

CONTEMPORARY DYNAMICS AND POPULATION STRUCTURES OF FORMER OBROVAC AREA

VERA GRAOVAC
MARTIN GLAMUZINA
Department of Geography
Faculty of Philosophy in Zadar
Odsjek za geografiju
Filozofski fakultet u Zadru

UDC: 911.3:314.18](497.5 Obrovac)
Preliminary communication
Prethodno priopćenje

Primljeno: 2002-06-10
Received:

This paper deals with demographic characteristics of former Obrovac Municipality that existed as such until 1993. Like most of the municipalities in Dalmatian hinterland, this municipality was also affected by depopulation processes. The purpose of this paper is to determine the intensity of these processes by analyzing the various aspects of population structures. The analysis includes population trends, age-sex structure, educational structure, economic and ethnic composition. This mostly rural area has always been underdeveloped with depopulation processes dating from 1970s that particularly intensified during and after the Croatian War of Independence.

Key words: Obrovac Municipality, population structures, depopulation processes, emigration, age-sex structure

Ovaj rad proučava demografske karakteristike bivše općine Obrovac prema administrativno-teritorijalnom ustroju 1991 godine. Kao i većina općina Dalmatinske zagore i općina Obrovac je zahvaćena depopulacijskim procesima. Svrha ovog rada je utvrditi intenzitet ovih procesa analizirajući različite strukture stanovništva. Analiza uključuje kretanje broja stanovnika, dobno-spolnu, obrazovnu te gospodarsku i nacionalnu strukturu. Ovo, uglavnom ruralno, područje je oduvijek bilo nerazvijeno, a depopulacijski procesi su započeli još u 1970ima i posebno su se intenzivirali tijekom i nakon Domovinskog rata.

Ključne riječi: općina Obrovac, strukture stanovništva, depopulacijski procesi, emigracija, dobno-spolna struktura

Introduction and methodology

The area analyzed in this paper comprises the former Obrovac Municipality situated in northern-Dalmatian hinterland (NEJAŠMIĆ, 1992) and encircled by four other municipalities – Zadar, Gračac, Knin and Benkovac (actual territorial division in 1991) (Fig. 1). This municipality comprised the area of 509 km² and it consisted of 15 settlements: Jasenice, Zaton Obrovački, Obrovac, Kruševo, Muškovci, Golubić, Bilišane, Gornji Karin, Zelengrad, Medviđa, Bogatnik, Nadvoda, Krupa, Kaštel Žegarski and Komazeci. Until 1961 Obrovac Municipality consisted of 12 settlements, because Kaštel Žegarski, Komazeci, Nadvoda and Bogatnik were considered as one settlement called

Žegar, so for methodological reasons these settlements are analyzed as one in this paper. The only urban settlement in the municipality was Obrovac, the settlement with mixed (urban and rural) characteristics was Žegar, while the rest of the settlements had rural characteristics.

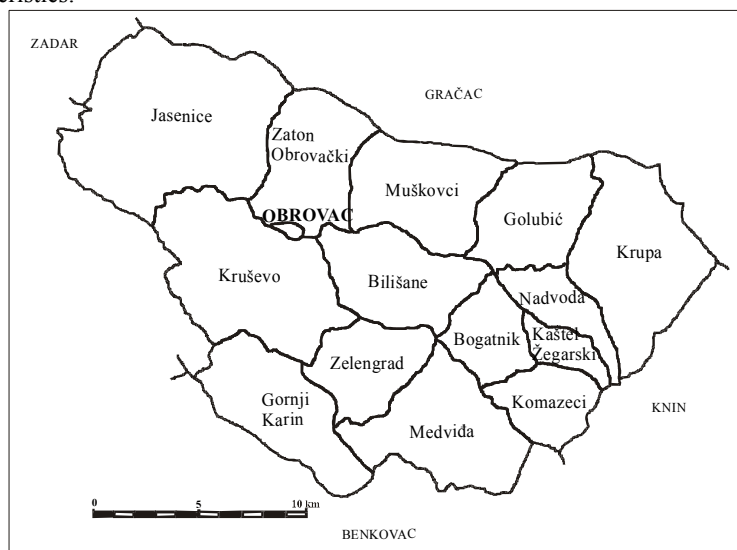


Fig. 1 Former Obrovac Municipality

Sl. 1. Bivša općina Obrovac

Obrovac Municipality existed as such until 1993 when new administrative and territorial division of Croatia was introduced. According to this new administrative and territorial division, Jasenice and Zaton Obrovački were detached from Obrovac Municipality and became independent municipality called Jasenice, Medvida became a part of Benkovac Municipality, while the rest of the settlements remained as a part of Obrovac Municipality.

