

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN CROATIA\*

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In the paper authors discuss demographic features in Croatia since the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century till 1996, paying a special attention to the period since early fifties onwards. Beside the population migration, vital statistic, projections and population development program have been analysed. It is possible to compare Croatia with some European countries using tabular views.

**Key words:** history of statistics, nationalities, fertility, extramarital births, nuptiality, divorcibility, mortality, migrations, age and senescence of population, population density, population projections, population politics

Rad obrađuje demografske karakteristike Hrvatske od polovice prošlog stoljeća do 1996., s tim da je veća pažnja posvećena razdoblju od početka pedesetih godina. Osim kretanja stanovništva, analizira se vitalna statistika, projekcije i populacioni program stanovništva. Preko tabelarnog prikaza moguća je i usporedba Hrvatske s nekim europskim zemljama.

**Ključne riječi:** povijest statistike, nacionalni sastav, fertilitet, izvanbračna rađanja, bračnost, divorcijalitet, mortalitet, migracije, starost i dob stanovništva, gustoća naseljenosti, projekcije stanovništva, populacijska politika

### Introduction

The Republic of Croatia is a Central European and Mediterranean country; lies on the contact of Adriatic, Dinaric, Panonian and Sub-Alpine regions and covers an area of 56.538 km<sup>2</sup>. Historically, the territory of Croatia has been an area exposed to the influences of Roman, Hungarian and German cultures for centuries, which intertwine in its population entity.

According to the 1991 census, the total population of Croatia was 4.784.265 persons. In mid – 1996 population was estimated at 4,5 million (4.493.581) or 79,5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. Slightly more than half of total Croatian population (54,3% in 1991) live in 204 towns and cities, and 45,7% in 6.490 villages.

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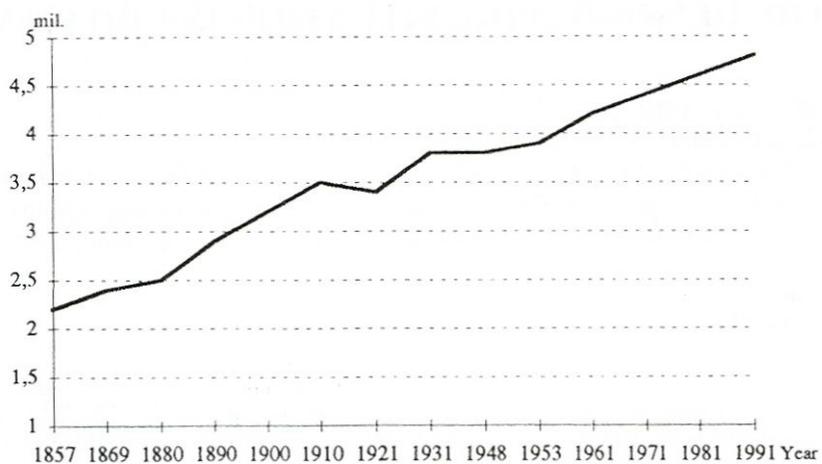


Fig. 1 Total population in Croatia, 1857-1991

Sl. 1 Ukupno stanovništvo u Hrvatskoj, 1857.-1991.

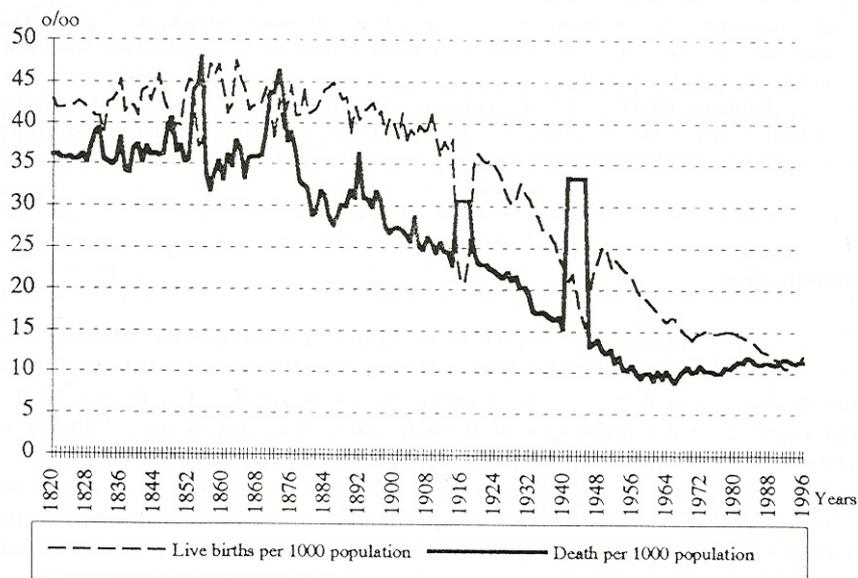


Fig. 2 Crude birth rates and crude death rates in Croatia, 1820-1996

Sl. 2 Stope nataliteta i mortaliteta u Hrvatskoj 1820.-1996.

Croatia may serve as an example of the countries where population dynamics preceded the social and economic development. Very low fertility and characteristic, stagnant natural population growth resulting from low natality and raised mortality indicated that the process of demographic transition had been completed in the seventies.

Another characteristic of the Croatian population is its prominent spatial polarisation of demographic development; almost all demographic flows are directed toward four macro-regional centres (Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, and Osijek).

A long-term emigration greater than immigration, the decline of natural growth and depopulation of certain regions, in addition to the consequences of wars have resulted with present demographic situation.

During the several preceding years of nineties the natality and nuptiality showed the trend of increase. The last war, however, led to deterioration of the demographic situation in Croatia in the regions affected by the aggression.

### **Historical background**

Croats settled in territory of their present homeland in the area between the rivers Drava and Danube, and Adriatic Sea, at the beginning of the seventh century. Their distinct ethnicity was formed in a complex ethnogenetic process taking place since the early Middle Ages to the times of modern national integration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century Christianisation of the Croats ended (from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century was the period of Croatian rulers). Since then the Croats fall into the sphere of Western European civilization. Over a long period lasting from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to 1918 the Croatian national territory had been territorially and politically disintegrated, subjugated within the rule of Austria, Hungary, Turkey and Venice.

After the First World War (1918) Croatia became part of the new state; Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later (1929) renamed Yugoslavia. Since the Second World War Croatia was one of the constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1991). By the dissipation of second Yugoslavia in 1991, in May that year, Croatia declared independence, and became a member country of the United Nations a year later.

From the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century a part of the Croatian territory was subject to frequent Turkish invasions and ethnically its territory suffered great changes. There was a massive emigration of autochthonous population on one hand and, on the other, concurrent immigration of different population groups from the neighbouring regions of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1991 in Croatia lived 78,1% Croats, 12,2% Serbs, 2,2% "Yugoslavs" and 7,5% others. Religious structure was as follows: 76,6% of the population declared themselves as Roman Catholics, 11,1 as Orthodox, 1,2% as Muslims and 11,1% of other religions. The Croatian language was spoken by 82% of the population, Croato-Serbian or Serbo-Croatian by 9,8%, Serbian by 4,3% and other languages by 3,9% of the population.

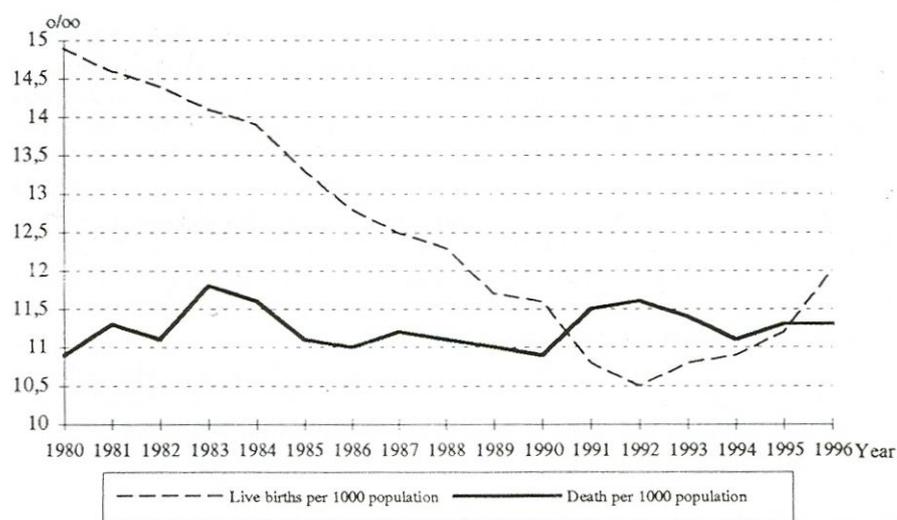


Fig. 3 Crude birth rates and crude death rates, Croatia, 1980-1996  
 Sl. 3 Stope nataliteta i mortaliteta u Hrvatskoj, 1980.-1996.

