

FRANJO TUĐMAN AND DEMOGRAPHIC REVITALIZATION / SUSTAINABILITY OF CROATIA

Dražen ŽIVIĆ*

According to a number of relevant demographic and statistical indicators, Croatia is in a deep demographic crisis in all aspects of demographic dynamics and structural-demographic development. Total depopulation, natural decline, negative migration balance, demographic aging, and spatial polarization of the population – are fundamental long-term and current demographic trends and processes that, thanks to available data from census, vital and migration statistics can be monitored almost continuously from the middle of last century until today. The current demographic picture of Croatia is marked by natural and mechanical population losses, which means more deaths from birth and more emigration than immigration, with significantly disturbed relations between large (functional) age groups that threaten further collapse of bio reproductive potential and economic activity of the population. Croatian demographers warned of this circumstance during socialist Yugoslavia, especially after reaching independence in 1991. In their research, they were especially committed to the design and implementation of active and stimulating population policies, which had a certain impact in the formation of some decisions and documents of Croatian state policy during the 1990s. In this sense, it is scientifically relevant to valorize Dr. Tuđman's attitude towards Croatian demographic issues, because demographic challenges have been and still are in significant discrepancy with socially desirable demographic processes and trends as key factors in the development and progress of the Croatian state and society, especially from 1991 and onwards. Therefore, in the context of Tuđman's work as a politician (president of the Croatian Democratic Union from 1989 to 1999) and statesman (president of the Republic of Croatia from 1990 to 1999), but also as a scientist and public figure (director of the Institute for the History of the Labor Movement from

* Dražen Živić, PhD, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Vukovar, Croatia

1961 to 1967) it is useful to investigate whether and to what extent there is a consistent attitude towards the demographic situation and problems of Croatia and, accordingly, whether we find the issue of Croatian demography at the center or on the margins of interest in his public work.

Key words: Franjo Tuđman, Croatia, depopulation, demographic revitalization, demographic sustainability

Introduction

The political and public activities of Dr. Franjo Tuđman, the first President of the independent and sovereign Republic of Croatia, can be evaluated from different points of view and as such can be the starting point for different assessments of the scope and far-reaching success of his work. In this context, it is a scientifically relevant and challenging to valorize Dr. Tuđman's attitude towards Croatian demographic issues, because demographic challenges have been and still are in significant discrepancy with socially desirable demographic processes and trends as key factors in the development and progress of the Croatian state and society, especially after Croatia reached independence in 1991. Therefore, in the context of Tuđman's work as a politician (president of the Croatian Democratic Union from 1989 to 1999) and statesman (president of the Republic of Croatia from 1990 to 1999), but also as a scientist and public figure (director of the Institute for the History of the Labor Movement from 1961 to 1967) it is useful to investigate whether and to what extent there is a consistent attitude towards the demographic situation and problems of Croatia and, accordingly, whether we find the issue of Croatian demography at the center or on the margins of interest in his public activities. Given the desirable scope of work, I considered it crucial to consult the available documents, decisions and reports that Dr. Tuđman wrote and/or publicly presented at different times, and in their content more or less addressed the challenges of demographic revitalization and long-term population sustainability of Croatia. This paper, of course, does not exhaust this topic, but provides a possible conceptual framework for further research and analysis.

A review of demographic trends in Croatia

“It is a well-known fact that Croatia has been recording very unfavorable demographic trends for many years.”¹ This is a consequence of the interaction

¹ Anđelko Akrap, “Demografski slom Hrvatske: Hrvatska do 2051.”, *Bogoslovska smotra* 85 (2015), No. 3: 855.