The natural characteristics of this area – relief, geological composition of the terrain, climate, hydrology, soil composition – are rather unfavorable. If we add this to poor traffic connections, it is evident that demographic and economic development are restricted. For centuries the population was oriented to agriculture, mainly on stock breeding (goats and sheep), but during 1970's agricultural production slowly started to decrease and the population was forced to emigrate and settle in more prosperous parts of the country. Obrovac Municipality was a typical example of agricultural society characterized by high birth rate and high infant mortality rate, low educational level (especially of women), low living standard. All this was caused by economic and cultural underdevelopment and it reflected itself in demographic structure – age composition characterized by large number of children, predominance of male population. Somewhat stronger economic development began in 1980's as a result of significant development of industry in Obrovac. Nevertheless, this could not stop or reduce the intensity of depopulation processes that began in 1970's.

Another important aspect in studying population of Obrovac Municipality is ethnic composition. Namely, this area has been inhabited by both Serbs and Croats, but ever since the first census that started recording ethnic composition in 1880, Serbs have been the ethnical majority. From 1880 to 1991 only in three settlements Croats were the majority – Jasenice, Kruševo and Medviđa.

The most significant political, demographic and economic changes in this area happened during and after the Croatian War of Independence. This area was directly influenced by the war activities and has undergone many changes, both physical and social. Thus, it is interesting to analyze the consequences and influence of the war on demographic situation in this area. One of the possible ways of analyzing is to compare the newest census data with that from 1991 and before. Unfortunately, since the census data from 2001 is still incomplete, it is not possible to make thorough analysis and comparison. The purpose of this paper is to determine demographic characteristics and processes that have happened in the past 50 years, emphasize the problems this area is faced with and thus help finding the best solutions for its revitalization.

Population trends in Obrovac Municipality

According to the census taken in 1991 Obrovac Municipality had 11,557 inhabitants, while according to the first census taken in 1857 it had 8,070 inhabitants, which means 43.2% increase in 134 years. On the other hand, if we compare the situation before and after the war (i.e. if we compare year 1991 with 2001), decrease of 57.5% reflects the impact of war on demographic situation (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1 Population trends in Obrovac Municipality from 1857 to 2001
Tab. 1. Kretanje broja stanovnika općine Obrovac od 1857. do 2001. godine

Settlement	1857.	1869.	1880.	1890.	1900.	1910.	1921.	1931.	1948.	1953.	1961.	1971.	1981.	1991.	2001.
Bilišane	884	952	956	1,045	1,249	1,332	1,009	1,315	1,064	1,127	1,146	1,008	928	857	29
Golubić	357	428	483	489	573	682	639	720	663	704	674	595	505	478	36
Gornji Karin	1,040	1,146	1,234	1,235	1,415	1,655	1,541	1,637	1,001	1,123	1,175	1,089	949	876	859
Jasenice	725	741	815	942	1,127	1,376	1,216	1,331	1,318	1,373	1,537	1,658	1,344	1,308	1,224
Krupa	508	569	564	580	749	860	883	879	948	893	839	656	484	412	57
Kruševo	1,044	1,182	1,249	1,339	1,600	1,775	1,663	1,710	1,827	2,017	2,206	2,370	1,978	1,674	1,078
Medviđa	903	999	1,021	1,204	1,263	1,294	1,375	1,403	1,170	1,212	1,211	1,124	917	688	199
Muškovci	324	400	422	447	522	607	571	580	408	478	519	549	588	543	47
Obrovac	341	403	463	410	401	461	418	508	302	306	532	1,187	1,457	1,660	1,055
Zaton Obrovački	256	300	325	338	374	479	407	476	375	397	427	395	525	492	105
Zelengrad	373	411	463	522	597	625	471	717	575	664	688	624	558	512	44
Žegar	1,315	1,323	1,373	1,341	1,645	1,817	1,832	2,026	2,328	2,384	2,406	2,243	2,129	2,057	182
Total	8,070	8,854	9,368	9,892	11,515	12,963	12,025	13,302	11,979	12,678	13,360	13,498	12,362	11,557	4,915

Source: 1, 8, 9, 11

The number of inhabitants in Obrovac Municipality was constantly increasing in the period from 1857 to 1910 as a result of increase in all settlements, especially in Bilišane, Gornji Karin, Jasenice, Kruševo and Žegar. The increase of 60.6% was primarily the result of positive natural change. As it could be expected, after the World Wars the number of inhabitants decreased. In the period from 1857 to 1948 unfavorable social and economic conditions caused emigration from many parts of Croatia, including Obrovac Municipality that has traditionally been economically underdeveloped area. Emigration was directed toward more developed areas and big towns in Croatia, but also abroad. In spite of the considerable emigration, the number of inhabitants grew due to high positive natural change.