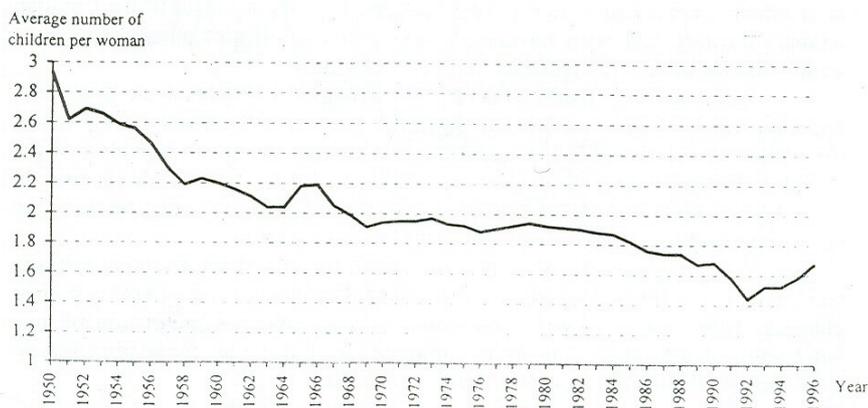


Fig. 4 Total fertility rates in Croatia, 1950-1996  
 Sl. 4 Prosječan broj živorođene djece po ženi u Hrvatskoj, 1950.-1996.

In 1991, in the aggression against Croatia, a quarter of its territory was occupied. Great number of killed and disappeared, hundred thousands of the displaced and refugees and consequential changes in the number of population, its ethnic composition and distribution were major direct demographic consequences brought about by the aggression.

At the beginning of 1998 the last part of the formerly occupied area (Croatian Danubian Region) was reintegrated into the Croatian territory. However, almost hundred thousand of the displaced persons still await their return to their original homes. Today Croatia hosts about 120.000 Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina and about 45.000 Croats from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (40,000 from Voivodina and 5.000 from Kosovo). According to the data provided by UNHCR, 140.000 of Serbs left occupied areas before the liberation in 1995. In the course and immediately after the liberation in 1995, formerly occupied area left additional 130.000 Serbs. In the Croatian Danubian Region after 1995 lived 45.000 of domicile Serbs and about 18.000 of Serbs who emigrated from other parts of the Republic of Croatia. Today, in Croatian Danubian Region live 40.000 Serbs whereas 17.000 returned to other parts of Croatia and rest left Croatia. By now from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and "Republika Srpska" have returned 21.000 Serbs to Croatia.

### History of statistics

The first census of total population in Croatia following modern principles of data collection was conducted in 1857. Even before that time censuses were taken in the territory of the present Croatia but at different periods - because its various parts belonged to different political entities

In some parts of the territory of Croatia the official statistical reports involving data on natural population change, although incomplete, had been published since 1828. After the Second World War (1941-1945) the scope of the census-data became more extensive and more accurately presented and better organised. In the period 1991-1996 the vital statistic data (births, deaths, marriages and divorces) could not had been collected for the whole territory of Croatia because some regions were temporarily occupied. Thus, for temporarily occupied areas data were collected only partly and referred to displaced persons with residence in that area.

In the period between the two world wars two censuses were taken (1921 and 1931) and next census followed seventeen years later (1948) providing data only on the number of inhabitants and its basic structures. Even the next 1953 census was not complete; the 1961 census was the first to encompass the entire present-day territory of Croatia (London Agreement).

The 1961 census resumed the practice of decennial census. Following censuses were taken in 1971, 1981 and 1991. The 1971 census included the data on the population working abroad and the 1981 census included also the data on their family members. The data of all six censuses taken after the Second World War (1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991) provided data on permanent (*de iure*) population, taking as the critical moment the date of 31<sup>st</sup> March of each census year (the exception was 15<sup>th</sup> March 1948).

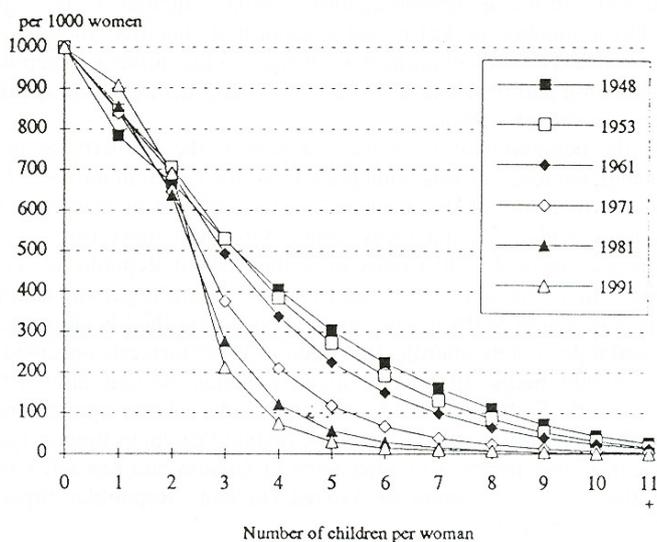


Fig. 5 Ratio of women 45-49, per number of children in Croatia, 1948-1991

Sl. 5 Broj žena u dobi od 45-49 godina prema broju živorođene djece u Hrvatskoj, 1948.-1991.

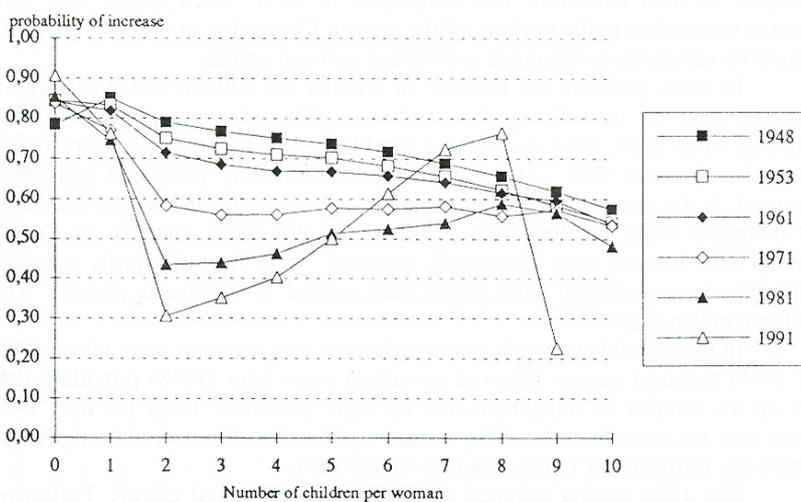


Fig. 6 Probability of family increase, women 45-49 in Croatia, 1948-1991

Sl. 6 Vjerojatnost povećanja obitelji, žene od 45-49 godina 1948.-1991. u Hrvatskoj.

1948.-1991.

*De iure* principle means that enumeration included all inhabitants who declared themselves as living permanently in the territory of Croatia irrespective of their presence or temporary absence from the actual place of residence at the time of the census (the critical moment). The same principle was followed in the population estimates from 1992 to 1995. In 1996, population estimate was made on the *de facto* principle following international recommendations. This means that total number of inhabitants included all those living in a place of residence a year or longer and excluded all those who were absent a year or longer.

### Population change

In the period 1857-1991, the number of inhabitants of Croatia was slightly more than doubled, which may be explained by the process of demographic transition (fig 1). This increase took place in spite of temporary extensive emigration since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, mostly to the overseas countries. The end of the process of demographic transition (meaning a decline from high to low natality and mortality rates) in Croatia has happened in the seventies of this century, and in the early nineties in post-transitional Croatia the number of deaths exceeded births. In 1996 natural population change was positive again.

The dynamic of population growth was unequal during the whole period from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The highest relative increase was seen at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (in the period 1880-1910) and not in the post-war compensation inter-census periods (1921-1931 and 1948-1953) as might be expected due to the process of demographic transition and trends in other countries (fig. 2). General tendency of population growth was particularly disturbed in the war inter-census periods (1910-1921, 1931-1948) when great direct and indirect losses produced by the war in Croatia caused negative natural increase and decline of the overall population.

Since the Second World War until 1991 Croatia's population growth was relatively low (26,6%) due to emigration and reduced natural increase. In the period 1971-1981 population growth rate was +4% and in the last inter-census period (1981-1991) it was +3,5%. This is the lowest population growth rate in the entire period from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (with the exception of the war inter-census periods) when regional differences became most distinct.

Recent natural decrease has been reinforced by the Homeland War (1991-1995), and great human losses. The war has also led to deterioration of the economic situation and living conditions in the country. Natural population increase that amounted to almost 35.000 in 1960 fell to only 3.217 in 1990 and in the period 1991-1995 it assumed a negative trend (more deaths than births) (fig. 3).

