup>1</sup> A single variable DZ SCiG was omitted from the combined scale, as in the meantime the Republic of Montenegro became independent, and this act the Republic of Serbia also became an independent state.

The fact that the majority of the respondents opt for local and narrow regional territorial communities can be accounted for by the fact that, on average, the two thirds of the surveyed population of Vojvodina *do not travel at all* to the countries in the region, or the countries of the European Union:

Do you / How often do you travel to:	the countries of European Union?	the countries in the region?
Almost every day	0	0.2
Every week, on average	0.2	0.4
Once or two times a month	0.5	1.8
Once a year	23.9	0.8
A couple of times a year	8.5	36.0
I do not travel to these countries at all	<b>66.9</b>	<b>60.8</b>

Table 2 (in %)

The respondents, who do travel, on the other hand, stated the reasons for travelling, which are predominantly tourism and entertainment, followed by visiting family and/or relatives, and shopping and business trips (Table 3). Although the two thirds of population do not travel at all in the countries of European Union or the countries in the region, *almost 23% of the respondents travel for tourism, entertainment and shopping* – which casts a completely new light on the living standard of the Vojvodians.

Reasons for travelling to the countries in the region and the European Union:	Valid Percent (100%=557)	Percent (100%=1204)
Tourism and entertainment	37.5	17.4
Visiting family and/or relatives	33.4	15.4
Shopping	11.5	5.3
Business	10.2	4.7
Education	3.8	1.7
Medical treatment	2.0	0.9

Table 3 (in %)

Generally speaking, *local* affiliation is ranked at the first place by the Serbs, Montenegrins, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Ruthenians and Roma, while *regional* affiliation (Vojvodina) is the most important to the Croats, Slovaks and Romanians. It is only the Vojvodinian Montenegrins that list *Serbia* at the second place, as the Serbs rank it at the third place, and the others at the fourth. On the whole, *sub-regional* affiliation (Banat, Bačka, Srem) is more important to the respondents which belong to the national minorities and the Yugoslavs (the third place) than to the Serbs and

Montenegrins (the fourth place). *The Balkans* was ranked at the next to the last place by the Serbs, Montenegrins, Ruthenians and Roma, and at the last place by the Hungarians, Croatians, Slovaks, Romanians and Yugoslavs. *Europe* is the territorial unit that is evidently least perceived as home by the surveyed citizens of Vojvodina in 2006, i.e. the Serbs, Montenegrins, Ruthenians and Roma rank it at the last, while the others rank it at the next to the last – fifth place.

Interestingly, the standard deviation is the highest for the first and the last ranked territorial units, which indicates the greatest dispersion of responses, i.e. great variations in the respondents' choices. In our opinion, these variations arise, predominantly, from collisions of different valuing criteria which are crucial for one's identification, and thus also crucial for desirability of belonging to a certain geographical area.

Ambivalence towards the local affiliation stems from realistic existential conditions (unemployment, uncertainty of current employment, low income, unresolved problems of dwelling places, poor infrastructure, unsatisfactory cultural life), which still considerably burden everyday life of an average citizen of Serbia/Vojvodina. Here the existential criteria are opposed by the emotional ones, i.e. by one's bond to the local social and geographical environment – where the latter prevail being strengthened by poor prospects of social mobility, as well as by still widespread feeling of isolation, insecurity and xenophobia.

On the other hand, at the roots of indecisiveness towards Europe it is possible to detect the conflict of existential and symbolic criteria, which is primarily induced by extreme polarisation of Serbian politics and political public sphere towards the process of European integration, but also by inconsistent politics of European institutions towards Serbia. The political entity which is symbolically perceived as European Union is existentially more than desirable ("European standard"), but in terms of values it is ambivalent ("European perspective"), as it conceals the whole range of transitional perils, political injustices and globalisation-driven issues which are sometimes unacceptable – especially for the national, cultural and religious identity.

The responses of the surveyed are most influenced by their national and confessional affiliation, but only for the regional and wider territorial units.