After the Second World War the birth rate was very high, but that is understandable considering the fact that this was the post-war period and in such conditions birth rate is always increased. In 1961 birth rate was still very high (30‰), but slowly began to show downward tendency. In the period between 1961 and 1991 death rate is relatively steady and it ranges from 5.9‰ to 8.1‰.

Tab. 2 Population loss/gain caused by migrations in the settlements of Obrovac Municipality 1991/1961¹

Tab. 2. Smanjenje/povećanje broja stanovnika uzrokovano migracijama po naseljima općine Obrovac 1991./1961.

Settlement	Number of inhabitants in 1961	Natural change 1961-1991	Expected number of inhabitants in 1991 (based on natural change)	Number of inhabitants in 1991	Loss/gain caused by migrations
Bilišane	1,146	316	1,462	857	-605
Golubić	674	215	889	478	-411
Gornji Karin	1,175	285	1,460	876	-584
Jasenice	1,537	540	2,077	1,308	-769
Krupa	839	176	1,015	412	-603
Kruševo	2,206	650	2,856	1,674	-1,182
Medvida	1,211	360	1,571	688	-883
Muškovci	519	254	773	543	-230
Obrovac	532	967	1,499	1,660	161
Zaton Obrovački	427	149	576	492	-84
Zelengrad	688	193	881	512	-369
Žegar	2,406	422	2,828	2,057	-771
Total	13,360	4,527	17,887	11,557	-6,330

Source: 1, 9, 12

¹2001 census was not used in this analysis because the borders of the municipalities changed and so far 2001 census data is presented only by new municipalities, not by settlements.

From 1961 to 1971 natural change rate was high (21.9‰ in 1961 and 15.6‰ in 1971) and it procured further increase despite the emigration. The highest number of inhabitants was recorded in 1971. After that, the process of general rural exodus accelerated in whole Croatia and the whole northern-Dalmatian hinterland was, and still is, one of the most prominent depopulation areas in Croatia (NEJAŠMIĆ, 1992). This means that after 1971 emigration rate surpassed natural change rate so that in 1991 the number of inhabitants was at the same level as that in 1900. The loss of population from 1961 to 1991 caused by emigration is significant (Tab. 2).

Due to poor traffic connections, unfavorable natural conditions, low educational level, autarkic agricultural production, this area was unable to keep up with the new technology and modernization, so that obsolete way of cultivating land caused reduction in agricultural production and low living standard, and thus intensified emigration, especially of the young people. This is, of course, a chain reaction – young people, who are in their reproductive age, emigrate and this directly influences fertility and birth rate in a way that it reduces them. The consequences are obvious – reduced number of young people, increased number of old people, who are unable to sustain economic development, ageing of the whole population, and all this happens in an area where immigration is almost non-existent.

Such disadvantageous conditions were additionally worsened by the war in 1991. The last census, taken in 2001, shows drastic reduction of number of inhabitants. Very large number of the inhabitants moved away because of the war and their return is difficult, because the reconstruction of the houses is very slow, the fields have not been cultivated for a long time, there is a big danger of land mines left from the war. In other words, the prospects for living are very unpromising.

Tab. 3 Population change 1991/1948 and 2001/1991 in the settlements of Obrovac Municipality (in %)

Tab. 3. Promjena broja stanovnika po naseljima općine Obrovac 1991./1948. i 2001./1991. godine (u %)

Settlement	Change 1991./1948.	Change 2001./1991.
Bilišane	-19.5	-96.6
Golubić	-27.9	-92.5
Gornji Karin	-12.5	-1.9
Jasenice	-0.8	-6.4
Krupa	-56.5	-86.2
Kruševo	-8.4	-35.6
Medviđa	-41.2	-71.1
Muškovci	33.1	-91.3
Obrovac	449.7	-36.5
Zaton Obrovački	31.2	-78.7
Zelengrad	-11.0	-91.4
Žegar	-11.6	-91.2
Total	-3.5	-57.5

Source: 1, 9, 11

In the period between 1948 and 1991 the only settlement with positive demographic development is Obrovac together with Muškovci and Zaton Obrovački that practically belong to the territory of Obrovac (Tab. 3). As an industrial and urban center and the center of the municipality, Obrovac was attractive to the inhabitants of the other settlements in the municipality, but the population growth of 449.7% between 1948 and 1991 was the result of both positive net migration and positive natural change. In 1948 only 2.5% of the population of the municipality lived in the central settlement – Obrovac, while in 1991 that number rose to 14.4%.