### Fertility

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the crude birth rates of the Croatian population were very high (about 40‰ per year). The total fertility rate (average number of live-born children per woman) was the highest in 1890 (6,04).

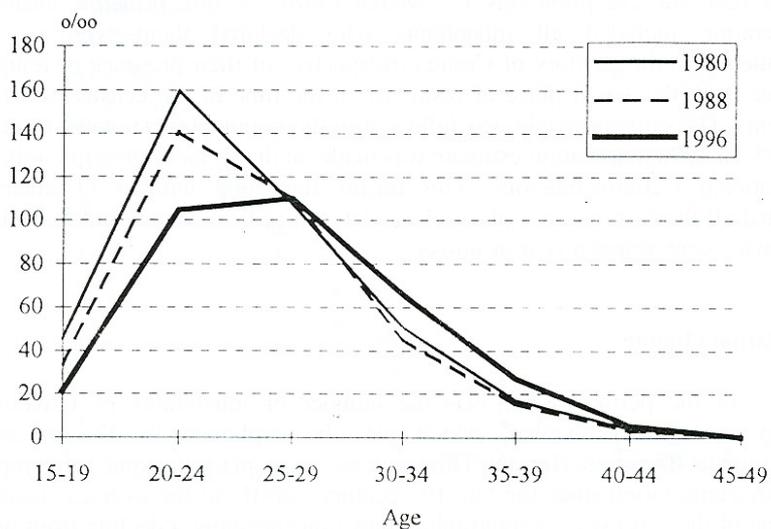


Fig. 7 Age-specific fertility rates in Croatia, 1980, 1988 and 1996  
 Sl. 7 Specifične stope fertiliteta u Hrvatskoj, 1980., 1988. i 1996.

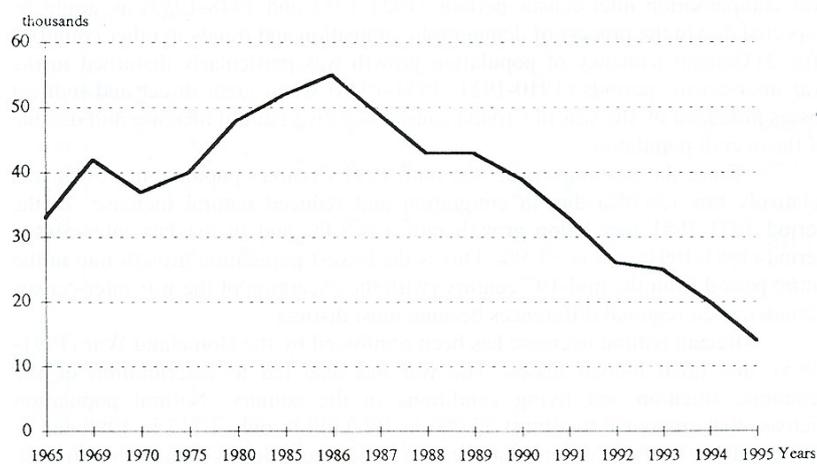


Fig. 8 Legal abortions in Croatia, 1965-1995  
 Sl. 8 Broj legalnih pobačaja u Hrvatskoj, 1965.-1995.

In the early nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century natality fell to nearly 10‰. The average number of live-born children per woman was the lowest in 1992 (1,44) as a consequence of the war in Croatia. Since then the fertility has been increasing; in 1996 fertility was 1,67 (fig. 4). This was the rate higher than in the neighbouring countries, particularly in comparison to Slovenia or Italy. However, in view of the net reproduction rate this trend still remained unsatisfactory.

Completed fertility rates obtained for women at the end of their fertile period (45 to 49 years of age) illustrate the following situation: women born at the turn of the century (1899-1903) delivered an average of 3,3 live-born children, those born in the period 1942-1946, who were 45-49 years old in 1991, less than two children (1,96). This decline in fertility (average number of live-born per woman) results from a considerable decrease of share of the women who delivered three, four or more children; their percentage amounting to more than 50% in 1948 fell to 20% in 1991. The number of childless women also decreased (from 22% to only 10%), whereas the proportion of women with one or two live-born children increased (fig. 5).

Probabilities of family increase were rather high in women born at the turn of the century. This could be expected because the reproductive capacities of that female generation fell in the period when demographic transition was still in progress. Generation of women born during and immediately following the Second World War, who were in their fertile ages in the post-transition period, showed very low probability of family increase (that is, of having three, four or more children) (fig. 6).

Age-specific fertility rates indicate a tendency of childbearing confined to younger age groups, which resulted in very low fertility rate after the age of 35. In 1980 and 1988 maximum rates were observed in women aged 20 to 24, and relatively high rates in very young women (age group 15-19). In 1996 the highest fertility rates were seen in the age group 25-29. It should be mentioned that increase in complete fertility rates in the age groups 35-39 and 40-44 was also found significant. Since this increase lasted since 1992 it points not to a yearly oscillation but to the trend of an increased birth rate in the older age groups (over 30) (fig. 7).

Very low fertility in the age group 30-35 can be noticed in the populations with the practice of planned and deliberate birth control measures. In Croatia the abortion as a method of birth control had been more frequent during the 70-ties and 80-ties (fig. 8). As many as 83 abortions were recorded per 100 births in 1986 but in the 90-ties (1995) there were only 28 abortions per 100 births which probably contributed to the natality increase since 1995. In addition to this, the mean age of mothers at childbearing and the mean age at birth of the first child, which had a negative influence to fertility since the late 70-ties, have been continuously increasing.

This was particularly obvious since the beginning of the 90-ties; the mean age of mothers at childbearing rose from 26 years in 1990 to 27,5 in 1995, the mean age at birth of the first child rose from 24,1 to 25,0 respectively. In the past fifty years the number of extra-marital births in Croatia showed slight oscillations (fig. 9). The number ranged between 4 and 10% in the total number of births. In this respect Croatia is comparable to the Mediterranean countries to a greater degree than to the mid-European or Balkan countries. After 1990 the decline of extra-marital birth rate has changed. In comparison to other European countries, Slovenia in particular, Croatia is the sole country where this process took place.

Another characteristic about Croatia is very low number of legally acknowledged of fatherhood of extra-marital children. This number, though in 1990 higher than in 1970 (33% versus 23%) is still very low (particularly in comparison to Slovenia) which points to the fact that extra-marital communities are very rare in Croatia.

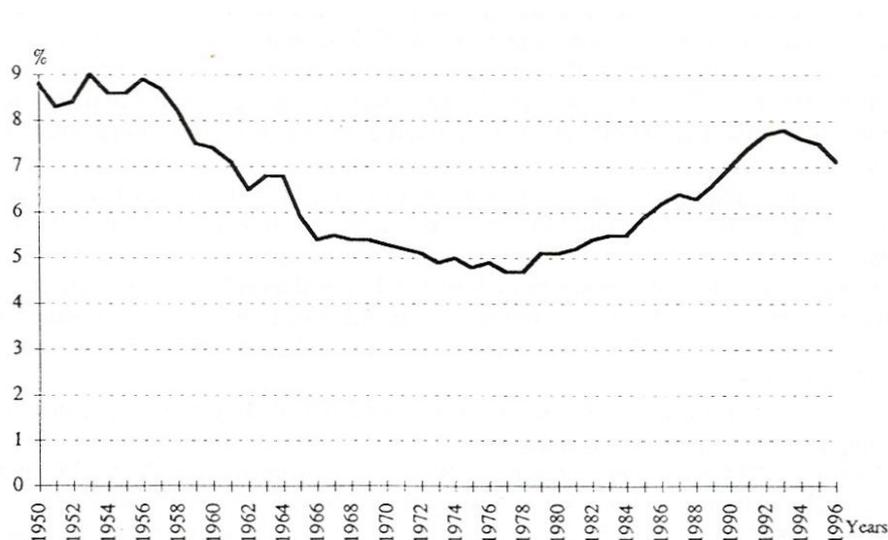


Fig. 9 Extra-marital live births in Croatia, 1950-1996  
*Sl. 9 Rađanja izvan braka u Hrvatskoj, 1950.-1996.*

### Nuptiality and divorcibility

Demographic situation of Croatia in the 90-ties reveal the change in nuptiality and divorcibility. As well as the decreased number of abortions in the 90-ties what might have caused an increase of crude birth rate, crude marriage rates and divorce rates acted in the same direction

The trend and stability of marital relationships in Croatia are best illustrated by the constantly decreasing number of marriages since the World War II to 1990, which was most emphasised during the 70-ties. Since 1991 the number of marriages has been increasing. The increase in the number of divorces was observed since 1950 to the mid-eighties, when they began to decrease.