of general and specific demographic and non-demographic or external determinants of population movement and development, many of which have had markedly destabilizing effects on demographic trends and processes.² Namely, one should especially keep in mind “the fact that demographic processes are by their nature long-term and therefore in long-term connection with a combination of their factors”.³ Among the most important factors of several centuries of demographic and economic decline with dramatic consequences for the current demographic situation and strong depopulation characteristics, A. Akrap points out: (1) wars with the Ottomans, Venetians and Habsburgs, or their occupation of Croatian territories which resulted in a great number of casualties and demographic losses through a rise in emigration from Croatian territory; (2) the extremely negative impact of the ‘white plague’ and emigration from Slavonia, which, despite the influx of people from areas with high birth rates, turned from a ‘promised land’ to becoming a focus of emigration and depopulation trends in the second half of the last century; (3) slow and inadequately designed and directed development of modernization processes; (4) mass emigration to overseas countries, which represented a large outflow of biological potentials; (5) a model of economic development after 1945 which, through accelerated but insufficiently planned de-agrarianisation and industrialization, encouraged depopulation tendencies, especially in the context of internal and external migration; (6) a change in the system of life values in relation to marriage, family and having children in general; (7) human and demographic war losses associated with the First and Second World Wars and the Homeland War; and (8) a numerically strong emigration wave after Croatia’s accession to the EU, with markedly negative effects in demographic structures.⁴

According to formal demographic and statistical criteria, Croatia has been in various evolutionary stages of depopulation for more than six decades.⁵ Namely, as early as 1958, the net reproduction rate of the female popu-

² See in more detail in: Dražen Živić, Nenad Pokos, Ivo Turk, “Basic Demographic Processes in Croatia”, *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* 67 (2005), No. 1: 27-44.

³ Mladen Friganović, “Socijalni aspekti demografskih kretanja u SR Hrvatskoj”, *Revija za sociologiju* 5 (1975), No. 1-2: 32.

⁴ See in more detail in: Anđelko Akrap, “Stanovništvo u Hrvatskoj: čimbenici silaznih trendova”, *Obnovljeni Život* 74 (2019), No. 3: 335-350.

⁵ See in more detail in: Mladen Friganović, “Socijalni aspekti demografskih kretanja u SR Hrvatskoj”, *Revija za sociologiju* 5 (1975), No. 1-2: 32-50; Ivica Nejašmić, “Prirodno kretanje stanovništva SR Hrvatske prema tipu naselja boravka”, *Geografski glasnik* (1986), No. 48: 123-135; Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Tendencije u razvitku stanovništva SR Hrvatske”, *Ekonomski pregled* 40 (1989), No. 5-6: 231-250; Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, Jakov Gelo, “Ukupno i prirodno kretanje stanovništva Hrvatske”, *Sociologija sela* 28 (1990), No. 107-108: 1-18; Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Demografske promjene i globalni demografski procesi u Hrvatskoj u poslijeratnom razdoblju”, *Encyclopaedia Moderna* XIII (1992), No. 2 (38): 238-251.

TABLE 1. Trends and indicators of change in the total population of Croatia 1948-2011

Census year	Total population	Absolute change in the number of population	Inter-census change index	Rate of average relative annual change
1948	3 779 858	-	-	-
1953	3 936 022	156 164	104,1	0,8
1961	4 159 696	223 674	105,7	0,7
1971	4 426 221	266 525	106,4	0,6
1981	4 601 469	175 248	104,0	0,4
1991	4 784 265	182 796	104,0	0,4
2001	4 437 460	-346 805	92,8	-0,8
2011	4 284 889	-152 571	96,6	-0,3

SOURCE: *Naselja i stanovništvo Republike Hrvatske 1857. – 2001.*, CBS, Zagreb (www.dzs.hr; accessed November 16, 2020); *Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2011.*, DZSRH, Zagreb (www.dzs.hr; accessed on November 16, 2020).

lation fell below the threshold value of 1.0, which means that on average one woman in the fertile period of her life from then until today does not give birth to more than one female child. In this way, Croatia records the continuous non-renewal of female generations, which is the first partial evolutionary process (reproductive depopulation) in the development of total depopulation. The second partial depopulation process (generational depopulation) occurred a decade later, in 1968 to be precise, when for the first time the total fertility rate fell below the limit of 2.1. From then until today, on average, one woman in the fertile period of her life gives birth to less than two children, which indicates a generational non-renewal of the total, meaning both male and female, population. Thanks to inherited negative demographic trends as well as the negative impact of the Homeland War on the overall, natural and mechanical movement of the population, in 1991 Croatia recorded a natural population decline (higher number of deaths from live births) for the first time since World War II, which, as the third partial depopulation process, is in continuity to date.⁶ In the context of the mechanical movement of the population, Croatia has been an “open” migration country for decades, to which,

