

## PREKODRAVLJE-REPAŠ Development of the Settlement and Population

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Prekodravlje is an area in Croatia between the Drava River and its left tributary, the Ždralica River. This is a markedly lowland area of the Drava alluvial plain, with a total surface of 88.78 km<sup>2</sup>. It has six settlements with a total population of 3,286 according to the 2001 census. Prekodravlje is an area that has a long history of human habitation, but the current settlements are relatively young – as most of them emerged as the result of development in the early nineteenth century. An analysis of population trends, natural growth and the migration balance has shown that Prekodravlje had the features of an immigration region only until the end of the nineteenth century, when intense growth in the number of inhabitants was conditioned by the high number of immigrants in relation to emigrants and high natural growth. In the entire subsequent one-hundred year period, i.e. already after 1910, Prekodravlje became a region marked by depopulation, and since 1971 its population has begun dying off. Due to its position on a national border and its earlier relative transit isolation, this area saw little investment, so jobs outside of agriculture were not created here. A portion of the labor force therefore moved away. The consequence has been a decline in the population and aging of that same population. In recent years, the character of its position on the border has changed, and the transport and communications infrastructure has improved. The latter may even be reinforced with the introduction of telecommunications links (Internet, mobile phone networks, etc.). The conditions have been created for the accelerated development of the secondary and tertiary sectors, which are technologically more complex and thus require a qualified labor force. So a higher general level of education and the corresponding school structure have become prerequisites for faster economic development and the halting of negative demographic trends.



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Out of the total 2,080 km of overland borders of the Republic of Croatia, the Croatian-Hungarian border accounts for 329 km, which is 16.2% of its total length. This border is one of the oldest in Europe, particularly the segment that runs along the Drava River, which is also the longest section of this border. Only the extreme western and eastern sections of this border, drawn pursuant to the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, are of a more recent date. These sections of the border are considerably farther north than the Drava. In the west the border separates Hungary from the Croatian region of Međimurje, while in the east it divides the Baranja region. Međimurje is an area with an almost exclusively Croatian population, and it is historically part of the Croatian ethnic territory. Baranja is part of a larger natural region with a complex ethnic composition. The southern part of this region was attached to the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, i.e. to Croatia, at the end of World War I due to its Croatian population and the area's general location in the gravitational region of the city of Osijek.

Between these two regions in the extreme west and east, between Međimurje and Baranja, there are only two other Croatian sections north of the Drava, of which the larger and more important is Prekodravlje, a zone between the Drava and its old river bed in which the Ždralica River now flows. In old documents, Prekodravlje is mentioned under the name Repaš. Its location makes Prekodravlje a Croatian enclave surrounded by Hungarian territory. Triangular in appearance with

➔ FIGURE 1  
Croatian-Hungarian  
border region



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a slope (from approximately 124 m to approximately 113 m) in the northwesterly-southeasterly direction, it is approximately 23 km long with a maximum width of approximately 12 km. The area's surface area is 88.78 km<sup>2</sup>.

The purpose of this study is to provide a socio-geographic analysis of Prekodravlje, particularly its settlement patterns and changes in the number and structure of the population. It is the intent of the authors to establish to what degree the area's population could be a factor in its further development.

## **LOCATION AND NATURAL FEATURES**

Prekodravlje is a markedly lowland zone of the Drava River alluvial plain, formed by the Drava's accumulative activity. Sand and gravel deposits predominate. More recent tectonic movements have led to a de-leveling of the plain, so it is relatively higher in the northwestern section than it is in the southeast. The lower southeastern section is therefore more greatly exposed to the activity of the Drava's waters, including subterranean waters (Bognar, 1985). Under such ecological conditions, the lower portions of Prekodravlje were covered with extensive marshes and oak forests.

The somewhat higher and better drained northern periphery and the western half of the area are more suited to settlement. The construction of a protective embankment along the Drava and Ždalica Rivers and drainage canals led to a reduction of the marshlands and forests to the benefit of arable land. These works also facilitated the construction of livestock shelters or stables, and these in turn developed into permanent human settlements. There were minor regulatory works even earlier, but the systematic regulatory and ameliorative works only commenced in earnest at the beginning of the twentieth century. The majority of essential drainage works were carried out between 1926 and 1940 as a part of regulatory works conducted in the Podravina region in the wider environs of the towns of Koprivnica and Đurđevac (Blašković, 1976). The remaining and still quite expansive oak forests represent this area's great wealth. Fertile soils developed on the alluvial deposits and where these were cultivable they formed the basis of agriculture, the area's principle economic activity.

Prior to the completion of the aforementioned regulatory and ameliorative works, the Drava River was a considerable obstacle to transportation links between Prekodravlje and the rest of Croatia due to frequent high water levels and even floods. Mutual links were maintained by means of small boats and river barges. The area's borderline location simultaneously rendered investments in its economic development difficult, particularly investment in potential secondary activities. Occasional unstable political circumstances made the

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border impassable or difficult to pass. Even so, in more recent years the transportation position of Prekodravlje has improved considerably, and this is a prerequisite for its more intense development into an economically more viable border area, meaning an area that foments stronger mutual links between two neighboring countries: Croatia and Hungary. The significance of the border has also changed, as it is no longer a defensive/strategic line between neighboring states; rather it is increasingly becoming a zone of mutual links and social and economic intermingling.

It should be noted that Prekodravlje is connected to the international rail route that runs from Zagreb to Budapest via Koprivnica, constructed in 1870. This railroad does not directly intersect Prekodravlje but rather passes along its extreme western periphery. But there are no significant barriers to even better links with this railroad. Transportation ties between Prekodravlje and the rest of Croatia were greatly improved by two newly-constructed bridges across the Drava River in the early 1980s. The bridges were constructed near the settlements of Botovo and Repaš. The first one creates a direct road link between Prekodravlje and Koprivnica, while the second creates a road link with Đurđevac. These towns are otherwise marked by greater economic development and a higher degree of centrality. In the hierarchy of Croatia's central settlements ranked from 1 to 5, Koprivnica merits a rating of 3 while Đurđevac has a rating of 4 in the order of centrality (Crkvenčić, 1976). Both of these roads are connected to Prekodravlje's paved road network. After the construction of this transportation infrastructure, Prekodravlje's two major settlements, Gola and Ždala, acquired the function of national border crossings (Feletar, 1984). These should facilitate enhanced interstate links between Croatia and Hungary.

FIGURE 2  
Prekodravlje-Repaš



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Prekodravlje has a long tradition of human habitation, although its current settlements are relatively young. Most of them were established in the course of development in the early nineteenth century. After relatively fast settlement and population growth, the area began to lose its inhabitants to an extent that threatens its further development. The primary task of this work is to analyze the population as a factor of the area's economic development. It is the opinion of the authors, however, that a better understanding of the population will benefit from a prior analysis of the area's settlement patterns.