Statistical information obtained over a forty-year period show the lowest nuptiality rates<sup>1</sup> in the early 90-ies (minimum of 4,5 in 1991), which is explained by the specific conditions, brought about by the war. In the 90-ies the total divorce rate<sup>2</sup> was also on the decrease in comparison to the preceding years, though not the lowest;

divorciality was continuously increasing since the 50-ies, reaching its maximum value of 0,23 in 1991. The number of divorces fell to 0,17 in 1992 - only a year later (fig. 10).

The data on mean ages of Croatian men and women at marriage show that both brides and grooms are young. Since the beginning of the 60-ies to the mid-70-ies the mean age at marriage is lowering, which was followed by an increase comparable to that observed in the 50-ies. In 1990 mean age of men at marriage was 28.8 years and 25.1 for women but with a tendency of increase. In 1990, the mean age of women at first marriage was 23 and in 1995 it rose to 24 years (fig. 11). Despite that increase, the mean age of woman at first marriage remained lower than the mean age of women at birth of first child, which accounts for the very low number of extra-marital births.

The shown evolution of the mean ages at total and first marriage of women in Croatia differs from those in other west European countries. The sharp and constant decline of the mean age at marriage in those countries, which lasted until the end of the Second World War, suddenly increased in the mid 70-ies. In 1995 it was for two or more years higher than in Croatia.

### **Mortality**

Over the past forty years mortality in Croatia corresponds to that of population in the final stage of demographic transition. At the turn of the century mortality began to decrease and fell under 30‰. This lasted to the mid-60-ies when mortality began its steady rise, related to the process of ageing and prolonged survival of the population. The mortality rate was sharply decreasing after the Second World War, which is primarily attributed to the reduced infant mortality rate. In the early 50-ies more than 10,000 infants had died (or more than 100 per 1000 live-borns) which is beyond comparison with any other neighbouring country. In the 70-ies the number of deaths among infants fell to less than 2.000 (or less than 30‰). Infant mortality rate lower than 10‰ was reached in 1993 (fig. 12).

Crude death rates by sex for the period 1950-1996 indicate a parallel trend but with the higher male mortality (fig. 13). The difference between sexes was the greatest in 1991 when in the course of war male mortality amounted to 12,7‰, which is almost as high as in 1983.

Life expectancy is continuously increasing, in case of women more rapidly than in men. The boys born in 1989/1990 may expect to reach the age of 68,2 years, the girls 76 years. This is considerably higher than life expectancy of boys and girls born 1960/1962 (fig. 15).

Most frequent causes of death in Croatia are, like in other European countries, diseases of the circulatory system, neoplasms, accidents, poisonings, violence, respiratory diseases. In 1996 the premature deaths were primarily due to diseases of circulatory system - 570 women and 480 men, neoplasms - 170 women and 270 men, respiratory diseases - 34 women and 52 men.

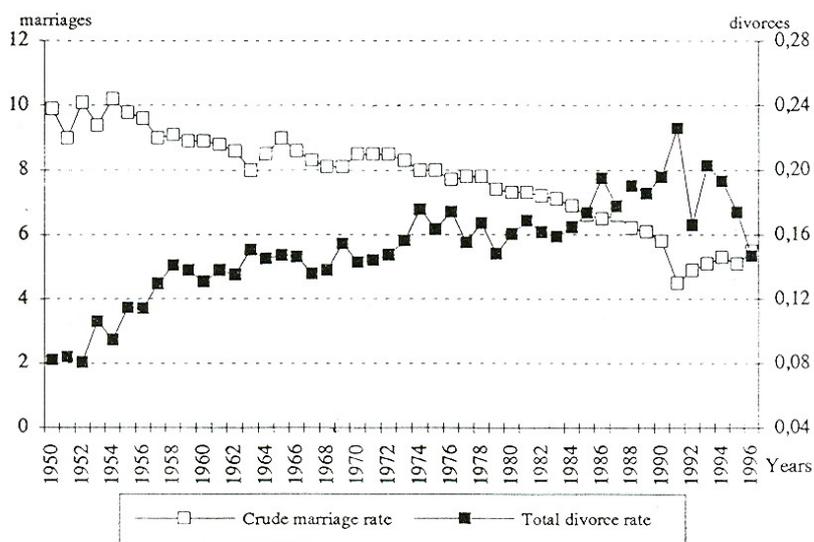


Fig. 10 Crude marriage rates and total divorce rates in Croatia, 1950-1996.  
 Sl. 10 Broj sklopljenih i razvedenih brakova na 1000 stanovnika u Hrvatskoj, 1950.-1996.

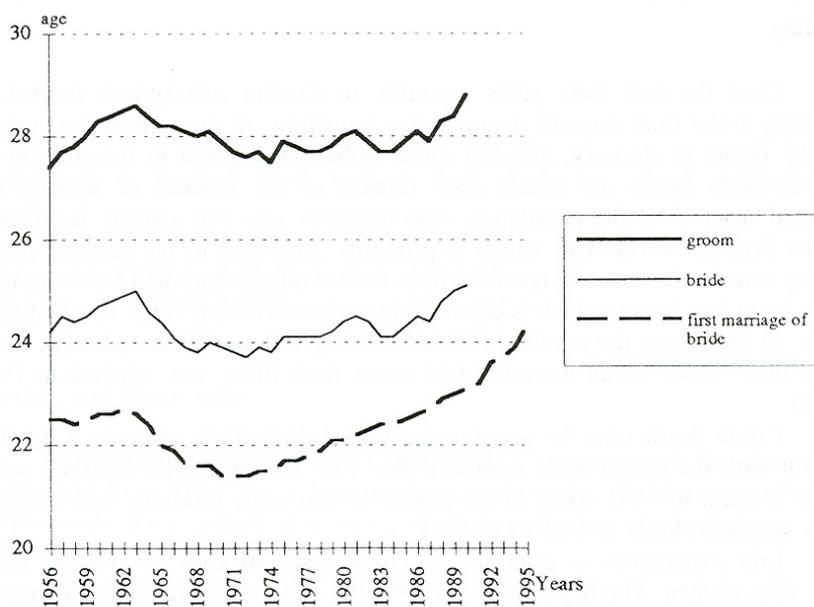


Fig. 11 Mean age of groom and bride in Croatia, 1956-1995.

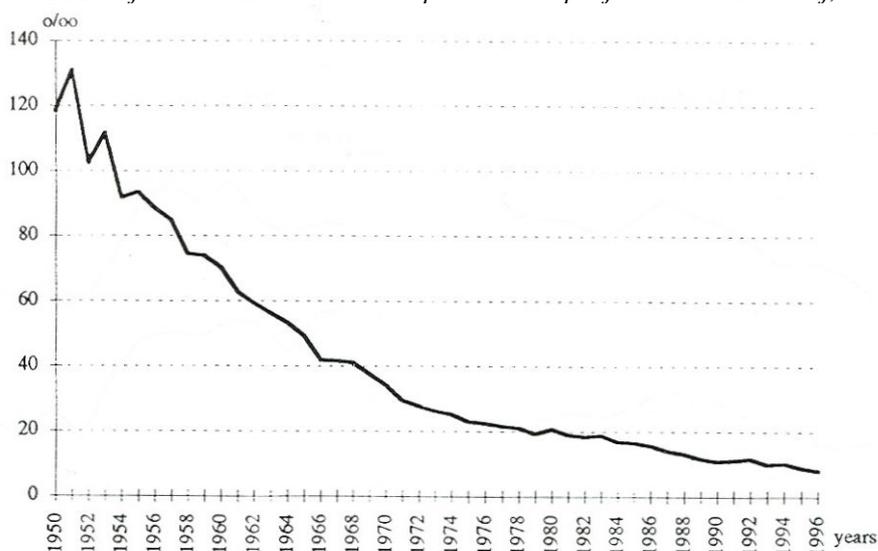
*Sl. 11 Prosječna dob žene i muškarca prilikom sklapanja braka u Hrvatskoj, 1956.-1995.*

Fig. 12 Infant mortality in Croatia, 1950-1996

*Sl. 12 Mortalitet dojenčadi u Hrvatskoj, 1950.-1996.*

Accidents, poisonings or violence were the main causes of deaths for 120 men and only 43 women (fig. 14). During the Homeland War (1991-1995) accidents, poisonings and violence were significantly more frequent causes of death among men as well as respiratory diseases.