Europe was ranked at the first place proportionally the most by the respondents who still declare to be the Yugoslavs (17.5%; the average is 7.8), and at the last place by the Roma (70%, the average is 58.1). The Serbs (7.1%) and Hungarians (6.9%) with almost the same proportion opted for Europe as the most desirable affiliation, but on the other hand, they considerably differ in opting for this entity as the least desirable: it is slightly above the average for the Serbian respondents (almost 62%), while for the Hungarian respondents it is substantially below the average (45%). As we determined in some other cases in previous surveys, the respondents of Montenegrin nationality in the Province express extreme attitudes: on one hand, they opt for European affiliation considerably above the average as the most desired (15.8%), and on the other, also above the average as the least desirable one (68.4%).

The Vojvodinian Montenegrins are the most consistent in opting for the territorial community of *Serbia*: proportionally the most of them place it at the top of the list (26.3%; the average is 16.2), none of them at the bottom, and only one respondent at the next to the last (fifth) place. Above the average – but still only following

the Montenegrins – the Serbs opt for belonging to Serbia as the most desirable (21.4%); however, the greatest percent of them (42.7%) rank Serbia as the fourth most important territorial unit. Interestingly, the respondents of the Croatian and Hungarian nationality with the almost the same percent (43.3 and 41.3, respectively) place Serbia at the fourth place, although they put it under the average at the first place (not a Croat, and 6.3% of Hungarians; the average is 16.2), and above the average at the last place (16.7% of Croats, and 11.3% of Hungarians; the average is 5.1). The Yugoslavs also express a low level of identification with Serbia – only a single respondent listed this entity at the first, at the second and at the third place, while a much higher percent of them place it at the fourth place – almost 72%.

The highest level of identification with Vojvodina (the average ranking at the first place is 18%) is expressed by the Croatian (41.9%), Slovak (41.7%) and Romanian (37.5%) national minorities, while it is first-ranked above the average also by the Roma (30%), Hungarians (28.8%) and Ruthenians (25%). Although the Serbs, Montenegrins and Yugoslavs below the average opt for the Province as the most desirable territorial community, both the relative and the absolute majority of the surveyed population of these groups rank it at one of the first three places.

	Proportionally the <b>most</b> important	Proportionally the <b>least</b> important
Europe	to the Yugoslavs	to the Roma
Serbia	to the Montenegrins	to the Croats
Vojvodina	to the Croats, Slovaks	to the Yugoslavs

Table 4

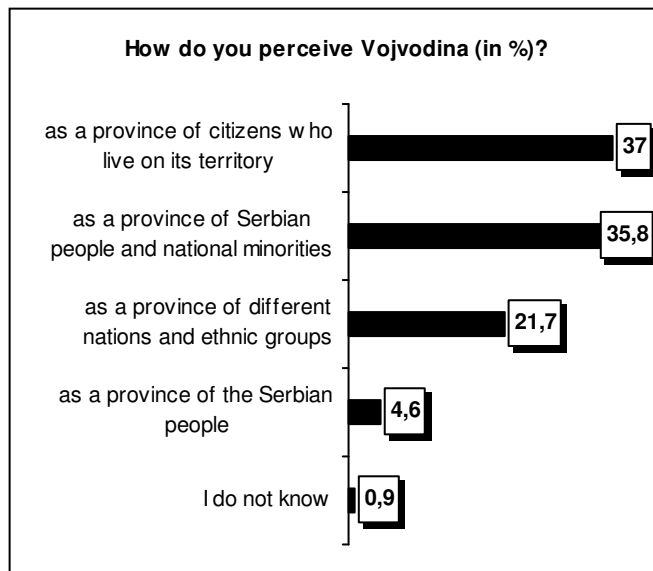
A confessionally-based ranking of the territorial communities generally corresponds to the above presented results examined within the respondents' national affiliation. An interesting exception, however, is the above-average ranking of Europe as the most desirable by atheists and unbelievers (18.4%; the average is 7.8), as well as the Catholics' opting below the average for the same entity (only 5.3%).