⁶ In the context of natural population change, according to A. Wertheimer-Baletić, Croatia went through 4 characteristic periods after the Second World War: the compensatory or “baby boom” period (1946-1955), the period of marked decrease in birth rate (1955-1970), a period of parallel decline in birth rates (1970-1980), and a period of marked decline in birth rates (1980-1990). From 1991 until today, Croatia is in the fifth characteristic period – natural depopulation. See in more detail in: Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Demoreprodukcijski procesi u Hrvatskoj”, *Nacionalni program demografskog razvitka* (Zagreb: Ministarstvo razvitka i obnove, 1997), pp. 55-75.

admittedly, immigrants do arrive, but also from which a large number of inhabitants emigrated, both for economic and political reasons.⁷ According to the research of I. Nejašmić, in the period from 1900 to 2001, about 2.3 million inhabitants emigrated from Croatia.⁸ The periods that had especially strong and pronounced negative demographic effects were the economic emigration or the so-called temporary work abroad in the 1960s and 1970s, emigration related to the Homeland War and its consequences in the 1990s, and modern emigration after Croatia's accession to the European Union (from 2013 until today). Although migration statistics in Croatia are not completely reliable, it can be stated that long-term depopulation through emigration is also at work as the fourth partial depopulation process. Finally, the results of the 2001 census, despite methodological inconsistencies with previous censuses, showed an inter-census decline in population, which means that since 1991 Croatia has entered the final evolutionary stage of depopulation – general or total depopulation⁹ which can be statistically tracked to this day.¹⁰

⁷ See in more detail in: Ivica Nejašmić, "Emigration from Croatia – a quantitative approach to a century long process", *Geographical Papers* (1991), No. 8: 61-82; Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, "Demografske promjene i globalni demografski procesi u Hrvatskoj u poslijeratnom razdoblju", *Encyclopaedia Moderna XIII* (1992), No. 2 (38): 238-251.

⁸ See in more detail in: Ivica Nejašmić, "Iseljavanje iz Hrvatske od 1900. do 2001.: demografske posljedice stoljetnog procesa", *Migracijske i etničke teme* 30 (2014), No. 3: 405-435.

⁹ Although formally speaking, general depopulation at the level of the total population was recorded in Croatia for the first time since the Second World War in the inter-census period 1991-2001, at the spatial or regional level depopulation had already been confirmed. Namely, I. Nejašmić proved that in the period from 1953 to 1981, an inter-census decline in population or demographic regression affected 5,476 Croatian settlements (82.4 % of all settlements in Croatia in that period), which covered 79.9 % of the area of Croatia. This means that depopulation affected the majority of settlements in all Croatian macro-regions, which were more than clear indications of the occurrence of depopulation of the total population of Croatia. (Ivica Nejašmić, "Osnovne značajke depopulacije u Hrvatskoj u razdoblju 1953.–1981.", *Sociologija sela* 28 (1990), No. 107-108: 33-50). The consequences of differentiated population movements were manifested in different regional population concentrations and different population densities, with a general trend of increased population concentration in large urban and industrial centers, which accelerated demographic depopulation. (see in more detail in: Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, Jakov Gelo, "Ukupno i prirodno kretanje stanovništva Hrvatske", *Sociologija sela* 28 (1990), No. 107-108: 1-18).

¹⁰ According to the official estimate of the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, from mid-2011 to mid-2019 the total population in Croatia decreased from 4,280,622 to 4,065,253, which is an absolute decline of 215,369 inhabitants or a relative -5.0 % (Population estimates of the Republic of Croatia in 2011 and 2019, Press release No. 7.1.3., CBS, Zagreb; www.dzs.hr; accessed on November 16, 2020.)