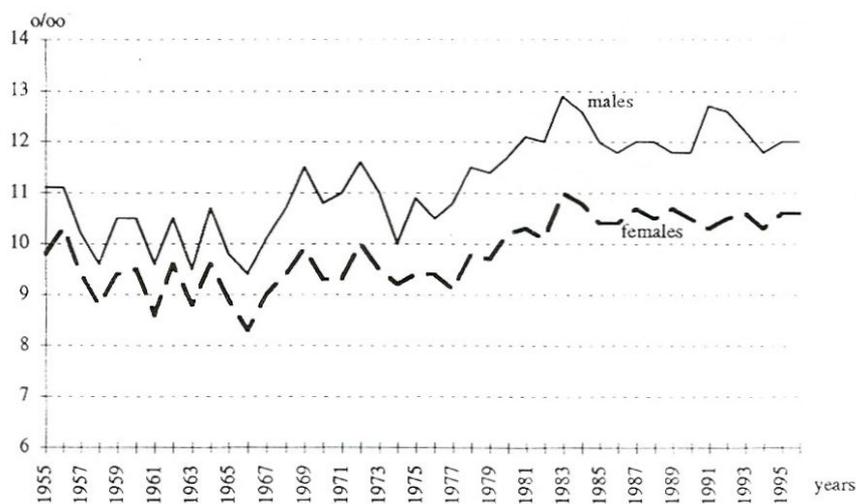


Fig. 13 Crude death rate in Croatia, 1955-1996

Sl. 13 Opća stopa mortaliteta u Hrvatskoj, 1955.-1996.

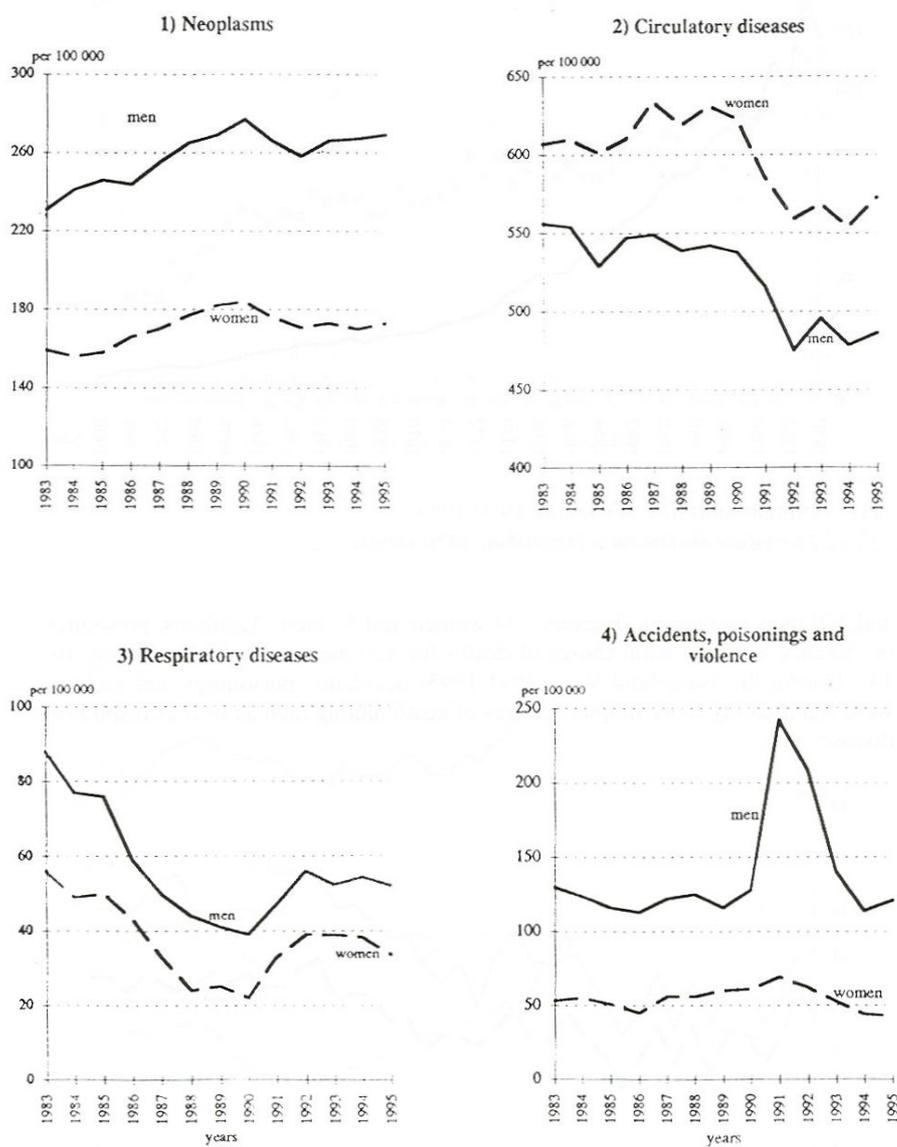


Fig. 14 Cause specific death rates for four main causes of deaths, Croatia, 1983-1995  
 Sl. 14 Umrli prema glavnim uzrocima smrti i spolu u Hrvatskoj, 1983.-1995.

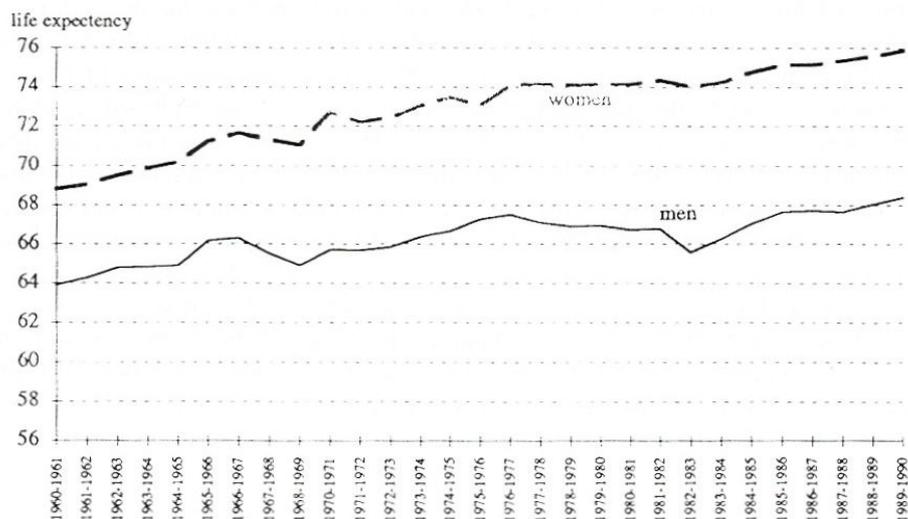


Fig. 15 Life expectancy at birth in Croatia, from 1960-1961 to 1989-1990

*Sl. 15 Očekivano trajanje života živorođenih u Hrvatskoj od 1960.-1961. do 1989.-1990.*

## Migration

Migrations have always been an important component of the changes in the number and age structure of the Croatia's population. Since the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the year 1981, more than a million of inhabitants emigrated to other European or overseas countries. Concurrently, about 300,000 immigrants have settled in Croatia.

The first emigration flow in the overseas countries took place in the course of the 80-ies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and led to depopulation of certain rural parts of Croatia. After the First World War the emigration to the distant, overseas countries weakened due to the world economic crisis, but it was continued into European countries. The records show maximum emigration in 1929, although considerably lower than the emigration flow induced by the Second World War (refugees). To summarise short, from the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1948 about 800.000 persons have emigrated from Croatia.

Emigration was continued despite the fact that the borders of the former Yugoslavia, and, normally, of Croatia, were closed until the beginning of the 60-ies.

The beginning of the 60-ies marks a new era in the long-term process of external immigration of Croatia. This time, the emigration was mainly oriented to European labour markets and it continued with equal intensity for the following twenty years. In the period 1961-1981 it comprised about 320.000 of the Croatian population. In the last inter-census period, 1981-1991, net-migration in Croatia was positive owing to the inflow of immigrants from other, undeveloped republics of the former Yugoslavia, mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Immigration flow was focused mainly to the urban centres and rich agricultural regions of Croatia and therefore, demographic picture was not

substantially improved and natural decrease of the population from mostly poor and rural karsty regions of Croatia did not cease.

According to the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics a total of 236.124 persons immigrated into Croatia in the period 1991-1996. These were mostly immigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina (almost 180.000) and FR Yugoslavia (20.454). At the same period more than 60,000 persons (62.278) have emigrated from Croatia (fig. 16).