	Proportionally the <b>most</b> important	Proportionally the <b>least</b> important
Europe	to atheists and unbelievers	to Orthodox
Serbia	to Orthodox	to Catholics
Vojvodina	to Catholics	to Orthodox

Table 5

By comparing the results from 2006 and 2002, it can be concluded that there are no great variations either in the respondents' attitudes or in statistical values (percentages) which we used for measuring the levels of preferences. However, the differences in rankings are interesting as they indicate certain tendencies, and therefore,

demand further interpretations. Accordingly, we introduce herein also the analysis of the respondents' attitudes regarding the models of civil, national and ethnic perception of Vojvodina. The surveyed population of Vojvodina provided the following answers to the question how they perceive the Province in this context:



Graph 1

The data presented in the Graph 1 show that the greatest number of the respondents opted for a civil model (a province of the citizens who live on its territory – 37%), and a moderate national model (a province of the Serbian nation and national minorities – 35.8%) of Vojvodina as a territorial community. However, if we accompany the latter group by a multiethnic model (a province of different nations and ethnic groups – 21.7%) and an extreme national one (a province of the Serbian people – 4.6%), we can see that the majority of respondents (62.1%) *perceive Vojvodina as some model of many national-ethnic region*.

If we combine the models of Vojvodina as a territorial community with the respondents' national affiliation the figures prove that there is a *double division in Vojvodina between the Serbian population on one hand, and the national minorities on the other*: the first division is between the moderate national model (the respondents of the Serbian nationality) and the multiethnic one (the respondents of Ruthenian, Slovak, Hungarian and Croatian nationality), while the other refers to the civil model (the Serbs opted for it below the average and proportionally the least).

However, there is also a division within the corpus of the national minorities: the multiethnic model is proportionally more important than the civil one to the Ruthenians and Slovaks, while for the Croats, Romanians and Hungarians it is the opposite. The most consistent are the respondents whose state ceased to exist – 73.2%

of the Yugoslavs opted for the civil model, none for the extreme national one, while the other two models were opted for significantly below the average. On the other hand, the most polarised answers are (again) the answers of the Vojvodinian Montenegrins, which are divided between the moderate national and civil model (in both cases, the percentage was 41.7%)<sup>2</sup>, but there is a high level of agreeing in not accepting the multiethnic model (strikingly the lowest percentage – only 8.3%, the average is 21.6).

Perceiving Vojvodina as:	proportionally the most	model
a province of the citizens who live on its territory	Yugoslavs, Croatsians, Romanians, Hungarians	Civil
a province of different nations and ethnic groups	Ruthenians, Slovaks	Multiethnic
a province of the Serbian people and national minorities	Serbs, Montenegrins	Moderate national
a province of the Serbian people	Serbs	Extreme national

Table 6

A statistical analysis proves that confessional affiliation also influences the respondents' attitudes: the Orthodox opt for the extreme and moderate national model above the average, and the civil and multiethnic model below the average, while it is the opposite with the Catholic respondents; the atheists and unbelievers are the group that to the greatest extent choose the civil model of Vojvodina – 57% (the average is 37%), while the members of Evangelist and Protestant church, as well as Muslim religious community choose the multiethnic model. However, these results are expected and they greatly depend on the national affiliation of the respondents, which traditionally correspond to their affiliation to certain confessions.

Europe was ranked at the first and second place, above the average, only by the respondents who perceive Vojvodina as a civil model of a territorial community; nevertheless, even in this case almost 55% of these respondents rank affiliation to Europe at the last, sixth place, which, in our opinion, very strongly supports the fact that even the most open group of population show strong reserves towards everything that Europe represents today, especially regarding the external political affairs and its attitude towards Serbia.

Concerning Vojvodina, all the stated categories equally ranked the Province at the second place (around ¼), but on the other hand, there are considerable differences among the respondents in case of its ranking at the first place – only the surveyed

<sup>2</sup> In the instances when the Montenegrins opt for the moderate national model they either identify with the Serbian nationality, or accept some kind of majority's "priority right" to the Province.

population who opted for the civil model had an above average result (22%; the average is 18.1), while the supporters of the extreme national model remain significantly below the average (8.2%). However, none of the categories show strong reserves towards the territorial identification with the Province – it is ranked at the last position only by 2.2% of the surveyed (among whom, interestingly, there is only a single representative of the extreme national model)<sup>3</sup>, while this territorial unit is positioned at the next to the last place by 3.5% of the respondents.