## SETTLEMENT OF THE AREA

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Settlement patterns in this area were greatly influenced by socio-political circumstances in its narrower and wider vicinity. Until the emergence of the Ottoman threat and this Empire's occupation of the area (1566-1690), Prekodravlje was a possession of feudal dynasties – among the last was the Zrinski family. Although insufficient research has been conducted on this period in the area's history, what is known is that there were about fifteen inhabited localities during this time. Neither their size nor populations are known. With the appearance of the Ottomans, the area was deserted and the settlement disappeared. The population largely fled. Resettlement already began in the second half of the seventeenth century, during the period of Ottoman occupation. Even so, the period of permanent inhabitation and the formation of settlements began in the second half of the eighteenth century, during the period when the area was a part of the Military Frontier – from 1753 to 1871 (Petrić, 2000). Settlement became particularly intense after the beginning of the nineteenth century, and this phase lasted until the end of that century.

This new wave of settlement at the beginning of the nineteenth century did not come to an area completely devoid of human habitation, because some of the original inhabitants – population from earlier settlement periods – remained (Feletar, 1988; Petrić, 2000). A contrast should be drawn between two periods in this more recent settlement.

The better drained northern periphery of Prekodravlje was settled the earliest, as it was here that the Ždala, Gola and Gotalovo gradually developed. These inhabitants were largely newcomers from neighboring Croatian settlements across the Drava River, but also from the Bilogora region. Some even came from neighboring Hungarian settlements. This settlement period was most intense from 1822 to 1827. The oldest settlement in this part of the area is Ždala, which was already mentioned in 1781, while in 1827 it consisted of 106 houses. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ždala was the most important settlement in Prekodravlje, but only for a relatively brief period. Gola was populated at the beginning of the ni-

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nineteenth century, although this locality was already mentioned in the eighteenth century. In 1822, entire parts of the Drnje settlement moved to Gola. In 1827 Gola had only 52 houses, but it developed rather quickly and soon became a more important locality than Ždala. Gotalovo developed after the beginning of the nineteenth century (Feletar, 1984), and its settlers came from places south of the Drava River.

Permanent human habitation in the southern section of Prekodravlje directly along the Drava River commenced somewhat later. But here the habitation process exhibited a different course than the settlement of the area's northern periphery. In this part of Prekodravlje, the inhabitants of Croatian settlements located south of the Drava began to construct stables or barns for their livestock. The process of building stables was also encouraged by the authorities of the Military Frontier. Therefore, mostly during the second half of the nineteenth century, a network of livestock stables and shelters (hamlets) emerged in Prekodravlje on the left bank of the Drava River, and these later grew into permanent human settlements. The settlement of Otočka thus grew out of Peteranski konaci ('Peteranec stables,' named after the settlement of Peteranec), Novačka out of Novigradski konaci, Repaš out of Molvarski konaci and Ogorelo Polje out of Virovski konaci. These *konaci* were designated under these names in topographic maps from the second half of the nineteenth century, while their current names emerged at a later date. It should be noted that during the second half of the nineteenth century these *konaci* belonged to their 'home' settlements and parishes south of the Drava, i.e. Peteranec, Novigrad, Molve and Virje (Feletar, 1984; Feletar, Petrić, 2001).

Therefore, in the population censuses up to 1890, the populations of the *konaci* were attributed to the base settlements south of the Drava. The first three censuses, which were first conducted in 1857, only cite Gola, Gotalovo and Ždala as independent settlements in Prekodravlje. Only the censuses conducted after 1890 show the complete picture of the six settlements in Prekodravlje together with their components. It should be emphasized here that this picture was reconstructed on the basis of data provided in the book by Mirko Korenčić (1979).

The picture of Prekodravlje's settlements only became complete at the end of the nineteenth century. Later, particularly during the Second World War, some of these settlements disappeared (Ždalske Ciganske Kolibe). By the end of the nineteenth century, their populations grew considerably, as did the economic strength of their households. The settlements in Prekodravlje therefore acquired new, central functions which had earlier been associated with the aforementioned base settlements south of the Drava River, such as administrative-political and clerical functions.

Settlement	Parts of settlements, temporarily cited during a census
Gola	– cited as a separate settlement since the 1857 census As of the 1890 census, occasionally Golski Konaci, Golski Mlinovi and Golska Sazeva are cited together with Gola as its components
Gotalovo	– cited as a separate settlement since the 1857 census As of the 1890 census, occasionally Gotalovački Konaci and Gotalovački mlinovi are cited together with Gotalovo as its components
Novačka	– until the 1890 census Novačka was considered a part of its base settlement (located south of the Drava) As of the 1890 census, the settlement of Novačka is shown as consisting of: Novačka, Dravsko Polje or Golski Trnik, Jagarov Kut, Ješkovo, Piškornjaš and Novački Trnik
Otočka	– until the 1900 census it was a part of its base settlement (located south of the Drava) As of the 1900 census, occasionally Otočka, Hintov and Peteranečki Konaci (or Peteranski Konaci) are cited as components of Otočka
Repaš	– until the 1900 census it was a part of its base settlement (located south of the Drava) as of the 1910 census Repaš is cited as a separate settlement
Ždala	– cited as a separate settlement since the 1857 census As of the 1890 census, the settlement is cited as consisting of the following components: Ciganfis, Čambina, Kladnik, Štvanja, Ždalske Ciganske Kolibe, Ždalski Konaci and Ždalsko Ogorelo Polje

TABLE 1  
Settlements and parts  
of settlements  
in Prekodravlje

The considerable permanent habitation of the area and even a certain level of agricultural development are confirmed by the fact that Prekodravlje already had three tax municipalities in 1890 (Gola, Gotalovo and Ždala) with a surface area of 10,109 acres and 231 measures known in Croatian as *hvat* (1 *hvat* = 3.6 m<sup>2</sup>), 736 houses and 4,744 inhabitants (Več, 1941).

At the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century, Prekodravlje was administratively joined with the Military Frontier company garrisoned in Peteranec. It retained this status until 1871, when the Military Frontier was decommissioned (Kolar-Dimitrijević, 1988).

The decommissioning of the Military Frontier commenced in 1871, and in 1873 Prekodravlje had already become a part of the Bjelovar County of the time. Not long after the formation of Bjelovar-Križevci County in 1886, Prekodravlje acquired a political-administrative function. This was the year in which Prekodravlje was administratively divided into an upper and lower section. The former corresponded to the administrative municipality of Gola, established in 1892, which consisted of the settlements of Gotalovo, Novačka and Otočka. The lower section, with the settlements of Repaš and Ždala, was connected to the Molve administrative municipality, seated south of the Drava River (Kolar-Dimitrijević, 1988). This administrative and political division remained – with the exception of several brief periods of administrative unity within the Gola municipality – a characteristic of Prekodravlje to the present day. Today the Gola municipality consists of Gola, Gotalovo, Novačka, Otočka and Ždala, while Repaš is in the Molve municipality.