Census taken in 2001 clearly reflects the consequences of the war – all settlements in the municipality have negative population trend compared to 1991. Some of the settlements lost over 90% of their population and are on the verge of dying out. For example, Komazeci (in this paper this settlement is analyzed within the settlement of Žegar) lost 98.6% of its population – before the war it had 357 inhabitants and in 2001 it had only 5. According to this census, the town of Obrovac lost its role of the largest settlement and industrial center as a result of the decline of industry (the alumina plant was shut down) and is now the third largest settlement (after Jasenice and Kruševo). Of course, the war is not the only factor that caused negative demographic trends; they started back in 1970's as a result of the bad economic situation and significant emigration, and the war just speeded up the process of depopulation.

Age-sex structure

There are three different dimensions of population structure – demographic, cultural or ethnic and socio-economic. Population structure is both a cause and an effect. This means that, on one hand, it is an active factor influencing population growth, particularly through the medium of age structure, and on the other hand, population structure is an effect, in that present structure is greatly influenced by the growth trends of the past (WITHERICK, 1990).

One of the main aspects in analyzing population of a certain area is age and sex composition. This aspect is important because it indicates future demographic and economic development of that area. The ratio between the two sexes is influenced by three main factors: the preponderance of male births, the different mortality of the sexes, and migrations (CLARKE, 1965). Generally, male births exceed female births by approximately 4-6%, which means that about 104-106 males are born for every 100 females. This is the reason why the sex ratio in the age groups between 0 and 14 years of age is mostly above 100 in the favor of the males. On the other hand, male mortality is higher than female mortality; females have longer life span, so that they dominate in older age groups and generally. Migrations are also sex-selective. Namely, in the past, men were those who migrated more often, but in modern times that predominance is not so stressed.

In 1961 in Obrovac Municipality sex ratio is balanced – 96.5 males per 100 females. Men dominate in age group 0-14, while women dominate in age groups 15-49 and above 50. In 1971 number of men and women is almost equal (99.9 males per 100 females), but in 1981 and 1991 sex ratio is disrupted – 105 males per 100 females in 1981 and 108.1 males per 100 females in 1991. In 2001 sex ratio is relatively balanced – 98.5 males per 100 females.

This total sex ratio does not reflect the actual situation and does not indicate the real problems this area is faced with. To get a better picture it is important to analyze sex ratio of age group 15-49 years (reproductive age). Unbalanced sex ratio in reproductive age has direct negative effects on the number of marriages, birth rate and, finally, on natural change. This aspect of sex ratio in Obrovac Municipality indicates severe problems – unbalance is obvious and worrying. The reason for this disproportion is sex-selective migration. Namely, in the past men were those who were leaving their homes, seeking jobs and better life opportunities. Today, in the times of increased mobility and more developed transportation, women move away because of marriage or better job opportunities, while men are more bonded to family estate. In 1961 sex ratio in reproductive age was 87.3 males per 100 females due to increased male emigration. In 1971 situation is better, the ratio is balanced – 98.7 males per 100 females, but the following years show significant disproportion. In 1981 the ratio was 118.1 males per 100 females and in 1991 130.3 males per 100 females. The latest census shows a slight improvement – 115.8 males per 100 females.

Compared to 1961, in 1991 there was an 8.5% reduction of male population and 18.3% reduction of female population. The only settlements where women in reproductive age outnumber men are Obrovac and Žegar. Development of textile industry and administrative functions in Obrovac ensured more jobs for women and that's why sex ratio is slightly in favor of women.

Age-structure is directly influenced by three variables: mortality, fertility and migrations and these variables are not entirely independent - any change in one may eventually influence the other two (CLARKE, 1965). Age data is most frequently presented by age groups, indices and pyramids. Age-structure indicates whether the population is young, adult or aged. There are several classifications for distinguishing age groups. One commonly used distinguishes young population: 0-19 years, adults: 20-59 years and the aged: 60 and over (FRIGANOVIĆ, 1990).

Analyzing the ratio of these three age groups in the period 1961-2001 it is evident that in 1961 the population was young and in 2001 the population was extremely aged. In other words, in 1961 almost 50% of the population of Obrovac Municipality was under 19 years of age, and only 8.8% was over 60 years of age. The following censuses indicate that the number of the children and adolescents decreases, while the number of adults the aged increases. In accordance with its rural characteristics and orientation to agriculture, up to 1970's this area had increased birth rate, and at the same time life span was much shorter due to more difficult living conditions and underdeveloped health care. The obvious consequence of such situation is the above-mentioned age-structure. Gradually, the population started abandoning agriculture as the primary activity, the emigration of the young people intensified and birth rate consequently started to decrease, causing the reduction of the number of children and adolescents in the future. On the other hand, the number of adults and the aged grew. To illustrate this situation it is sufficient to present it in numbers. In 2001 the ratio between the population under 19 and the population above 60 is almost equal – 26.8% of young and 23.2% of the aged. It is considered that if the share of the aged in total population exceeds 12%, the population has begun to age. As we can see, in 2001 this share in Obrovac Municipality is almost twice higher than the critical value. Of course, such turn of events has a negative impact on future reproduction of the population and general demographic development of this area. The ultimate result would be dying out of the population.