TABLE 2. Natural movement of the population of Croatia 1961 – 2019

Year	Number of live births	Number of deaths	Natural population change	Vitality index
1961	74 190	37 796	36 934	196,3
1966	71 325	37 841	33 384	188,5
1971	61 673	44 538	17 135	138,5
1976	61 876	44 670	17 206	138,5
1981	63 885	50 953	12 932	125,4
1986	58 181	51 233	6 948	113,6
1991	50 815	55 714	-4 899	91,2
1996	48 218	49 657	-1 439	97,1
2001	40 993	49 552	-8 559	82,7
2006	41 446	50 378	-8 932	82,3
2011	41 197	51 019	-9 822	80,7
2016	37 537	51 542	-14 005	72,8
2017	36 556	53 447	-16 921	68,4
2018	36 945	52 706	-15 761	70,1
2019	36 135	51 794	-15 659	69,8

SOURCE: Tablograms of vital statistics of the Republic of Croatia, Press releases on natural population change, CBS, Zagreb.

In addition to these negative dynamic demographic trends, the population of Croatia is in a continuous and accelerated process of demographic aging, i.e. deterioration of the relationship between large (functional) age groups in the biological composition of the population, which is most evident in the reduction of the number and relative share of young people and increase in the share of old people in the total population. Given that the biological composition of the population is a reflection of past, but also a function of future demographic trends and processes, especially in natural population movements, then it is clear that demographic aging is a crucial factor for future demographic trends and changes in Croatia, with far-reaching consequences for bio reproduction and economic activity of the population, and without the balanced development of these determinants of the state of the population it is impossible to expect stable development in other aspects of society and economy.

TABLE 3. Selected indicators of the composition of the population of Croatia by age 1953 – 2011.

Indicator	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Youth coefficient	27,0	27,2	22,6	20,9	19,4	17,0	15,2
Old age coefficient	7,0	7,4	9,6	11,4	11,6	15,6	17,7
Ageing index	25,8	27,2	42,6	54,4	60,0	91,9	116,3
Average age	30,7	32,5	34,0	35,4	37,1	39,3	41,7

SOURCE: Censuses for the years in question, CBS, Zagreb.

Franjo Tuđman and demographic challenges in Croatia

From the scientific and analytical insight into the subject documentation it follows that in his scientific and especially political work Dr. Franjo Tuđman paid a certain, and on some occasions significant attention to the demographic problems of Croatia, both in public appearances (speeches) and in relevant documents, decisions and reports. He most often emphasized the need to solve the accumulated demographic problems by slowing down, stopping and reversing negative trends as a necessary precondition for the overall development and progress of Croatia. As I will present below, he did this while he was the director of the Institute for the History of the Workers' Movement in the mid-1960s, while he was paving the way for democratic processes and democratization in Croatia as president of the Croatian Democratic Union in 1989 and 1990, and especially during the 1990s when he was the President of the Republic of Croatia. In this summary, I will point to several, I hold, relevant speeches and documents that illustrate Dr. Tuđman's affirmative attitude towards Croatian demography and the necessary and urgent need to address worryingly growing problems in demographic dynamics and structural-demographic development.

1

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the population of Croatia has been in the first evolutionary phase of depopulation processes and trends since the late 1950s, especially in bio reproduction, which began to show increasingly unfavorable trends after the post-war compensation period (1946-1954). Therefore, it is not surprising that in February 1965, as part of the preparations for the 5th Congress of the League of Communists of Croatia (held in Zagreb from April 26 to 29, 1965),¹¹ Dr. Franjo Tuđman signed a document as the director of the Institute for the History of the Workers' Movement entitled "Proposal of current issues for consideration at the 5th Congress of SKH". The seventh point of this document contains a rather extensive review of the then demographic situation in Croatia supported by numerous statistical and demographic indicators (observed, understandably, in the then Yugoslav context) and growing problems in the overall, natural and mechanical movement of the population. This points to the conclusion that Dr. Tuđman was well acquainted with demographic trends, processes, relations, and structures in

¹¹ Berislav Jandrić, "Izvori i literatura za proučavanje povijesti Komunističke partije Hrvatske – Saveza komunista Hrvatske 1945. – 1978.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 14 (1982), No. 2: 146.