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In ecclesiastical terms, until 1893 the trans-Drava *konaci* remained a part of the parishes in Drnje, Peteranec, Novigrad, Virje and Molve, therefore tied to settlements south of the Drava. It was only in that year that they were incorporated into the Gola parish, which was founded in 1827 and which, besides Gola, included Gotalovo, Ždala, Novačka and Otočka. However, Ždala withdrew from the Gola parish in 1895 and set up its own parish, which even incorporated some of the *konaci*. Repaš remained a part of the parish in Molve (Petrić, 2000).

Gradually two central settlements developed in Prekodravlje: Gola and Ždala. Even so, secondary and tertiary functions did not develop there to a sufficient degree, so today both only merit a rating in the lowest, fifth, degree of centrality (in the hierarchy of centrality rankings from 1 to 5 for Croatia's central settlements; Crkvenčić, 1976).

## POPULATION

TABLE 2  
Settlements and population  
of Prekodravlje according  
to censuses, 1857-2001

As mentioned previously, the analysis of the population shall be limited to only some of its demographic characteristics, i.e. those that are deemed essential to understand the population as a factor in the area's further development.

Settlement	Portion thereof	1857	1869	1880	1890	1900	1910	1921	1931
Gola		1,270	1,420	2,044	2,546	2,205	2,061	1,991	1,881
Gotalovo		454	515	629	729	761	826	880	839
Novačka		-	-	-	714	782	1,340	1,151	1,105
	Dravsko polje	-	-	-	-	105	224	229	173
	Novačka	-	-	-	714	677	1,116	922	932
Otočka		-	-	-	-	477	566	534	591
Repaš		-	-	-	646	884	1,141	1,042	1,046
Ždala		670	967	1,140	1,469	1,564	1,622	1,724	1,610
	Ciganfis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
	Čambina	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	10
	Kladnik	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Štvanja	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Ždala	670	967	1,140	1,469	1,560	1,620	1,724	1,573
Total		2,394	2,902	3,813	6,104	6,673	7,556	7,322	7,072
Settlement	Portion thereof	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	
Gola		1,688	1,554	1,397	1,254	1,137	1,102	996	
Gotalovo		815	798	733	629	572	478	405	
Novačka		982	910	789	644	517	428	394	
	Dravsko polje	155	147	130	108	-	-	-	
	Novačka	827	763	659	336	-	-	-	
Otočka		530	472	425	377	313	310	248	
Repaš		1,073	979	917	821	692	576	539	
Ždala		1,577	1,547	1,375	1,259	1,070	847	704	
	Ciganfis	13	34	18	7	-	-	-	
	Čambina	15	16	5	-	-	-	-	
	Kladnik	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	
	Štvanja	-	15	16	18	-	-	-	
	Ždala	1,549	1,477	1,331	1,234	-	-	-	
Total		6,665	6,260	5,636	4,984	4,301	3,741	3,286	

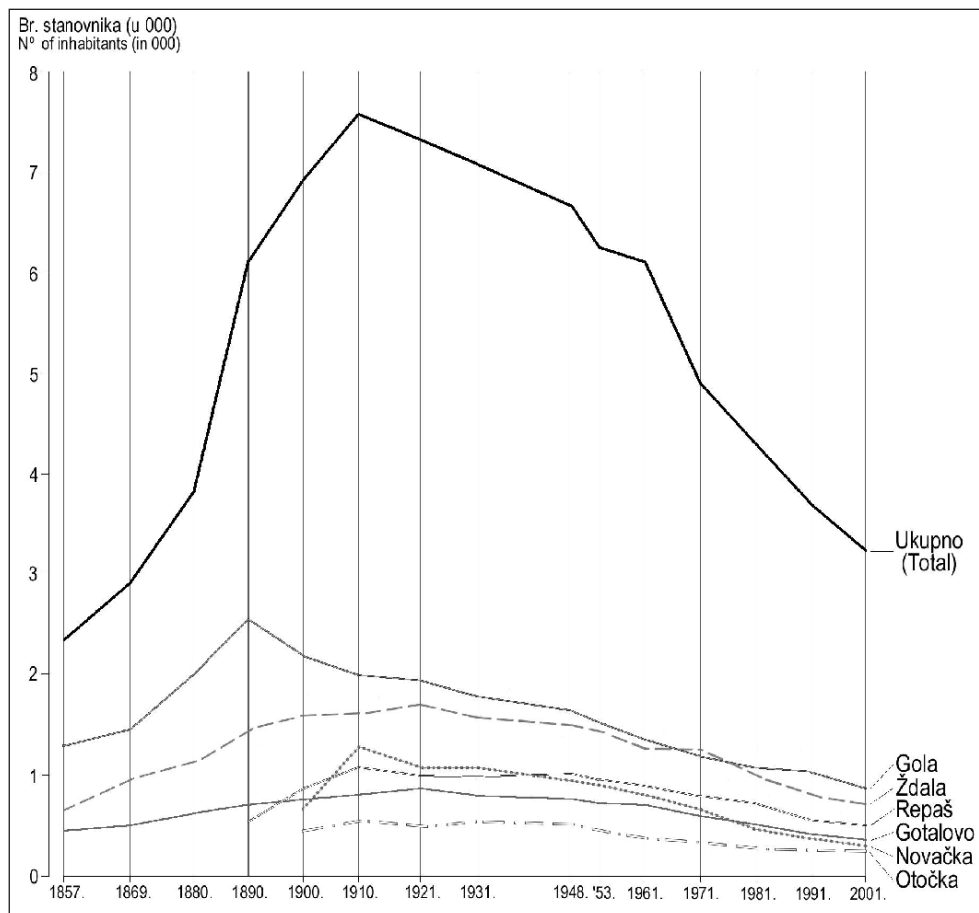
Source: M. Korenčić (1975); *Narodnosni i vjerski sastav stanovništva Hrvatske 1880.-1991. po naseljima*. Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku, 1998.



## CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF INHABITANTS

The total surface area of the area is 88.78 km<sup>2</sup>, while the total population according to the 2001 census is 3,286. This means that there are only a little over 36 persons per square kilometer, and this over two times less than its maximum population density in 1910 (84 persons/km<sup>2</sup>), when Prekodravlje had its highest population. The area's population more than halved over this ninety-year period. Over a relatively brief period, Prekodravlje transformed from an area of high immigration to an intense depopulation zone, which is even leading to a dying out of the population. Nonetheless, its population trends are quite specific.

FIGURE 3  
Population trends in  
Prekodravlje and its  
settlements



After the first census conducted in 1857, the population grew continually and quickly. The statistically-indicated population growth in Prekodravlje up to 1890 cannot, however, be deemed a reflection of natural population trends. This is because the population of the trans-Drava *konaci*, or rather portions of the later settlements of Novačka, Otočka and Repaš,

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were shown as a part of the base settlements south of the Drava in the census periods prior to 1880. The high population growth in Prekodravlje from 1880 to 1890 (as high as 60%!) is a result of the registration of these settlements as a part of the population of Prekodravlje rather than within the framework of the base settlements.