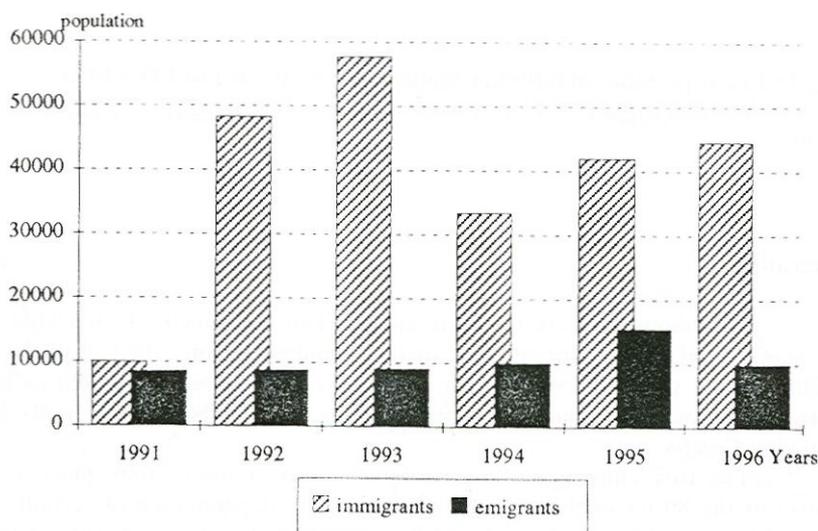


Fig. 16 Immigrant and emigrant population in Croatia, 1991-1996  
*Sl. 16 Doseљeno i odseljeno stanovništvo u Hrvatskoj 1991.-1996.*

### Age and other structures of the population

The Croatian population is characterised by very unfavourable age and sex structure. According to the 1991 census there were 19,4% of the population aged 0-14 years and 13% aged over 65 (fig. 17).

Unbalanced sex composition as well as age structure of the Croatian population lies within the limits of the European averages. In the Croatian population, proportion of women prevails over men, though not significantly. This is brought about by the war and losses that were greater among the male than female population as well as by the higher number of men in emigration. The difference is somewhat greater only in the old age groups.

The process of ageing of the total population as well as partial processes of ageing among individual functional age groups in Croatia is not an uncommon feature, and many European countries have faced the same process. In case of

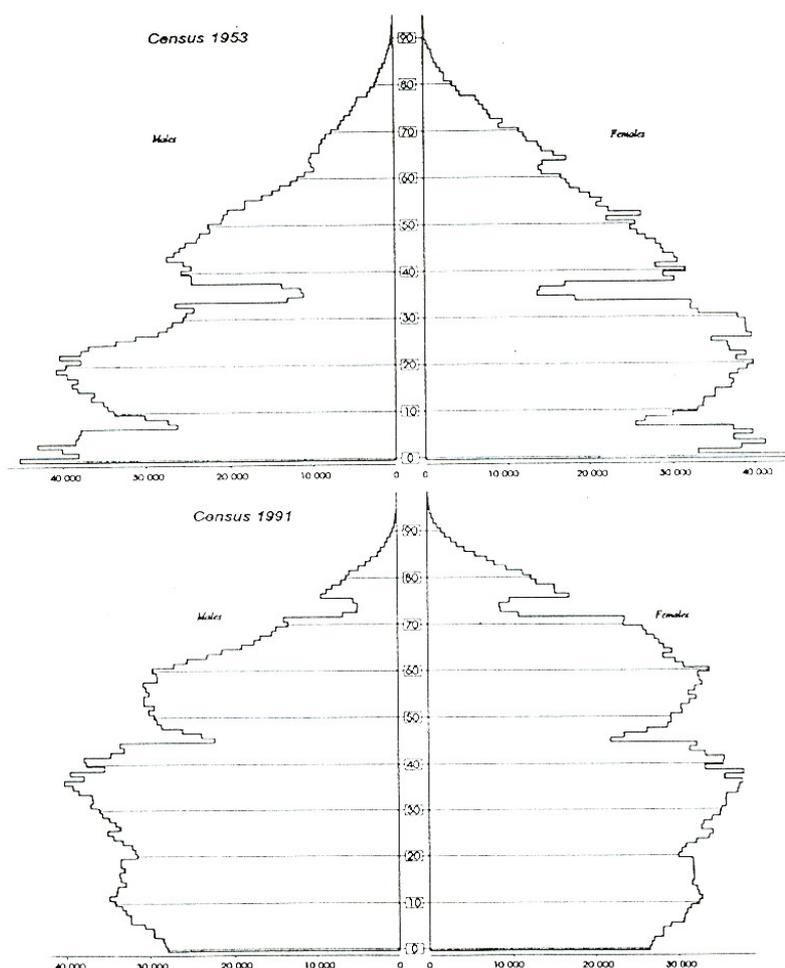


Fig. 17 Total population by age and sex, Croatia, 1951, 1991  
 Sl. 17 Stanovništvo prema spolu i starosti u Hrvatskoj, 1951. i 1991.

Croatia, however, this is one of the basic drawbacks related to the level of economic (un)development that will be reflected in future development of the country. In the total population the ratio of young people is declining and that of old people is on the increase. In the long run this disproportion might have a negative role in the economic and total social development of Croatia.

Although men make up a greater part of the active population in comparison to women, the increase of activity rates recorded in 1991 is due to the increase in the number of active women; 34% in 1971 increased to 43% in 1991 (fig. 18). The increase refers particularly to the age group 30-50 years which is probably contributed by the expansion of tertiary activities and new possibilities of employment for highly educated women. However, the greatest number of women (54%) is employed in agriculture,

which becomes a prevailing female field of activity.

Educational structure of active population has been improved especially in 1991 when compared to the previous years. That year, the majority of active population, both men and women, completed the following education: 49% secondary school (versus 35% in 1981), 37% elementary school and 14% higher or high education.

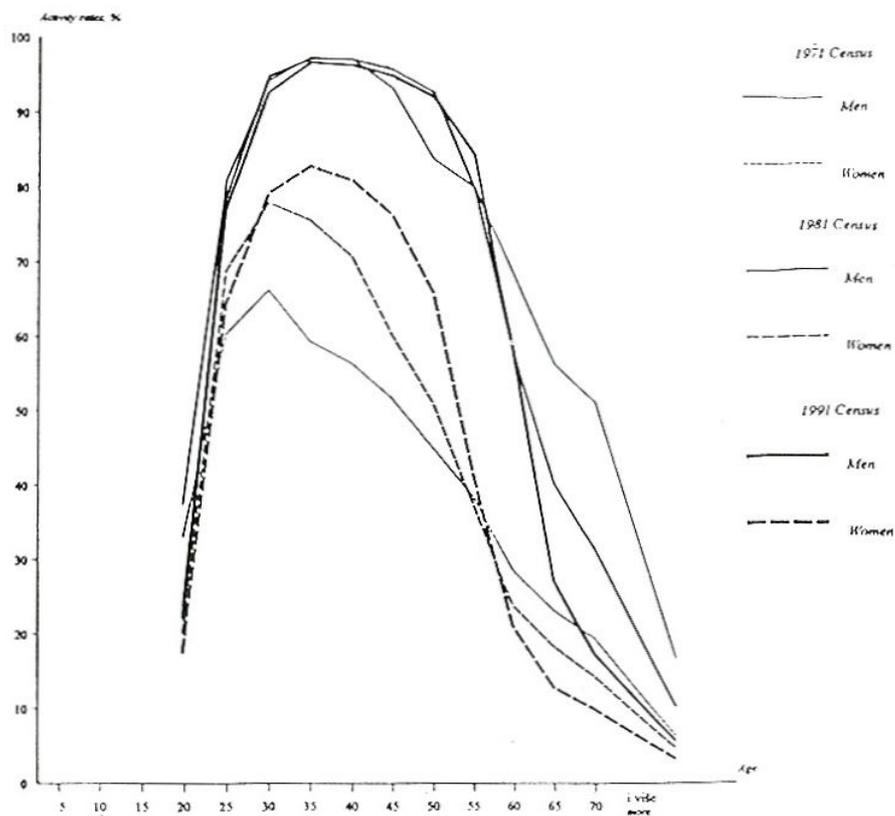


Fig. 18 Age specific rates of economic activity for men and women, Croatia, 1971, 1981, 1991

*Sl. 18 Specifične stope aktivnosti za muškarce i žene po dobi u Hrvatskoj, 1971., 1981., 1991.*

### **Regional differences of Croatia**

Demographic processes and population distribution in Croatia result from regional differences and tendencies. This is primarily manifested in different population density, different population change, ageing of population, social and economic structure of the population and other characteristics related to population trends and composition.

Diverse spatial distribution of population is determined by three main geographic regions of Croatia in terms of relief, economy, culture and social structure. These regions are: Panonian Plain (103 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>), mountainous Dinaric area (18 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>), and coastal Adriatic region (85 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>) (fig. 19). The differences in the population distribution are more distinct if compared to the distribution by ex-municipalities; some of them, particularly those in the mountainous karsty regions or those in the islands of the Adriatic, are real demographic wastelands. On the contrary, some (mostly urban) municipalities are agglomerations of population. One of the consequences of the Homeland War are new depopulated regions in the parts of Croatia where intensity of war activities caused greatest damage and devastation.