Croatia. Given that this is a document that is generally not quoted in detail in the works of demographers and others who deal with the problems of the population of Croatia, I find it useful to point out its key elements.

Thus, at the beginning of his review of the demographic problem in Croatia, Dr. Tuđman points out the following: "Amongst many problems whose importance for the general society demands them to be thoroughly discussed in both the pre-congressional and upcoming congressional activities of the SKH, due to its significance and the severity of its state, the demographic problem of the annual growth rate of the Croatian population stands out as an extremely important one, given the degree of natural population growth and economic emigration of the population from the territory of Croatia. The need to draw serious attention to this issue is all the greater because it is taking on worrying proportions."¹² Dr. Tuđman also points out that in terms of population movements, Croatia "shows a demographic lag in relation to other republics of the SFRY."¹³ Dr. Tuđman finds the reasons for this, first of all, in significantly higher economic emigration from Croatia, but he emphasizes that "economic emigration from Croatia is only [one] factor, insufficient to explain the permanent occurrence of Croatia's lag in population growth."¹⁴ Another key factor in Croatia's demographic lag compared to other parts of the former SFRY, according to Dr. Tuđman, is the natural movement of the population, i.e. a very low level of bio reproduction, which is induced by low and declining birth rates and a slight increase in mortality. As early as the 1960s, it was clear that Croatia was entering an evolutionary depopulation phase of generational non-renewal of the total population (both male and female), which was becoming an increasing demographic and, in the long run, social and economic problem. Perhaps the most important finding from the document I am referring to comes at the very end of Chapter 7, which discusses Croatia's demographic problems. Namely, Dr. Tuđman, pointing out the positive examples of some European countries (France and Sweden) that have been pursuing explicit or implicit population policies for decades to slow down, stop and reverse their own negative demographic trends, points out, when it comes to Croatia, the need to take a series of socio-economic measures¹⁵ in order to prevent the continuation of processes and trends that would

¹² Franjo Tuđman, *Usudbene povjestice* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1995), p. 155.

¹³ Franjo Tuđman, *Usudbene povjestice*, p. 155.

¹⁴ Franjo Tuđman, *Usudbene povjestice*, p. 156.

¹⁵ Among others, M. Friganović also pointed out the need to apply appropriate population policy measures in Croatia even back in the time of socialist Yugoslavia. In his paper published in 1970, in which he presented the general and regional characteristics of natural population movement in the then FR Croatia, whose basic indicators were increasingly approaching negative (depopulative) values, in the concluding lines of the paper he pointed out "the urgency

lead to further demographic lag of Croatia. Given the intensity and direction of demographic trends and processes in later years and decades, it is clear that “socio-economic measures” have not been taken, at least not to the extent that would result in significant positive demographic effects. There is no doubt that this fact has contributed to the acceleration of negative demographic trends and helped the emergence, development and deepening of general and partial dynamic and structural-demographic depopulation processes in Croatia, especially strengthened and accelerated since the early 1990s due to negative demographic consequences and human losses in the Homeland War.

2

Given that the 1970s and 1980s were marked by continued negative demographic trends (slowing of the inter-census growth rate, continued emigration with strong and spontaneous deruralization, i.e. internal rural-urban migration, lowering of absolute values and birth rates and approaching a natural decline of population, acceleration of the process of demographic aging, etc.),¹⁶ it is understandable that the demographic problems of Croatia were in the focus of Dr. Tuđman’s interests in the events leading up to the first democratic parliamentary elections and the establishment of a sovereign and independent Croatian state in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The results of scientific demographic research published in those years certainly contributed to this. Thus, for example, Friganović and Pavić warned in the early 1970s of the growing