Only the population growth and declines after 1890 can be considered natural population trends in Prekodravlje. However, since then Prekodravlje's population only increased for twenty years, up to 1910, when Prekodravlje achieved its highest population. Prekodravlje as a whole began to experience a decline in its population after that point, although the population of individual settlements began to decline in the period from 1890 (Gola) to 1921 (Ždala and Gotalovo). In subsequent censuses after 1921, the population declined in all settlements. The 1931 census still showed an almost identical population as in 1900, but after this until the 2001 census, the population continually declined. Thus, by 2001 Prekodravlje's population numbered less than half, or 47.09%, of its numbers in 1900. The extent of change in the population of individual settlements in individual census period is shown by the indexes of inter-census changes.

The question remains as to the cause for this striking decline in Prekodravlje's population: was it insubstantial natural growth or a negative migration balance? The answer to this question is provided by the data on population trends coupled with data on natural growth and the migration balances in the Gola parish, which includes Gotalovo, Novačka and Otočka (Feletar, 1984). In 2001, approximately 60% of the total population of Prekodravlje lived in these settlements, so the values obtained for this parish may be a good indicator of the aforementioned processes for all of Prekodravlje.

TABLE 3  
Population trends by  
settlement and indexes  
of change in relation  
to 1900

	1900	1910	1921	1931	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Gola	2,205	2,061	1,991	1,881	1,688	1,554	1,397	1,254	1,137	1,102	996
Index	100	93.46	90.29	85.3	76.55	70.47	63.35	56.87	51.56	49.97	45.17
Gotalovo	761	826	880	839	815	798	733	629	572	478	405
Index	100	108.54	115.63	110.24	107.09	104.86	96.32	82.65	75.16	62.81	53.21
Novačka	782	1,340	1,151	1,105	982	910	789	644	517	428	394
Index	100	171.35	147.18	147.3	125.57	116.36	100.86	82.35	66.11	54.73	50.38
Otočka	477	566	534	591	530	472	425	377	313	310	248
Index	100	118.65	111.94	123.89	111.1	98.95	89.09	79.03	65.61	64.98	51.99
Repaš	884	1,141	1,042	1,046	1,073	979	917	821	692	576	539
Index	100	129.07	117.87	118.32	121.38	110.74	103.79	92.87	78.28	65.18	60.97
Ždala	1,564	1,622	1,724	1,610	1,577	1,547	1,375	1,259	1,070	847	704
Index	100	103.7	110.23	102.94	100.83	100.63	87.91	80.49	68.41	54.15	45.01
Prekodravlje	6,673	7,556	7,322	7,072	6,665	6,260	5,636	4,984	4,301	3,741	3,286
Index	100	108.36	105	101.41	95.58	89.77	80.82	71.47	61.68	53.64	47.09

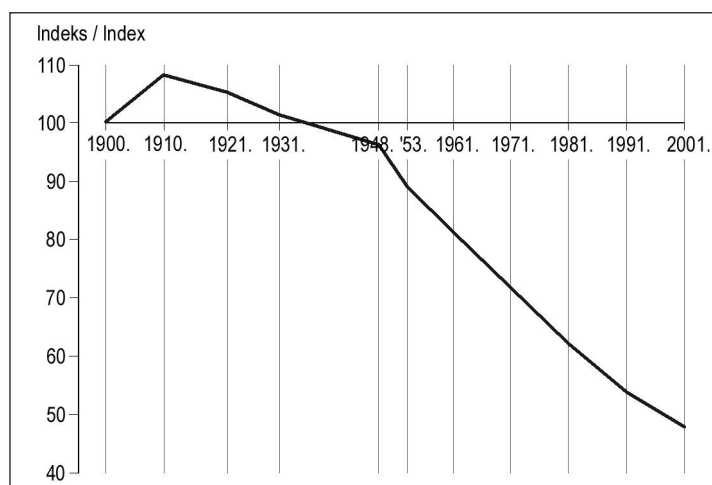
Sources: see Table 2.

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It is apparent that this parish experienced positive natural population growth up to the 1971 census. But natural growth began to decline ever since the 1910 census, meaning soon after the period of intense immigration into Prekodravlje. It declined considerably, however, during the first census conducted after World War II, in 1948. A natural decline was recorded in the last three censuses. During the 1900-2001 period, natural population growth in the Gola parish totaled 2,027, which means that in 2001 this parish should have had 6,252 inhabitants (4,225 + 2,027).

➔ FIGURE 4  
Indexes of change in  
Prekodravlje population



Trend elements	1900	1910	1921	1931	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	1900/ 2001
Census figures	4,225	4,793	4,556	4,416	4,015	3,734	3,344	2,904	2,538	2,318	2,043	2,043
Natural growth	-	+813	+339	+529	+401	+61	+107	+89	-105	-79	-128	2,027
Expected pop.	-	5,038	5,132	5,085	4,817	4,076	3,841	3,433	2,799	2,459	2,190	6,252
Migration balance	-	-245	-576	-669	-802	-342	-497	-529	-261	-141	-147	4,209
Inter-census variance	-	+568	-237	-140	-401	-281	-390	-440	-366	-220	-275	2,182

➔ TABLE 4  
Population trends, natural growth and the migration balance in Gola parish<sup>1)</sup> settlements

<sup>1)</sup> The Gola Parish consists of Gola, Gotalovo, Novačka and Otočka  
Sources: M. Korenčić (1975), D. Feletar (1984), I. Crkvenčić, A. Malić (1983-1984).  
Table graphs from the Central Bureau of Statistics, Zagreb.

However, it actually has only 2,043 inhabitants, or only 48.3% of the population it had one hundred years earlier. The population shortage totals 4,209, and this is a result of a negative migration balance – a higher number of emigrants than immigrants. The entire natural growth as well as a part of the population shown in earlier censuses emigrated. The population of the parish from 1910 to 1971 gradually fell due to the increasingly lower natural growth and the intense emigration, while after 1971 it was due to the combination of natural decline and intense emigration. All inter-census periods since the 1900 census exhibited a negative migration balance.

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If the figure of 48% natural growth of the total population in the Gola parish in 1900 is applied to all of Prekodravlje with its 1900 population of 6,673, then it should have had 9,876 inhabitants in 2001 instead of the 3,286 it actually has. This latter figure is only 49.2% of Prekodravlje's population one hundred years earlier. The shortage in the population totals 6,590, and it is the result of the negative migration balance, which encompasses the entire natural growth and a considerable portion of inhabitants from earlier censuses. The following data show that this process of population trends in the Gola parish can be applied to all of Prekodravlje.