Other relevant index of age-structure is old age index, which is gained by calculating the ratio between the aged and the young population. The critical value of old age index is 0.40, which means that if old age index of a certain population exceeds that value, the ageing process has begun. In Obrovac Municipality this index was below the critical value until 1991, but in 2001 it was more than twice higher – 0.86.

The most common way of presenting age and sex structure of a population is by constructing an age-sex pyramid. Based on the shape of the pyramid we can conclude whether the population is progressive, stationary or regressive. Analyzing the pyramid we can notice some short-term events: wars, epidemics, sudden migrations, baby booms and so on. If we observe the age-sex pyramids of Obrovac Municipality from 1961 to 2001, we can trace the change of shape from progressive to restrictive. In 1961 and 1971 the pyramid had progressive shape – it has a broad base and it tapers fairly abruptly. This pyramid indicates a youthful population and high fertility (WITHERICK, 1990). On 1961 pyramid we can clearly see high share of the population under 14 years of age as a result of the increased birth rate after the Second World War, while the small share of those 15-19 years of age is a result of the reduced birth rate during the war. Direct impact of the war is particularly evident in the male age group 35-49 years (war casualties).

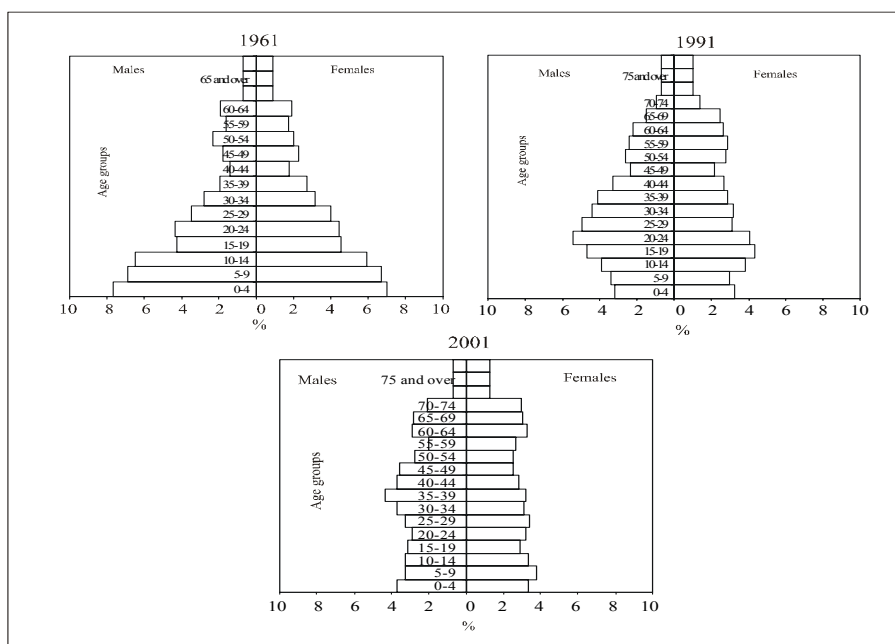


Fig. 2 Age-sex pyramids in 1961, 1991 and 2001

Sl. 2. Dobno-spolne piramide 1961., 1991, i 2001. godine

Source: 4, 9, 11

In 1971 the pyramid still indicates progressive population, but ten years after it abruptly shifts to regressive shape and retains it until 2001. However, there is a difference

between 1991 and 2001 pyramid – in 1991 the pyramid has typical regressive shape (narrow base due to low fertility rates, expanded middle part and again relatively narrow upper part due to longer life span and low mortality rates); in 2001 the pyramid shows almost equal share of all three age groups. Predominance of the male population is evident on both pyramids (Fig. 2).

Educational structure

As it is often the case in rural areas, educational structure of Obrovac Municipality indicates low educational level of its population. The reasons for such a low level of education are orientation to agriculture (where children are more needed as a labor force), then remoteness of the schools (especially secondary schools), poor traffic connections and poverty of the population, which prevented the parents to provide their children schooling in big urban centers. The highest level of education available was elementary school. Analysis of educational structure includes population above 10 years of age. The exception is the census taken in 1991, which includes population above 15 years of age, and because if this it cannot be completely compared to previous censuses. At is will be seen, there is a considerable difference between the educational level of men and women.