of more serious and more comprehensive consideration of this phenomenon by the most responsible bodies in the republic. Appropriate population policy should become an integral part of the general concern for the future development, social, economic and demographic of the Socialist Republic of Croatia. (Mladen Friganović, “Regionalne osobitosti novijega prirodnog kretanja stanovništva Hrvatske”, *Geografski glasnik* (1970), No. 32: 87.) In a paper published in 1975, M. Friganović is even more explicit: “Demographic development policy should be made part of the general long-term socio-economic policy” (Mladen Friganović, “Socijalni aspekti demografskih kretanja u SR Hrvatskoj”, *Revija za sociologiju* 5 (1975), No. 1-2: 32). Considering in great detail the indicators and characteristics of demographic change in Croatia, especially in the context of the completion of the process of demographic transition, A. Wertheimer-Baletić, among other things, emphasized: “In order to at least somewhat compensate this negative demographic impact, the general conditions for the reproduction of the population would have to be improved. Current economic hardship that Yugoslavia is faced with should not be a factor that prevents implementation of adequate population policies as a primary long-term policy in the scope of social development policies” (Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Tendencije u razvitku stanovništva SR Hrvatske”, *Ekonomski pregled* 40 (1989), No. 5-6: 238).

¹⁶ For more detail see: Mladen Friganović, “Socijalni aspekti demografskih kretanja u SR Hrvatskoj”, *Revija za sociologiju* 5 (1975), No. 1-2: 32-50; Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Tendencije u razvitku stanovništva SR Hrvatske”, *Ekonomski pregled* 40 (1989), No. 5-6: 231-250.

danger of depopulation because “long-term reduction of the rate of natural population increase and the rate of general population growth, and strong internal relocation and more or less constant emigration, are fundamental characteristics of demographic processes and the situation in FR Croatia.”¹⁷ Based on indicators of movement and development of the Croatian population from 1948 to 1989, S. Šterc warned of the negative determinants of the demographic picture of Croatia, which included: excessive concentration of the population in a small area, approaching natural decline of population, insufficient reproduction, low birth rate and ever higher mortality, permanent emigration, population aging and the imminent occurrence of depopulation of the total population.¹⁸

Without going into complex political issues related to the process of democratization and independence of the modern Republic of Croatia, my intention is to point out the presence of the demographic theme as an important determinant of political and state activities of Dr. Franjo Tuđman in that period of his life and work.

At the Founding Assembly of the Croatian Democratic Union held in Zagreb on June 17, 1989, the Program Declaration was adopted, which approaches the problem of growing demographic decline and depopulation of many Croatian regions as a “burning existential issue” and from which the following steps can be identified as necessary to start Croatia’s much-needed demographic recovery: First, systematic and effective steps must be taken to halt the demographic decline; Second, it is necessary to change the social and economic circumstances and the spiritual atmosphere due to which a large number of Croatian citizens in the most vital years of life emigrate abroad or do not decide to have children; Third, the coordinated action of all social factors in different areas of public life is needed; and Fourth, it is necessary to create conditions that will enable and encourage the return of as many emigrants as possible, as well as to improve the connection of emigrants with the homeland.¹⁹

The first general assembly of the Croatian Democratic Union was held in Zagreb on February 24, 1990. In his extensive and often quoted speech, Dr. Tuđman, in the part of his speech in which he presented “CDU’s views on some important issues in the upcoming elections”, stated the following in point 7: “One of the most difficult tasks facing Croatian society is to stop the

¹⁷ Mladen Friganović, Pero Pavić, *Uzroci i posljedice demografskih promjena u SR Hrvatskoj 1961. – 1971.* (Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1973), p. 9.

¹⁸ For more details see: Stjepan Šterc, “The general demographic cross section of the Republic of Croatia”, *Geographical Papers* (1991), No. 8: 1-38.