Data on population trends, natural growth and the migration balance for Prekodravlje as a whole show that after the 1971 census the population in all of the area's settlements declined due to a natural decline and a negative migration balance. In this relatively short thirty-year period alone, Prekodravlje's population fell from 4,984 to 3,286, i.e. by 1,690 persons or 34.1%. In this deficit of 1,690 persons, natural decline accounts for 533 while the negative migration balance accounts for 1,155.

Settlement	Population		Nat. gr. 1971-1981	Mig. bal. 1971-1981	Pop. 1991	Nat. gr. 1981-1991	Mig. bal. 1981-1991	Pop. 2001	Nat. gr. 1991-2001	Mig. bal. 1991-2001
	1971	1981								
Total	4,984	4,301	-147	-536	3,741	-150	-410	3,286	-236	-219
Gola	1,254	1,137	-67	-50	1,102	-4	-31	996	-66	-40
Gotalovo	629	572	-4	-53	478	-46	-48	405	-50	-23
Novačka	644	517	-16	-111	428	-31	-58	394	-12	-22
Otočka	377	313	-18	-46	310	2	-5	248	-33	-29
Repaš	821	692	-8	-121	576	-32	-84	539	-21	-16
Ždala	1,259	1,070	-34	-155	847	-39	-184	704	-54	-89

Sources: D. Živić (1996). Table graphs from the Central Bureau of Statistics, Zagreb.

TABLE 5  
Population trends,  
natural growth and  
the migration balance  
in Prekodravlje

Based on the above data on population trends, natural growth and the migration balance, the conclusion can be reached that Prekodravlje had the features of an immigration area only until the end of the nineteenth century, because it is very likely that the considerably intense population growth during this period was influenced by a surplus of immigrants over the number of emigrants and relatively high natural growth. Throughout the entire subsequent period, Prekodravlje was a depopulation area, as its population after the 1910 census continually fell and the migration balance was concurrently negative. After 1971, this depopulation area became an area marked by the dying off of its population, because the number of its inhabitants declined steeply. This decline has not only been influenced by the negative migration balance but also by a natural decline (or negative natural population growth).

These demographic processes had a corresponding impact on the area's ethnic composition, of which the majority is Croatian. Croats are the autochthonous population, and in

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the presentation of the development of more recent immigration into the area it was shown that the majority of Prekodravlje's settlements emerged through the movement of inhabitants from Croatian settlements located south of the Drava River. Therefore it is not unusual, despite Prekodravlje's borderline position, that Croats are numerically predominant. There are few members of other ethnic groups here, including Hungarians, despite the fact that the area borders Hungary. The relatively steep decline in the number of Hungarians during the period from 1900 to 1910 can be attributed to changes in their numbers in Ždala. According to the 1900 census, out of Ždala's 1,564 inhabitants, Hungarians accounted for 1,241, while in 1910 they only numbered 109 out of a total population of 1,622. This relatively large number of Hungarians in Ždala in 1900 is obviously a statistical error, because it is unlikely that this change could have occurred by a voluntary decision of the population over the period of only ten years up to 1910. There were not even political reasons for this change, because during both census periods Ždala was in Croatia, or rather in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Among the other ethnicities, the relatively largest groups were Romany and Jews, both of whom were decimated during World War II.

➔ TABLE 6  
Ethnic and religious  
composition of  
Prekodravlje

Year	Religious Composition					
	Total	Roman Catholic	Orthodox	Jewish	Protestant	Other & unknown
1880	3,813	3,730	1	63	19	-
1890	6,104	5,017	8	90	89	-
1991	3,741	3,655	2	-	-	84

Year	Ethnic Composition						
	Total	Croats		Hungarians		Other & unknown	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1900	6,673	4,679	70.1	1,664	24.9	330	4.9
1910	7,556	6,685	88.5	488	6.4	383	5.1
1953	6,220	6,184	99.4	27	0.4	9	0.01
1961	5,636	5,561	98.7	6	0.1	69	1.2
1971	4,984	4,913	98.6	6	0.1	65	1.3
1981	4,301	4,205	97.8	-	-	96	2.2
1991	3,741	3,692	98.7	1	0.01	48	1.3
2001	3,286						

Source: *Narodnosni i vjerski sastav stanovništva Hrvatske 1880.-2001. po naseljima*, Vol. 3, Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku, 1998.

## Changes in the Age Structure – Aging of the Population

Population development in the aforementioned direction, entailing a reduction of natural growth and a negative migration balance, was gradually but necessarily reflected in changes in the age and sex structure of the population, i.e. its increasingly marked aging. The following section will highlight

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TABLE 7  
Primary age groups  
in Prekodravljje settle-  
ments in 1953,<sup>1)</sup> 1971  
and 2001

Settlement	0-19		20-59			60 and older			Unknown		
	1953 <sup>2)</sup>	1971	2001	1953	1971	2001	1953	1971	2001	1971	2001
Gola	31.4	27.7	25.1	55.4	50.1	48.3	13.2	21.4	26.3	0.8	0.3
Gotalovo	31.4	29.7	16.1	55.4	50.4	54.4	13.2	19.5	29.0	0.4	0.5
Novačka	31.4	29.8	29.0	55.4	50.3	46.5	13.2	19.6	22.2	0.3	2.3
Otočka	31.4	28.4	19.8	55.4	50.7	48.6	13.2	20.4	31.6	-	-
Repaš	-	29.7	22.8	-	50.1	48.9	-	18.9	28.3	0.3	0.2
Ždala	36.2	34.9	22.1	51.9	47.6	47.8	11.9	16.0	29.4	0.5	0.7
Total	32.8	30.4	23.1	54.4	49.5	48.8	12.8	19.1	27.5	1.0	0.6

<sup>1)</sup> Does not include data for Repaš

<sup>2)</sup> The data for Gola, Gotalovo, Novačka and Otočka in 1953 are an average for all four settlements.

Sources: *Popis stanovništva 1953. Starost, pismenost i narodnost*. Vol. XI, Belgrade, 1960. *Popis stanovništva 1971. Stanovništvo, vitalna, etnička i migraciona obilježja*. Belgrade, 1974. *Popis stanovništva 2001. Stanovništvo prema spolu i naseljima*, CD Državnog zavoda za statistiku, 2002.

the period after the Second World War, or rather the period after the 1953 census.

From the 1953 census to the 2001 census, the share of the 19 and under age group (young population) declined from 32.8% to 23.1%, while the share of the 60 and over age group (elderly population) more than doubled during the same period, growing from 12.8% to 27.5%. From these data it is simple to compute the prime indicators of the degree of aging or the aging process of the area's population, and these are the age coefficient and the aging index.

TABLE 8  
Some indicators of  
age structure change  
in Prekodravljje,  
1953-2001

The age coefficient data show that the process of aging in Prekodravljje began immediately after the Second World War and that this process has continued unabated since. The aging index data indicate the same process, because according to them Prekodravljje's population began to age immediately after World War II.