In 1961 64.5% of the population above 10 years of age was without educational qualification or had only 1-3 grades of elementary school. Generally looking, 95.7% of the population was without educational qualification or had 1-7 grades of elementary school. In addition, 41.9% of the population was illiterate, out of which 72.8% were women. Most of the illiterate were between 35 and 64 years of age. Difference in education between men and women is evident. Namely, most of the uneducated were women, while men dominate in the categories of higher levels of education. This clearly illustrates that much more attention was given to education of the male population, because by learning a trade, men could find a job in other economic activities, since agriculture did not provide enough income. Unlike men, women were mostly provided with minimal level of education (a few grades of elementary school). Only 1.2% of population finished secondary school.

The next two decades show that educational level has been slightly improving; number of those who finished elementary and secondary school increased, but the share of those who were without educational qualification or did not finish elementary school was still very high – 78%. Illiteracy rate lowered, but women still significantly dominate in that category. Since educational structure in 1991 included population over 15 years of age, it cannot be completely compared to previous years. Anyway, it indicates some changes – most of the population finished secondary school, but the share of the uneducated is still very high.

Economic composition

Analysis of the economic composition includes the number of economically active and inactive population (inactive population includes children below working age, retired persons, students, people living from rents, dividends, pensions). One of the most

important aspects is the proportion between active and dependent population, since supported population depends on active population. Economic composition directly depends on age and sex structure, economic and social situation and level of economic development.

In 1953 percentage of economically active population was relatively high (44.2%) due to favorable age structure, i.e. due to large number of adult population. As agriculture was widespread activity and main source of income, economically active population was able to find a job relatively easily. At the same time percentage of dependent population was also high (55.2%) because of the large number of young population up to 15 years of age. In the following years, the situation worsened; percentage of economically active population lowered, mostly due to age-selective migrations. It is usual that most migrants are in their working age and constitute most of the labor force.

Another aspect of economic composition is industrial classification of the active population, i.e. percentage of active population working in one of four industrial sectors. In the middle of 20th century 90.3% of the active population in Obrovac Municipality worked in primary sector. This would not be such a surprising number if Obrovac Municipality did not have only 4.3% of cultivable land (KLANAC, 1992). Scarceness of cultivable land, low quality of the land, fragmentation of the properties had a great influence on the production and living standard. However, there were good conditions for the development of stockbreeding (sheep and goats), which was a very important economic activity and one of the preconditions for survival of the local people.

In the next thirty years the proportion of the industrial sectors changed completely – the population shifted from almost 100% agricultural to distinctly nonagricultural (Tab. 4). At the end of 1950's agricultural production started to decrease, so, in accordance with the economic possibilities of this area, the population shifted to other economic activities. From 1970's rapid development of industry and infrastructural development have opened wider range of possibilities for employment. The result of this restructuring was that in 1991 only 10.1% of the active population was employed in the primary sector. Tertiary sector is also well developed due to development of commerce and other services.

Tab. 4 Share of the employed inhabitants in the industrial sectors from 1953 to 1991²
Tab. 4. Udio zaposlenog stanovništva po sektorima djelatnosti 1953.-1991. godine

Year	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Quartar	Rest and unknown
1953.	90.3	2.9	0.9	1.3	4.6
1961.	76.9	12.9	1.6	2.4	6.2
1971.	53.6	30.9	8.1	5.5	1.9
1981.	18.6	52.6	13.7	12.1	3.0
1991.	10.1	51.9	22.3	12.5	3.2

Source: 3, 5, 6, 7, 10

² See note for Tab. 2

Ethnic composition

One very important and inevitable aspect in analyzing the population of Obrovac area is ethnic composition. This area is not characterized by significant ethnical diversity; two most numerous nations are Croats and Serbs, while the share of others is almost negligible. Until the Turkish conquest, this was ethnically homogenous area, inhabited by Croats. But, running away from the Turks in 16th century many ethnically diverse people abandoned their dwelling places and moved westward. Consequently, a part of those people, mostly Serbs, inhabited this northern-Dalmatian hinterland making this area ethnically more complex. The newcomers founded new settlements or settled in the existing settlements. At the same time, a part of Croats moved to other parts of Croatia, mostly to the islands.

With time, ethnical structure has changed considerably, so that the census taken in 1880 recorded 62.7% of Serbs and 36,5% of Croats. In the period between 1880 and 1991 percentage of Serbs was mostly at the same level or it was slowly increasing, so that in 1991 that percentage was 65.5%. At the same time the share of Croats oscillates, but in 1991 it lowered to 32.5% (Tab. 5).