Division by ex-municipalities reveals also significant difference in population migration. A very diverse picture can be obtained if total population change is divided by two basic criteria: the one related to exodus, that means the loss of population, and the other related to immigration which means gaining of population. Each group can be further divided into four subgroups<sup>3</sup>, which make up a diverse demographic situation in Croatia characterised by a great proportion of emigration.

In the past thirty years or longer, the regions marked by exodus are widening, and those of immigration become more restricted. This speaks in favour of stronger polarisation of the population, resulting in stronger gradient between the urban and other regions of the Republic of Croatia (fig. 20).

The regions with the process of depopulation included, in the period 1981-1991, 56% of the area inhabited by 34% of the population. The rest of the country are immigration ex-municipalities, that means the regions that gained more inhabitants. Thus, it can be concluded that in the Croatian territory the regions of exodus prevail.

### **Population projections**

Judging by the present demographic situation, migration of the Croatian population will also in future depend on the natality, mortality and population age structure, as well as on the migration trends. According to some estimations, faster economic development and planned repatriation of Croatian emigrants may overturn present negative demographic trends<sup>4</sup>.

Over the several past years (1992-1996) natality and number of marriages were higher than in preceding periods which could be explained by the compensational period following the war.

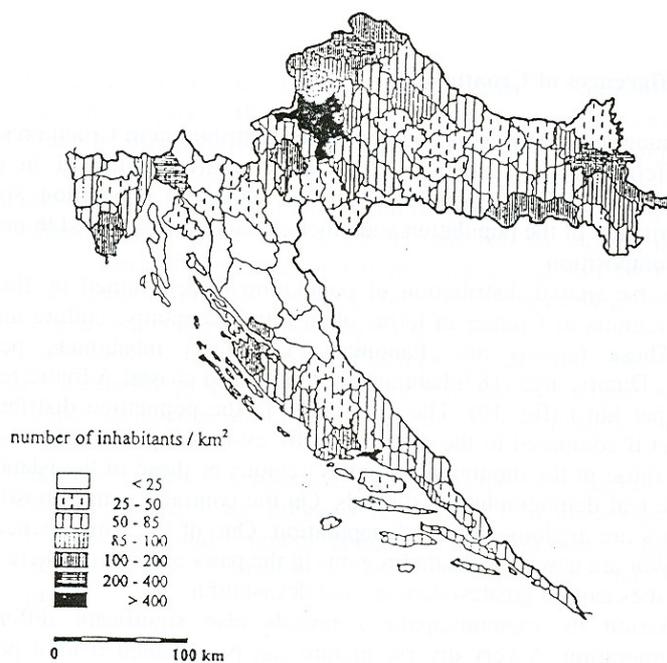


Fig. 19 Population density in Croatia by ex-municipalities, 1991  
 Sl. 19 Razmještaj i gustoća napučenosti u Hrvatskoj 1991.



Fig. 20 The types of general change of population in Croatia by ex-municipalities, 1981-1991  
 Sl. 20 Tipovi općeg (ukupnog) kretanja stanovništva Hrvatske po općinama, 1981.-1991.

The population projections published in the *National Demographic Development Programme* of the Ministry of Development and Reconstruction of the Republic of Croatia, in 2021 Croatia would wind up with a population of 4.450.000 inhabitants if the present regressive natality trend would continue. The share of young population (0-14 years) would be 17% and those over 65, 18%. In case that desirable birth rate would be achieved by implementing efficient population policy, in 2021 the population of Croatia might exceed the number of 5 million inhabitants (fig. 21).

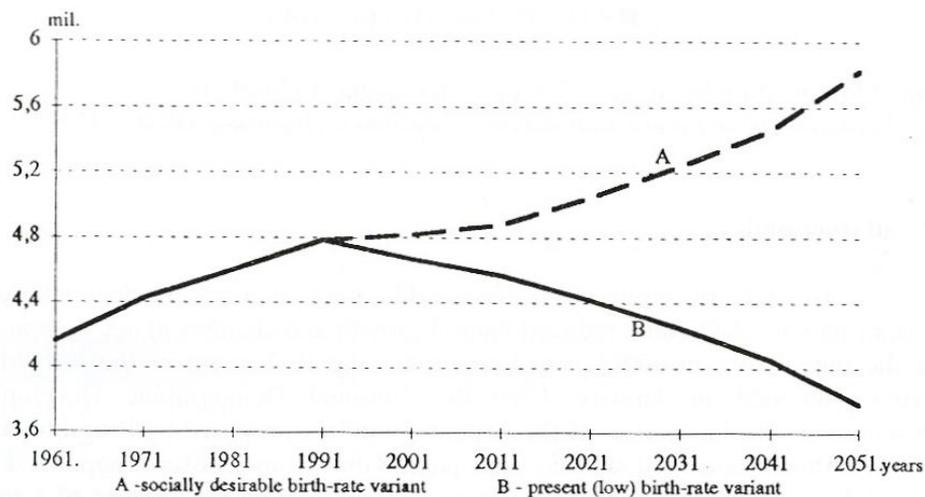


Fig. 21 Total population of Croatia: past trends (1961-1991), projections (1991-2021), likely trends (until 2051)

*Sl. 21 Ukupan broj stanovnika Hrvatske: dosadašnje kretanje (1961.-1991.), projekcija (1991.-2021.), vjerojatno kretanje (do 2051.)*

The results of the projections published in UN bulletin<sup>5</sup> show that following the medium natality alternative, in 2020 Croatia could have 4,301 million inhabitants. The process of demographic ageing would be strong. The share of population over 65 would increase as well as the share of age group 45-64 (fig. 22). The age group 15-44 would be reduced and the least changes would occur in the youngest age group (0-14). This is a unique feature taking into account the level of social and economic (un)development of Croatia.

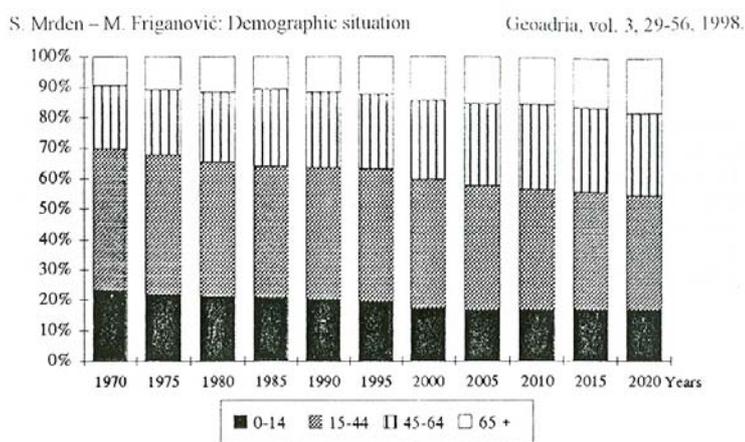


Fig. 22 Population by major age groups in Croatia, 1970-2020

*Sl. 22 Stanovništvo po glavnim dobnim grupama u Hrvatskoj 1970.-2020*

### Population policy

In view of numerous unfavourable consequences of depopulation in certain regions of Croatia, reduced natural growth and changes in age composition of the population, in addition to emigration, the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia adopted in January 1996 the National Demographic Development Programme. The basic aims of the population policy proposed by Programme are: increase birth rate, redistribute the population from densely populated into depopulated areas, stop further emigration and stimulate repatriation of Croatian emigrants.

The incentives are designed to revive the population growth ensuring prerequisites for satisfactory rearing of children, children's and family allowances, housing, tax relieves, granting of shares, etc.

The right to the allowance for the two firstborn children would be linked to the income and property status. It would rise progressively for families with three and four children. The increase for the fifth child would be the same as for the fourth child and for the sixth and next child the rate would be digressive. Provision would be made for mandatory maternal leave in the duration of six months plus parental leave up to the completed first year of the child's life or up to the third year for the third or each subsequent child. Either parent has the right to use the unpaid parental leave up to the completed third year of the child's life.

One of the aims is to stimulate repatriation of Croats abroad and return of the displaced persons and refugees to their homes. In view of possibility that Croatia will continue to be attractive to non-Croat immigrants from the eastern parts of the former Yugoslavia and that special immigration pressure could be expected, the Program proposed the introduction of immigration quotas. These quotas would control not only the sheer number of immigrants but also their composition (age, sex, educational level, ethnicity, economic status, etc.).