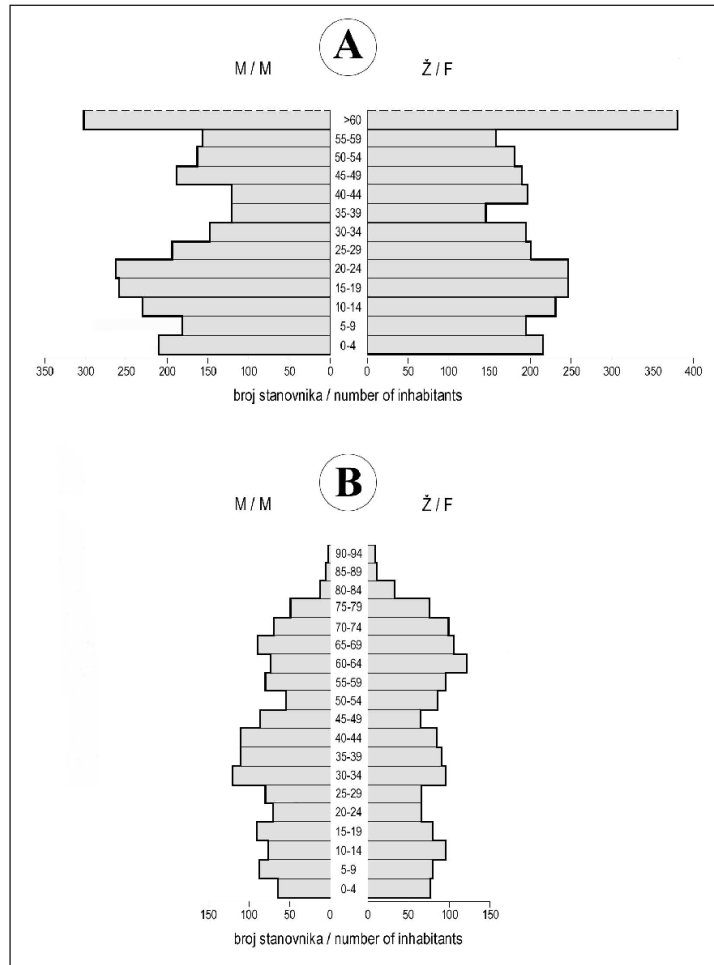
Year	Age coefficient <sup>1)</sup>	Aging index <sup>2)</sup>
1953	12.8	38.9
1971	19.1	62.6
2001	27.8	119.3

Sources: *Popis stanovništva 1953. Starost, pismenost i narodnost*. Vol. XI, Belgrade, 1960; *Popis stanovništva 1971. Stanovništvo, vitalna, etnička i migraciona obilježja*. Belgrade, 1974; *Popis stanovništva 2001. Stanovništvo prema spolu i naseljima*, CD Državnog zavoda za statistiku, 2002.

<sup>1)</sup> The age coefficient is the percentage of persons 60 years of age and older in relation to the total population; when this percentage reaches 12%, the process of general population aging begins.

<sup>2)</sup> The aging index or age index is the percentage of persons 60 years of age and older in relation to the number of persons 19 years of age and younger; when the aging index achieves a value of 40%, or 0.4, then the aging process in a given population has commenced.

➔ FIGURE 5  
Population by age and  
sex of the municipality  
Gola 1953 (A)  
and 2001 (B)



Note: In the 1953 census the population over 60 years of age is not shown by 5-year groups.

## CAUSES OF EMIGRATION AND THE DECLINING POPULATION

Although there are a number of reasons for Prekodravlje's declining population, the principal cause lies in the socio-economic changes in the country after the Second World War. This progressive and relatively wealthy agrarian area, with well-developed planting and cultivation activities, animal husbandry and trades, did not step into line with the country's overall economic development, particularly as this pertains to industrial development.

Due to its peripheral location along the state border, and previously also considerable transit isolation, this zone enjoyed relatively little investment in secondary and tertiary sector activities. Therefore, jobs outside of agriculture were not created to the required extent in Prekodravlje. Among the more

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important manufacturing firms, Avard is worth mentioning because for a time it was a center of innovation for the development of secondary activities even though tied to agricultural production. There is also a plastic products and packaging factory. However, these and other, smaller companies could not employ the entire surplus agricultural labor force that emerged during the deagrarianization process. When these surplus workers could not find jobs locally in Prekodravlje, they moved out of the area. Since persons most qualified for work and reproduction normally participate in emigration, this process gradually had a negative impact on demographic trends, particularly in terms of demographic renewal.

### Deagrarianization and Professional Changes

Deagrarianization is the basic social and economic process that characterizes Prekodravlje, and it has been particularly intense after the Second World War. It led to a decline in the population and to considerable changes in the area's professional structure.

After the end of World War II, Prekodravlje was an entirely agrarian zone with almost 90% of its population engaged in agricultural activity. With deagrarianization, this percentage fell to approximately 62% by 1991, which is, however, considerably less than the average for deagrarianization in Croatia in general, where the share of the agricultural population in relation to the country's total fell from 56.4% to only 8.6%.

TABLE 9  
Active population  
based on activity

	Total population	Agricultural population		Total	Active population Agricultural	
		No.	% of total pop.		No.	% of total pop.
<b>1953</b>						
Croatia	3,918,817	2,209,716	56.4	1,869,530	1,163,318	62.2
Prekodravlje	6,260	5,577	89.1	3,266	2,919	89.4
<b>1991</b>						
Croatia	4,784,265	409,647	8.6	1,819,084	251,736	13.9
Prekodravlje	3,741	2,312	61.8	1,907	1,300	68.2
Prekodravlje settlements 1991						
Gola	1,102	592	53.7	530	286	53.9
Gotalovo	478	266	55.6	230	127	55.2
Novačka	428	326	76.2	239	182	76.1
Otočka	310	216	69.7	153	97	63.4
Repaš	576	489	84.9	300	261	87.0
Ždala	847	423	49.9	455	326	71.6
<b>2001</b>						
Gola Municipality	2,760	1,343	48.7	1,244	782	62.9

Sources: *Popis stanovništva 1953. Osnovni podaci o stanovništvu*, Vol. XIV, Belgrade, 1958; "Poljoprivredno stanovništvo prema aktivnostima i spolu po naseljima 1991.", *Dokumentacija 886*, Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku, 1994; "Aktivno stanovništvo u zemlji koje obavlja zanimanje prema području djelatnosti po naseljima 1991.", *Dokumentacija 885*, Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku, 1994; *Popis stanovništva 2001*. CD Državnog zavoda za statistiku, Zagreb, 2002.



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The example of the Gola Municipality can be used to show that the share of the agricultural population in the subsequent ten-year period up to 2001 fell considerably in Prekodravlje, to something less than 50%. But Prekodravlje is still an obviously agrarian and rural zone in Croatia. It should nevertheless be said that deagrarianization has been relatively more intense in the three larger settlements located in the area's northern periphery, especially the two settlements with a central significance, Gola and Ždala. Deagrarianization has had a lesser impact on the relatively newer settlements – Otočka, and Novačka and Repaš in particular.

