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Who supported Croatia financially after the war in the 90s? And why?

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Intro

It was 1988, the winter in Yugoslavia was cold and hard for the local people. Not only because of the weather, the people are used to it. It was harder due to the uncertainty of the near future. The tensions between the Republic of Croatia and Yugoslavia are increasing, people are afraid of a possible war and the risk of losing life, house and job and because of that, leaving the country.

But first move to something positive, it's wedding time! Not yet time to think about war and risk to lose everything you have in life, let's go back to the winter of 1988. My parents had all they need, their lovely house, their friends, domestic food and music. Based on the stories I heard, the photos I saw and the famous wedding VHS tape I watched, it must have been an AMAZING party! Some time ago, the famous tape came back into my mind and I called my two younger sisters and asked them to jump over to our parents and have a nice afternoon watching the tape. So, the weekend my sisters and I were sitting in front of the TV watching the famous VHS wedding tape in the old retro VHS recorder. To be honest this very weekend I will remember for a long time as it woke up some strange feelings in my chest that I can't label correct in any way. The reason why, was our father as he joined us just shortly before the end of the tape, he joined and was having the same fun watching the tape as we did. But out of a sudden he said:

"Directly after this scene I realised that I will lose my home, my lovely Croatia, my loved friends and lots of things that emotionally matter a lot to me and that the future of you (he pointed into my direction) was at risk."

I asked him to elaborate a bit more what he means with this statement. And so he went on and told us that after this scene his older brother, who lives in Germany, came to him, explaining that the war is going to happen for sure and that he recommends to leave the country as soon as possible, preventing his new family to be in a war zone and to go and search a new home for his unborn baby. So my father decided to listen to his the experience of life of his older brother and leave. Leave the possible ugly facets of war, the destruction of countries, the pain of personal losses, the disruption of families and sadness that a war always brings along.

So, what was the output of all of this? My parents went to Switzerland, sacrificed their life for those of their children. My two sisters and I had the amazing opportunity to go to good schools, having a safe environment, good job perspectives, nice culture and all in all I think they did the very best for us they could, and I am thankful for all they did for us and feeling deep respect for their sacrifice. But the mark that was left in my brain by our father's statement how our start into the life was dictated forced me to think about what happened to Croatia and the people left there? Who helped them? How did the help arrive? Also, when did it arrive? I am especially interested in the involvement of Germany as the German people are very reputable people in the eyes of Croatian citizens.

The war officially started in 1991 and ended in 1995. In the meantime, people left the country, same as my parents, the infrastructure was destroyed, same as the economy and also the possibility to be in a safe political and social environment to give young people the possibility to grow. My believe is the domestic people are not able to help oneself to come out of such a crisis, so they depend on others and outside powers, like big nations and big organizations.

Analysis

Based on this assumption I used the AidData Research data set of project based commitments to investigate the relation of time, spent money for aid and origin of commitment. The first Graph (International aid in million USD) is indicating that during the war no impactful aid was given. Even if, it was very low compared to further donations over the time which leads me to some thoughts:

- *Is it politically motivated to not help countries during war times? As other powers might anticipate a political involvement?*
- *The given aid during this time is on such a low level that one might suggest this is just a "drop in a bucket" and if one goes even further down the conspiracy line someone could also say is it used to position oneself into a better spotlight as the helping hand?*

Let's now go a level deeper and have a look at what the purpose of the aid was? Do nations and organizations give aid in the same areas and at the same time? If not where is the difference?

To make sure the results are not totally wrong interpreted, I would like to give some important hints:

1. The scale of the axis of the committed aid and year is free for every category. So please make sure you look carefully when comparing same category plots for nations and organization
2. The categories "Other" and "Multisector" are pools that are combined from the other 8 categories, but the data set is not able to distinguish it fully
3. Organizations are institutions like "United Nations", European Bank", "International Monetary Fund", "World Bank" etc.

Now, what do the graphs tell us?

Business and Production

In my thinking I have the mindset that nobody is giving away anything for free, especially when it comes down to money. So, investing millions of dollars might have some reason behind it. In the case of Croatia, I observe that Croatian citizens have a high

opinion about German in general but how is this to observe in real life? When I am on vacation in Croatia one can observe that in the construction, car or trading business German goods are the most expensive ones because it is marked as “high quality”. Then I am asking myself:

- Is Germany giving aid and help in the form of money to get access to a new market and be able to export more goods? And influencing the opinion about goods and services by helping in such a large manner?

As reference I would like to show the spent amount of money based on countries. As seen in the graph the amount of spent money between Germany and others is really big.



E ducation

When I was at high school, I had a very close connection to one of the teachers and one memory I cannot let go. He was always telling me:

“Listen, knowledge is not tangible, thus nobody can steal it from you, but money comes and goes. Keep in mind that knowledge is necessary to build awesome things”

The spend on education is pushed more form organizational perspective as I think they are more “neutral” when it comes to politics. If one wants to be very provocative one

could say:

- *Are nations interested in making people dependent by not educating them so that they “construct” consumers of German goods? This by investing into infrastructure, business and production but not educating the people to build it by them self?*

If I personally would get a finished product, not knowing how to reproduce it and not being able to use it in full dept, I would always depend on the producer of the product. So instead of depending on someone my mindset is to learn about it, to be able to use everything properly and try even make it better.

Emergency Aid

No matter what the interest is behind giving emergency aid, my feeling is that the responsibility towards humanity is clearly showed in this graph from both parties, national and organizational. After the ending of the war in 1995 people stood up to help in the most crucial areas providing help for the most important things like food, water, housing, medicine etc.

Health

Health can be put in the same category as emergency aid. There is no time to wait to provide help in the sector of health. Injured and sick people need help as soon as possible in order to survive and this can be observed very good in the provided data as before 1995 there was zero commitment but once the war was over the jump in financial flows into the health sector jumped to incredible relative heights.

Conclusion

Yes, I am a very skeptical human being, like to add a bit conspiracy where I can and yes, I would be a human to reach out as soon as I can without looking at politics or others intersect. But of course, I am little bit biased 😊 my origins are from Croatia and we as a nation are a proud community and Croatia is one of my two homes. Don't get me wrong, I would do the same to Swiss people as I fell here at home too. On the other hand, looking at this situation more objectively I can totally understand that on the level of global politics and global aid the game is a little bit different. In the end I am glad that the impact of the help from outside is to be labeled as very positive. When I compare the stories that elder people telling me about a country 30 years ago to the country that I am seeing today, I see a big difference. Young people are getting job opportunities because they are educated, because they are capable. I see lots of industry sectors that are producing goods and service for countries in middle and west Europe. People can find work; the country has a good working infrastructure and people are getting their hope for a better life back.

Reference:

1. Tierney, Michael J. et. al. (Oct, 2016): AidData Core Research Release, Version 3.1. URL: <https://www.aiddata.org/data/aiddata-core-research-release-level-1-3-1>[09.01.2020]