Tab. 5 Share of Croats, Serbs and other nationalities in the population of Obrovac Municipality from 1880 to 1991³

Tab. 5. Udio Hrvata, Srba i ostalih naroda u stanovništvu općine Obrovac 1880.-1991. godine

Year	Croats	Serbs	Other
1880.	36.5	62.7	0.8
1890.	37.6	61.7	0.7
1900.	36.6	62.2	1.2
1910.	36.8	62.4	0.8
1948.	35.5	64.4	0.1
1953.	36.0	63.9	0.1
1961.	36.6	61.6	1.8
1971.	38.5	60.0	1.5
1981.	33.8	60.1	6.1
1991.	32.5	65.5	2.0

Source: 2

Reduced number of Croats is primarily the result of their stronger emigration, their marginalization in the local politics and selective employment (i.e. Serbs had better chances for employment due to their significant positions in the local politics). An interesting occurrence was recorded in 1981; that year, compared to 1971, the number of Croats decreased by 19.6% and the number of Serbs by 8.2%. In the background of this lies the fact that in that period many of the Croats and Serbs declared themselves as

³ See note for Tab. 2

Yugoslavs (4.4%). But this was not the only reason – such decrease was partly caused by intensive out-migration during the 1970's. Considering the consequences of the Croatian War of Independence, it is obvious that the whole demographic picture has substantially changed, including the ethnic composition. But since the data about the ethnic composition in 2001 still have not been published, it is hard to talk about the present situation.

In the period between 1880 and 1991 the only settlements where Croats were majority were Jasenice, Kruševo and Medvida. In Zaton Obrovački Croats were the majority until 1948, and in Obrovac until 1961.

Conclusion

Obrovac Municipality has been affected by strong depopulation processes. From 1971 the number of inhabitants has constantly been decreasing due to extreme out-migration. From 1961 to 1991 net migration was negative in all settlements, except in Obrovac. Age-sex structure has also been seriously disrupted – the number of adults and the aged grows at the expense of the young population. Out-migration also influenced the sex composition so that the number of the female population significantly decreased, especially in narrow fertile cohort (20-29 years).

Although 2001 census data still have not been completed, it is obvious that the war just speeded up already present depopulation processes. Compared to 1991, the number of inhabitants in 2001 lowered by 57.5% and some of the settlements lost more than 90% of their inhabitants.

It is clear that the municipality itself and its population cannot stop the depopulation process, thus, the state intervention is necessary. Despite the fact that this area has always been underdeveloped, it is necessary to use its advantages for the purpose of retaining the population and ensuring its survival in this area. Out-migration used to be relatively weak because people were more attached to their property, but due to war and its consequences the people moved out and settled in other areas.

Presently, there is nothing, except their properties, that would stimulate these people to return to their homes and continue living their life here. This especially refers to young people, who have almost absolutely no chance for employment. The state has begun to implement some incentives, mostly related to stock breeding, but stronger efforts and investments are needed. It is especially important to aim those incentives at attracting the young people to return and thus ensure the demographic revival of this area. As it is impossible to ensure the survival of all settlements, it is extremely important to determine which settlements have the best predispositions and perspective for survival and future development and then direct the investments and efforts toward their revitalization.

LITERATURA:

CLARKE, J. I. (1965): *Population Geography*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, pp. 164

FRIGANOVIĆ, M. (1990): *Demogeografija – stanovništvo svijeta*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, pp. 271

- KLANAC L. (1992): *Demografske promjene obrovačkog kraja 1957-1991. (Hrvati od etnocida do genocida)*, Zagreb, pp. 139
- NEJAŠMIĆ, I. (1992): *Neke populacijsko-geografske značajke sjevernodalmatinske unutrašnjosti (općine Benkovac, Drniš, Knin i Obrovac)*, Sociologija sela, 30, 61-72
- WITHERICK, M. E. (1990): *Population Geography*, Longman, London – New York, pp. 176