➔ TABLE 10  
Active population in  
Prekodravlje by sectors  
in 1991

Settlement	Total No.	Active Population By sectors (%) <sup>1)</sup>			
		I	II	III	Unknown
Gola	530	53.9	4.3	41.1	0.7
Gotalovo	230	55.2	9.6	35.2	-
Novačka	239	76.1	4.2	7.9	11.8
Otočka	153	63.4	4.6	31.4	0.6
Repaš	300	87.7	8.7	3.3	0.3
Ždala	455	80.9	7.2	11.4	0.5
Prekodravlje	1,907	70.0	6.3	22.4	1.3

Source: *Popis stanovništva 1991*. "Aktivno stanovništvo u zemlji koje obavlja zanimanje prema području djelatnosti po naseljima 1991.", *Dokumentacija 885*, Zagreb: Državni zavod za statistiku, 1994.

<sup>1)</sup> The primary sector (I) encompasses agriculture, fishing and forestry, the secondary sector (II) encompasses industry, mining, construction, sole trades and personal services, while the tertiary sector (III) encompasses all other activities.

From the above overview of the active population in the three sectors, it is apparent that secondary sector activities account for the smallest share. This encompasses manufacturing occupations in all trans-Drava settlements. A somewhat higher share of the active population is involved in tertiary, or service sector, activities. However, such activities only cover the area's basic local needs, above all the activities of tradesmen and those employed in local administration, health-care, education and utilities.

The highest basic service functions are located in the municipal seat of Gola, which is also the seat of a parish and post office, health-care institutions and a school district. A parish, local self-government and a school are also seated in Ždala. The other settlements only have local schools. Repaš is in the Molve elementary school district.

### The Foreseeable Further Process of Deagrarianization

It is completely certain that the process of deagrarianization in Prekodravlje will continue and that it will continue to influence population trends and professional differentiation. The

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further course of deagrarianization is being spurred by the process of adaptation of agriculture to general regional economic trends as well as the government's efforts to create family farms over larger surfaces which will facilitate profitable and market-oriented agricultural production. Besides this, deagrarianization will be impelled by the already existing structure of households based on size of available plots as well as the social stratification of households in Prekodravlje.

Out of the 879 households in the Gola Municipality in 2001, those without land account for 12.4%, while those with up to 5 ha. of land account for 56.1% percent of all households. This means that households with larger tracts of land account for approximately 31.5% of all households. The Gola Municipality is thus dominated by tiny farms with largely multi-crop production. Family farms with a market orientation can therefore only be created through a reallocation of agricultural land. This reallocation will alleviate the already existing social stratification of agricultural households.

In 1982, 127 agricultural households (out of a total of 767 households according to the 1981 census) were surveyed in the settlements of Gola, Gotalovo, Novačka and Otočka with the goal of determining the degree of their social and economic differentiation – i.e. determining the different types of formerly agricultural households. Based on the involvement of their active (from 15 to 60 years of age) male and female members in work on their own land or outside of it (employment), it was determined that there were already six types of households with different social and economic features. Purely agricultural households (solely derived income from agriculture) only accounted for 55% of all surveyed households. The majority of the remaining households already earned income from both agricultural and non-agricultural activities (two types of mixed households) or they were elderly or single-member (members over 60 years of age). Only 6.2% were non-agricultural (Crkvenčić, Malić, 1983-1984).

It is completely certain that the process of socio-economic stratification of households since 1982 has progressed considerably, so the structure of households with different social and economic features is today even more complex. This is an important prerequisite for the reallocation of land aimed at creating family farms.

The foreseeable deagrarianization process, or the gradual transformation of tiny farms with multi-crop production into larger family farms oriented toward market-based production will free up a considerable amount of the labor force no longer required in agriculture. If then such persons leave Prekodravlje, they will need employment. This will only be possible through the development of economic branches in the

secondary and tertiary sectors, through more intense general economic and social development in the area.

### **Conditions for Further Socio-Economic Development**

Economic development in the area depends on certain prerequisites, of which some have a positive and some, for now, have a negative connotation.

All previous unfavorable social and economic development has led to a sharp decline in Prekodravlje's population, while the existing age structure of the population is elderly. Even so, it is the opinion of the authors that the existing number and age structure of the area's population still forms a sound basis for further social and economic development, provided that the previous demographic trends are halted as soon as possible, and this will only be possible through more intense economic development.

The positive prerequisites include the changed significance and role of the area's border position, as well as its improved traffic infrastructure. The latter no longer just consists of traditional transportation lines (railroads and roads, which already existed in the area), but also different types of telecommunications facilities (Internet, mobile telephones, etc.) which not only have the potential to link the area as a whole to the rest of the world, but also each individual household. The expansion of this network is not costly enough to represent a barrier to development. These positive prerequisites should encourage investment in economic development in agricultural as well as production and service branches not related to agriculture.

The development of modern economies no longer depends on the construction of large companies (which employ a large number of unskilled laborers). On the contrary, such development depends on small but technologically more complex plants and institutions that do not have to be located in the area itself but merely in the general vicinity. Local deposits of natural gas as well as the activities of the Fergoplast factory can serve to encourage stronger future development. The surplus agricultural labor force may find employment in these new plants. However, modern economic development dictates that the workplace can also be located in the home rather than in some remote plant. Instead of a job, a working relationship can be established based on contracts between employees and employers – and not necessarily one but several. This type of working relationship is made possible by various telecommunications technologies. That this type of work is becoming increasingly important in Croatia is indicated by the planned amendments to legislation governing labor.

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Regardless of whether it is a matter of traditional jobs or contracted labor, new plants and institutions are technologically more complex and require a skilled labor force, and this can only be recruited from a population with a high level of education. Such an educational level and educational structure among a population are becoming essential conditions for further economic development in the area. The current educational structure of Prekodravlje's population is, unfortunately, low.

The 2001 census showed that 98.3% of the population in the Gola Municipality over the age of 15 completed some type of school. This is approximately the same number (98%) in the same age group that completed school in Koprivnica-Križevci County, to which the Gola Municipality belongs. 'Completed school' implies the completion of study at an educational institution which marks the highest level of education achieved by given person. However, there are considerable differences in the structure of completed school between the Gola Municipality and the aforementioned county.

In the Gola Municipality, persons who completed elementary school (either several grades or all grades) accounted for 78.5%, while persons who completed secondary school only accounted for 10.7% of all persons who completed school. Only 2% completed some form of higher education, such as college or university study. By way of comparison, in Koprivnica-Križevci County persons who completed elementary school (either several grades or all grades) accounted for 55.7%, while persons who completed secondary school accounted for 34.8%. Approximately 7% completed some form of higher education.