<b>Territorial affiliation:</b>	Proportionally the <b>most</b> important to the respondents who perceive Vojvodina as:	Proportionally the <b>least</b> important to the respondents who perceive Vojvodina as:
Europe	Civil model of the territorial communities	Extreme national model of the territorial communities
Serbia	Extreme national model of the territorial communities	Multiethnic model of the territorial communities
Vojvodina	Civil model of the territorial communities	Moderate national model of the territorial communities

Table 7

If we compare the results from 2006 with the respondents' attitudes in favour of the models of Vojvodina as a territorial community, it can be concluded that *traditionalism is less supported only by the respondents who opted for the multiethnic model*. However, it is important to stress that the extreme national model does not necessarily imply extreme traditionalism, as the attitudes of this category of respondents in fact prove that there is a certain level of *anti-modernity* – for which we can say that is *aimed against the civil institutions rather than the neoliberal processes in the Serbian society*. Nevertheless, this category is not large enough to serve as a basis for deciding on the tendencies towards strengthening or weakening of traditionalism in Vojvodina, neither is it significant enough to dictate these processes. Namely, the potential causes of retraditionalization are to be sought in the attitudes of large categories of respondents, which in this case are the categories of the supporters of the civil and moderate national model.

In our opinion, it is primarily the attitude of the respondents who opted for Vojvodina 'as a Province of the citizens who live on its territory' – the attitude that is still not differentiated consistently enough: firstly, although this category evidently prefers the civil model of territorial communities, this population is strongly reserved towards the civil initiative as a way of preserving the culture<sup>4</sup>; secondly, they still

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted here that from all the territorial communities, the community of Vojvodina has the smallest percent of ranking at the last place; it is followed by affiliation to Serbia with 5%, then to the sub-region with 6.1%, while 6.6% of the respondents assess the local affiliation as the least important.

<sup>4</sup> It is only 3.5% (the average is 5.4) of the respondents of this category that claim that it is the concern of the very members of a certain nation/ethnic group, see LAZAR 2007.

choose the traditional and administrative ways above average, while opting below average for the rule of law and economic stability. The characteristic that is supposed to be typical for this category is recognized with the supporters of the multiethnic model: their exceptionally prevailing attitudes in favour of the civil initiative and the rule of law, and below average attitudes for traditional and administrative ways. Even the category which prefers the moderate national model averagely opted for the indicator of the civil initiative, although underestimating – not excessively, however (4%; the average is 4.6) – the significance of broadening of individual and collective rights.

The respondents' attitudes regarding the choice of the territorial community models are to the greatest extent influenced by the values arising from personality traits.

Our research proved that the attitude of the surveyed who opted for Vojvodina as 'a Province of its citizens' is not sufficiently differentiated regarding the way of preserving the culture of a nation/ethnic group. This is also confirmed by the extent to which they choose certain values which are expected when a certain civil model is preferred: thus, this category opted for tolerance only hardly over the average (12.1%; the average is 11.4), while they chose responsibility even slightly under the average (13%; the average is 13.4). Instead, it is again the multiethnic model supporters that expressed the greatest belief in civil values: proportionally more than others and most above the average they opted for tolerance (17.3%) and responsibility (15.8%)<sup>5</sup>, and proportionally the least for sincerity (22.3%; the average is 29.8), and honesty (31.9%; the average is 34.4) – which are the personal traits typical for the less firmly established social relations and autarchic social communities. They also below the average opt for modesty (which is a trait typical for traditional uncompetitive societies), but on the other hand, they proportionally the most opt for solidarity. Modesty was proportionally most frequently chosen by the surveyed who preferred the moderate national model (5.4%, the average is 4.4), while the supporters of the civil model were as well close to the average (4.1%).

The analysis of these values shows that the moderate national model supporters generally stick to the averages, which implies that their attitudes to the greatest extent correspond to the values they chose. Also, the respondents who opted for the extreme national model choose the values which are considerably in accordance with their attitudes: proportionally the least and far below the average they choose tolerance (3.6%) and responsibility (5.5%), but they opt, the most, for sincerity (41.8%) and honesty (38.2%). Besides, they extremely distance themselves from modesty (only a single respondent from this category chose it!), which can be surprising at first, but this finding only confirms the already stated assumption that anti-modernism of this category of respondents is not so aimed at the liberal, as to the civil values of the Vojvodinian/Serbian society.

<sup>5</sup> Besides this category, the respondents who opted for the moderate national model also choose responsibility above the average (13.8%).



<b>Respondents opting for:</b>	<b>chose proportionally the most:</b>	<b>chose proportionally the least:</b>
Extreme national model of territorial communities	sincerity, honesty	modesty, tolerance
Multiethnic model of territorial communities	tolerance, responsibility	sincerity, honesty

Table 8

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