SOURCES

- KORENČIĆ, M. (1979): *Naselja i stanovništvo SRH 1857.-1971.*, JAZU, Zagreb
- Narodnosni i vjerski sastav stanovništva Hrvatske 1880.-1991. po naseljima, sv. 3, Državni zavod za statistiku, Zagreb, 1998.
- Popis stanovništva 1953., Ekonomska obeležja stanovništva, knjiga II, Savezni zavod za statistiku, Beograd, 1954.
- Popis stanovništva 1961., Pol i starost, rezultati za naselja, knjiga XI, Savezni zavod za statistiku, Beograd, 1965.
- Popis stanovništva 1961., Ekonomska obilježja stanovništva, knjiga VIII, Savezni zavod za statistiku, Beograd, 1962.
- Popis stanovništva 1971., Ekonomske karakteristike stanovništva, I. dio (Ukupno i aktivno stanovništvo), knjiga III, II. dio (Zaposleno osoblje) knjiga IV, Savezni zavod za statistiku, Beograd, 1972.
- Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 1981., Aktivno stanovništvo SR Hrvatske u zemlji – koje obavlja zanimanje – prema općini rada, djelatnosti, spolu i društveno ekonomskom razvoju, Općina Obrovac, Dokumentacija 596, Republički zavod za statistiku, Zagreb, 1982.
- Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 1981., Stanovništvo po naseljima, općinama i zajednicama općina, Općina Obrovac, Dokumentacija 553, Republički zavod za statistiku, Zagreb, 1982.
- Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava, stanova i poljoprivrednih gospodarstava, 31. ožujak 1991., Stanovništvo prema spolu i starosti, po naseljima, Dokumentacija 882, Republički zavod za statistiku, Zagreb, 1994.
- Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava, stanova i poljoprivrednih gospodarstava, 31. ožujak 1991., Aktivno stanovništvo u zemlji koje obavlja zanimanje, prema području djelatnosti, po naseljima, Dokumentacija 885, Republički zavod za statistiku, Zagreb, 1994.
- Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2001. godine, Državni zavod za statistiku, <http://www.dzs.hr/Popis%202001/popis20001.htm>, 3rd September 2002
- Podaci Vitalne statistike 1961.-1991. godine

SAŽETAK

Vera Graovac, Martin Glamuzina: Suvremena dinamika i strukture stanovništva bivše općine Obrovac

Ovaj rad se bavi suvremenom dinamikom i strukturama stanovništva bivše općine Obrovac, koja je kao takva egzistirala do 1993. godine kada je uvedena nova upravno-teritorijalna podjela. Ova je općina obuhvaćala površinu od 509 km² i sastojala se od 15 naselja. Novom administrativno-teritorijalnom podjelom iz 1993. godine naselja Jasenice i Zaton Obrovački postali su zasebna općina Jasenice, Medviđa je postala dio općine Benkovac, dok su sva ostala naselja ostala u sklopu općine Obrovac.

Prirodno-geografske karakteristike ovog područja su relativno nepovoljne i ako se tome pridoda loša prometna povezanost, očito je da su demografski i gospodarski razvoj ovog kraja dosta

ograničeni. Ovaj tradicionalno agrarni prostor oduvijek je bio orijentiran na ratarsku i stočarsku proizvodnju, međutim tijekom 1970-ih polako dolazi do napuštanja poljoprivrede i zbog nerazvijenosti ostalih gospodarskih grana stanovništvo je prisiljeno na iseljavanje. Takav trend nastavljen je i sljedećih desetljeća, a naglo je ubrzan tijekom i nakon Domovinskog rata.

Sve do 1971. godine broj stanovnika je rastao (osim u poslijeratnim razdobljima). Od 1857. do 1991. godine broj stanovnika je porastao za 43.2%, da bi se nakon Domovinskog rata smanjio za čak 57.5%. Neka su naselja nakon rata izgubila i više od 90% stanovništva.

Suvremeni demografski i gospodarski procesi očituju se u svim strukturama stanovništva. Spolna struktura je izrazito narušena, posebno struktura stanovništva fertile dobi. Posebno je izražena emigracija žena u fertile dobi tako da je odnos muškaraca i žena znatno narušen. Polovicom 20. st. stanovništvo općine Obrovac je bilo izrazito mlado, da bi krajem stoljeća spadalo u kategoriju duboke starosti stanovništva. Kao i u većini ruralnih krajeva obrazovna struktura pokazuje vrlo lošu obrazovanost stanovništva. Posebno je naglašena slaba obrazovanost žena.

Narušavanjem dobne strukture u drugoj polovici 20. st. došlo je do smanjenja udjela aktivnog stanovništva. U isto vrijeme, jačim razvojem industrije krajem stoljeća stanovništvo je prešlo iz izrazito poljoprivrednog u većinsko nepoljoprivredno stanovništvo.

Jedan od važnih aspekata proučavanja stanovništva ovog kraja je nacionalna struktura. Kroz čitavo promatrano razdoblje broj Hrvata se smanjivao, dok se broj Srba povećavao. Razlog tome je veće iseljavanje hrvatskog stanovništva, marginalizacija Hrvata te selektivna politika zapošljavanja. Jedina naselja u kojima Hrvati čine većinu su Jasenice, Kruševo i Medviđa. Budući da podaci o nacionalnoj strukturi stanovništva 2001. godine još uvijek nisu dostupni, teško je govoriti o trenutnom stanju.

Jasno je da sama lokalna zajednica i stanovništvo u postojećoj gospodarskoj i demografskoj situaciji ne mogu zaustaviti depopulaciju, stoga je potrebna intervencija države da bi se ovaj prostor barem donekle revitalizirao.