It is apparent from the above that the majority of Prekodravlje's population has completed only eight-year elementary school, while those who completed secondary school or some form of higher education only account for a relatively small share of the population. The level of education of the population in the Gola Municipality is considerably lower than the level for Koprivnica-Križevci County. In this sense, the Gola Municipality is a peripheral zone in this county. Even the data on persons attending school in this municipality in 2001 do not herald any improvement in the population's educational structure.

The share of those attending secondary school and higher education in relation to the existing structure of persons who completed school in 2001 has increased, and the differences in the educational levels in relation to the corresponding county are somewhat lower. This is, however, insufficient. In order for Prekodravlje's educational structure to become a favorable precondition for its more intense economic develop-

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➔ TABLE 11  
Population attending  
schools in 2001

ment, the structure of those attending school must improve considerably in the direction of a larger number of those who complete secondary school and higher education. The improvement of the educational structure as a prerequisite for economic development is not only a requirement of this area; it is a requirement that applies to the entire country.

	Gola Municipality	Koprivnica- Križevci County
Attending school	372 persons (13.5% of pop.) 100%	20,268 (16.3% of pop.) 100%
Of this:		
– Elementary school	69.3%	57.6%
– Secondary school	22.0%	25.4%
– College or university	8.1%	15.8%
– Post-graduate study	0.6%	1.2%

Source: *Popis stanovništva 2001. Stanovništvo koje pohađa školu*, CD Državnog zavoda za statistiku, 2002.

<sup>1)</sup> Secondary schools encompass three groups: a) vocational schools with 1-3 years of courses (industrial and trade schools, secondary focused education, crafts and other schools); b) schools for skilled and highly-skilled workers; and c) schools with 4 or more years of courses (secondary technical schools, economic, medical, arts, and so forth).

<sup>2)</sup> Colleges include studies between secondary schools and universities.

<sup>3)</sup> Post-graduate study refers to persons who have enrolled in graduate study or are already completing their doctoral dissertations.

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## Prekodravlje-Repaš. Razvoj naselja i stanovništva

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Prekodravlje je prostor Hrvatske između rijeke Drave i njezine lijeve pritoke Ždalice. To je izrazito nizinski prostor dravske aluvijalne ravnice, ukupne površine 88,78 km<sup>2</sup>. U njemu je 2001. u šest naselja živjelo 3.286 stanovnika. Prekodravlje je prostor duge naseljenosti, ali su sadašnja naselja relativno mlada, najvećim dijelom nastala razvojem od početka 19. st. Analiza kretanja broja stanovnika, prirodnog prirasta i migracijske bilance pokazala je da je Prekodravlje imalo obilježje imigracijskog područja samo do

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kraja 19. st., kada je jak porast broja stanovništva bio uvjetovan viškom broja useljenih nad brojem iseljenih i dosta visokim prirodnim prirastom. U čitavom naknadnom stogodišnjem razvoju, odnosno već od 1910., Prekodravlje je područje depopulacije, a od 1971. depopulacijski prostor postaje prostorom izumiranja stanovništva. Zbog graničnog, a prije i prometno dosta nepovoljnog položaja, u ovaj prostor je malo investirano, pa u njemu nisu stvarana radna mjesta izvan poljoprivrede. Dio radne snage se stoga iseljivao. Posljedice su se odrazile na demografsku strukturu kraja – pad broja stanovnika i starenje stanovništva. Posljednjih se godina promijenilo značenje pograničnog položaja kraja, a poboljšala se i njegova prometna infrastruktura. Nju može bitno poboljšati relativno jeftino uvođenje sredstava telekomunikacijskih veza (Internet, pokretni telefoni itd.). Brži gospodarski razvoj mogu osigurati samo pogoni i ustanove sekundarnog i tercijarnog sektora djelatnosti. To je tehnološki kompleksnije pa zahtijeva kvalificiranu radnu snagu. Stoga viša izobrazbena razina i odgovarajuća školovana struktura stanovništva postaju glavni preduvjet daljnjeg gospodarskog razvoja kraja i zaustavljanja negativnih demografskih trendova.

## Ortsentwicklung und Bevölkerungszahlen im Raum Prekodravlje-Repaš

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Die kroatische Mikroregion Prekodravlje mit dem Hauptort Repaš erstreckt sich zwischen der Drau und ihrem linken Nebenfluss Ždralica im Nordteil des Landes (Grenzgebiet zu Ungarn – Anm. d. Übers.). Diese in das Schwemmland der Drau eingebettete äußerst typische Niederungslandschaft misst insgesamt 88,78 km<sup>2</sup>. Im Jahre 2001 lebten hier 3286 Menschen in sechs Ortschaften. Die Siedlungsgeschichte dieses geografischen Raums reicht weit in die Vergangenheit zurück, doch handelt es sich bei den heutigen Ortschaften um relativ junge Gemeinden, die sich überwiegend ab dem Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts entwickelten. Eine Analyse der Bevölkerungszahlen, des natürlichen Zuwachses und der Migrationsbilanz ergab, dass der Raum Prekodravlje-Repaš nur bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts die Merkmale eines Zuwanderungsgebietes aufwies. Der damalige enorme Bevölkerungsanstieg ist darauf zurückzuführen, dass die Zahl der Zuwanderer über der Zahl der Abwanderer lag und der natürliche Bevölkerungszuwachs recht groß war. Im gesamten Verlauf der nächsten hundert Jahre, d.h. bereits ab 1910 ist im Raum Prekodravlje-Repaš ein steter Rückgang der Bevölkerungszahlen zu verzeichnen, und ab 1971 ist

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bereits von einem Aussterben der Bevölkerung die Rede. Wegen der Nähe zur ungarischen Grenze einerseits und der vormals ziemlich ungünstigen Verkehrslage andererseits wurde früher sehr wenig in dieses Gebiet investiert, sodass man nur in der Landwirtschaft eine Arbeit finden konnte. Daher wanderte ein Teil der Erwerbspersonen in andere Gebiete ab. Die Konsequenzen sind in der demografischen Struktur dieser Region sichtbar, die von Rückgang und Alterung der Bevölkerung geprägt ist. Im Laufe der letzten Jahre erwies sich die Nähe zur Staatsgrenze aber eher als Vorteil, sodass es allmählich auch zu einer Verbesserung der Verkehrsinfrastruktur kam. Eine weitere, wesentliche Qualitätssteigerung kann durch die relativ kostengünstige Einführung von Telekommunikations-Medien (Internet, Mobiltelefonie usw.) erreicht werden. Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung wiederum kann nur durch Betriebe und Einrichtungen des Industrie- und Dienstleistungsbereichs angekurbelt werden. Das ist jedoch in technologischer Hinsicht komplexer und setzt qualifizierte Arbeitskräfte voraus. Die Voraussetzungen für wirtschaftlichen Fortschritt sowie die Bekämpfung negativer demografischer Trends sind daher ein höheres Bildungsniveau und ein entsprechender Schulungsgrad des Bevölkerungsanteils der Erwerbspersonen.