**APPENDIX: THE COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA  
IN CROATIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES**

**Table 1. Some demographic indicators, 1996.**

Country	Population 1. 1. 1996 (thousands)	Density	Rate of natural increase (%)	Infant mortality (‰)
<b>CROATIA</b>	<b>4 493.6</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>8.0</b>
SLOVENIA	1 987.0	98	0.01	4.7
HUNGARY	10 174.4	109	-0.37	10.9
AUSTRIA	8 067.8	96	0.10	5.1

**Table 2. Fertility, 1996**

Country	Crude birth rate	Total fertility rate	Mean age of women at childbearing	Mean age of women at childbearing	Extra-marital births per 1000 births
<b>CROATIA</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>27.4*</b>	<b>25.0*</b>	<b>7.1</b>
SLOVENIA	9.4	1.3	27.3	25.2	31.8
HUNGARY	10.3	1.5	25.5	22.9	22.6
AUSTRIA	11.0	1.4	27.8	26.7	28.2

\* 1995

**Table 3. Nuptiality and divorcality, 1996**

Country	Crude marriage rate	Total first marriage rate <sup>1</sup>	Mean age of women at first marriage	Crude divorce rate <sup>2</sup>	Total divorce rate <sup>3</sup>
<b>CROATIA</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0.63*</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.15</b>
SLOVENIA	3.8	0.46	25.4	1.0	0.17
HUNGARY	4.8	0.56*	22.2*	2.2	0.34*
AUSTRIA	5.2	0.56	26.9	2.2	0.38

<sup>1</sup> For females below the age of 50    <sup>2</sup> Divorces per 1000 average population    <sup>3</sup> Divorces per total marriages

\* 1995

Table 4. Life expectancy at certain ages, around 1990

Country	Life expectancy at certain ages					
	sex	0	1	15	45	65
CROATIA	men	68.6	68.5	54.8	27.1	12.8
	women	75.9	75.7	52.0	33.0	15.8
SLOVENIA	men	69.4	69.1	55.4	27.8	13.2
	women	77.2	76.7	65.2	33.9	16.6
HUNGARY	men	65.1	65.2	51.5	24.8	12.0
	women	73.7	73.7	60.0	31.6	15.3
AUSTRIA	men	70.4	70.3	56.6	28.9	13.6
	women	77.3	77.1	63.3	34.4	16.9

Tables 5. Major age groups, 1996

Country	in per cent			
	0-14	15-44	45-64	65+
CROATIA	19.9	43.5	24.3	12.3
SLOVENIA	17.5	46.1	23.6	12.8
HUNGARY	17.7	43.7	24.3	14.3
AUSTRIA	17.3	44.5	22.9	15.3

Sources for Tables 1-5: Statistical Yearbook 1997, Central Bureau of Statistic of the Republic of Croatia  
Recent Demographic Developments in Europe 1997, Council of Europe

**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Number of marriages per 1000 inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup>Number of divorces per number of marriages.

<sup>3</sup>Exodus group (E) is further divided into four subcategories (E1, E2, E3, E4), which differ by the combination of natural trend and net-migration but all share the common characteristic of negative migration balance. Immigration group (I) is also divided into four subgroups (I1, I2, I3, I4), which differ, as well as the exodus groups by the combination of natural trend and net-migration, but share the common characteristic of positive migration balance.

<sup>4</sup>National Demographic Development Programme. Ministry of Development and Reconstruction of the Republic of Croatia, 1997, Zagreb.

<sup>5</sup>The World Population Perspectives 1950-2050 (revision 1996). United Nations, New York, 1996.

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Fig. 3 - Statistički ljetopis 1997. Zagreb : DZS, 1997.

Fig. 4 - Demografska statistika 1960-1990. ; Statistički ljetopis 1997. Zagreb : DZS, 1997.

Fig. 5 - Popisi stanovništva 1948., 1953., 1961., 1971., 1981., 1991.

Fig. 6 - Popisi stanovništva 1948., 1953., 1961., 1971., 1981., 1991.

Fig. 7 - Demografska statistika 1960-1990. ; Statistički ljetopis 1997. Zagreb : DZS, 1997.

Fig. 8 - Recent demographic development in Europe 1996. Council of Europe 1996.

Fig. 9 - Demografska statistika 1960-1990. ; Statistički ljetopis 1997. Zagreb : DZS, 1997.

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Fig. 12 - Demografska statistika 1960-1990. ; Statistički ljetopis 1997. Zagreb : DZS, 1997.

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**SAŽETAK**

Snežana Mrđen – Mladen Friganović: Demografsko stanje u Hrvatskoj

Demografska slika Hrvatske pokazuje određene posebnosti: njezina je populacijska dinamika ispred društvene i gospodarske razvijenosti; u tijeku i nakon Domovinskog rata nastale su promjene u narodnosnoj strukturi i teritorijalnom rasporedu stanovništva, a uočene promjene u demografskim pokazateljima vitalne statistike (rađanja, bračnost, bračnost, razvodi) od 1990. godine, mogle bi biti rezultat poslijeratnog razdoblja. Međutim za takav zaključak potrebno je višegodišnje promatranje kako bi se vidjelo u kojem će se pravcu ti vitalni događaji kretati.

Od prvog popisa cijelog stanovništva 1857. do 1991. godine, broj se stanovnika Hrvatske jedva udvostručio zbog ratnih gubitaka i iseljavanja. Najmanji porast bio je u posljednjem međupopisnom razdoblju (1981-1991), a 1996. godine procijenjen je manji broj stanovnika nego 1991. I dok je prirodni priraštaj u razdoblju 1960. godine iznosio 35.000, 1990. godine bio je samo

3.217, a od 1992. do 1995. u Hrvatskoj se manje ljudi rodilo nego što je umrlo.

Stopa ukupnog fertiliteta (prosječan broj živorođene djece po ženi) najviša je bila potkraj 19. stoljeća (6,04), a najniža ratne 1992. godine (1,44). Od tada fertilitet pokazuje tendenciju povećanja, pa je u 1996. jedna žena u fertilnom razdoblju prosječno rodila 1,67 djece, što je npr. više nego u Sloveniji ili Italiji. Specifične stope fertiliteta prema starosti pokazuju da je već poslije 35. godine života fertilitet vrlo nizak, što znači da se rađanje ograničava na mlađe dobne skupine. Sve do kraja 80-ih godina najčešći je oblik kontrole rađanja bio pobačaj, koji od devedesetih godine pokazuje tendenciju smanjivanja, isto kao i broj rađanja izvan braka, što je posebnost Hrvatske u usporedbi s ostalim europskim zemljama, u kojima je zabilježen porast.

Do promjena je došlo i u nupcijalitetu i divorcijalitetu. Nakon susljednog smanjivanja broja brakova od Drugoga svjetskog rata do 1990. godine, zabilježeno je njihovo povećanje posljednjih godina. Broj razvoda se smanjuje što upućuje na stabilnost bračnih veza. Prosječne godine stupanja u brak u Hrvatskoj pokazuju da žene i muškarci ulaze u bračne zajednice za oko 2 i više godina ranije nego u Zapadnoj Europi.

Što se tiče ukupnog mortaliteta stanovništva Hrvatske, opća je tendencija njegovo lagano povećanje zbog starenja stanovništva. Dok u svemu tome stopa smrtnosti dojenčadi pokazuje vrlo povoljan trend prema niskim stopama (manje od 10‰). Najčešći su uzroci opće smrtnosti stanovništva bolesti cirkulacijskog i dišnog sustava i neoplazme, kao i u ostalim europskim zemljama, dok su uzroci smrti nasiljem, trovanjem i nesretnim slučajevima osobito bili povećani u Domovinskom ratu. Očekivano trajanje života neprestano se povećava, i to brže za žene nego za muškarce.

Ostarijeost stanovništva i vrlo nepovoljan sastav po dobi i spolu značajke su dobne strukture stanovništva Hrvatske, što je u granicama europskog prosjeka. Mladih je sve manje, a starih sve više u udjelu ukupnog stanovništva. Prema rezultatima projekcije Ujedinjenih naroda temeljene na srednjoj varijanti nataliteta, u Hrvatskoj bi se 2020. godine mogao povećati ne samo udio stanovništva starijeg od 65 godina, nego i starosne grupe od 45 do 64 godine, a smanjiti udio stanovništva u grupi od 15 do 44. Ukupan broj stanovnika Hrvatske te iste godine bio bi 4,3 milijuna.

Različitost regionalnog kretanja stanovništva i geoprstorne naseljenosti također je opća slika Hrvatske. Prazni su ili poluprazni otoci i brdsko-planinski krajevi, kao i ona područja koja su bila zahvaćena Domovinskim ratom. Egzodusni se krajevi šire što pojačava polarizaciju i naseljenost pučanstva između gradskih i ostalih prostora.

S obzirom na nepovoljnu demografsku sliku Hrvatske, Sabor Republike donio je u siječnju 1996. *Nacionalni program demografskog razvitka* kojim su predviđene mjere zaustavljanja daljnjeg smanjivanja nataliteta, redistribucija stanovništva iz napučenih krajeva prema nenaseljenim, te povratak hrvatskih iseljenika.