¹⁹ Franjo Tuđman, *S Vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku* (Zagreb: Narodne novine, 1995.), p. 35-37.

demographic decline. It is caused by an unfavorable general spiritual climate, the consequences of which are a decline in morale, huge displacement of the population, job insecurity, inability to secure housing, etc. Radical changes in this situation require especially those measures that will enhance the birth rate. Among such, it might be effective to legally ensure that the mother of four children receives an average salary for their upbringing, as well as special benefits for the apartment or home of such families.²⁰

After two rounds of the first democratic elections, the Croatian Parliament was constituted on May 30, 1990. According to the then still valid constitutional provisions, the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Croatia was elected, and Dr. Franjo Tuđman was elected its president. In his introductory speech, among other things, Dr. Tuđman pointed out the ten most urgent immediate tasks facing the new democratically elected government in Croatia. With the adoption of the new Croatian Constitution, regulation of the new constitutional position of Croatia in Yugoslavia, Croatia's inclusion in Europe and Europeanization of Croatia, establishment of the rule of law and modernization of state administration, spiritual renewal, radical changes in property relations and the economy, changes in public services and moral renewal, Dr. Tuđman emphasized two points in particular: demographic revival and the return and inclusion of emigrants. Regarding the demographic revival, Dr. Tuđman emphasized the following: "With the overall policy so far in the last few decades, the Croatian national being has been brought to a state of demographic threat. In addition to changing the general spiritual and political climate, it is necessary to take urgent and purposeful steps both to prevent further departure of our citizens to the world and to raise the birth rate."²¹ On this occasion, Dr. Tuđman also considered the importance of return and the inclusion of emigrants as an inseparable part of the long-term strategy and policy of demographic recovery and the overall progress of the country. The unity between the homeland and the emigrants of Croatia through many aspects of social and economic development is an extremely important element in the strategic thinking of Dr. Tuđman. According to him, "the new Croatian government, at all levels, should take purposeful steps to enable as many Croatian people as possible to return from the world to their homeland. The possibility of relocating a part of Croatian minorities to empty rural areas in many Croatian regions should also be seriously addressed. Special benefits should encourage Croatian emigrants to invest in all areas of economic life."²² From the above, it can be concluded that "already at the very beginning of the

²⁰ Franjo Tuđman, *S Vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku*, p. 75.

²¹ Franjo Tuđman, *S Vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku*, p. 88.

²² Franjo Tuđman, *S Vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku*, p. 88-89.

country, it was completely clear that Croatia was in a difficult demographic situation and there was awareness of this at the highest political level.”²³

3.

During his presidency, Dr. Franjo Tuđman regularly submitted annual reports to the Croatian Parliament on the state of the Croatian state and nation. It was an opportunity for Dr. Tuđman, among other things, to present his thoughts on the current demographic situation in Croatia and propose measures to slow down and stop the negative demographic trends. In this regard, three reports are particularly important: for 1994, 1995 and 1996, as they are closely linked to the issue of the end of the war as well as post-war reconstruction and the return of displaced and refugee residents to their homes.

Of particular importance in the previous context, I hold, is the Report on the State of the Croatian State and Nation in 1994, which Dr. Tuđman submitted at a joint session of both houses of the Croatian Parliament on 22 December 1994.²⁴ This is a very extensive and very concrete review of Croatia's growing demographic problems and possible/necessary long-term and comprehensive solutions. In that report, Dr. Tuđman stated quite clearly and unequivocally that “the most severe and devastating consequence of the rule of the illegal communist system and the anti-Croatian state over the Croatian people is – the extremely worrying demographic situation in Croatia!” It is such that the Croatian people would be threatened with extinction if we did not take decisive steps. “As the most important causes of the demographic crisis, and even the threatening demographic collapse, Dr. Tuđman emphasized: excessive emigration of the population in the most vital age, too few births, too many abortions and an increasing number in the ratio of elderly to young people, which implies a decline in working and defense-capable population. Obviously aware of the demographic reality according to which, due to delayed action, i.e. gradual changes in the age structure of the population, the real effects of demographic measures on trends, relationships, processes and structures in a population can be assessed only in 20 to 25 years, which means that population-stimulating policy has its quantitative, but also qualitative (structural) level,²⁵ Dr. Tuđman proposed in the Report implementa-

²³ Ana Malnar, Dario Malnar, “Demografska problematika u strateškim političkim dokumentima Republike Hrvatske”, *Forum za sigurnosne studije* 3 (2019), No. 3: 55.

²⁴ *Izvešće Predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, dr. Franje Tuđmana o stanju hrvatske države i nacije u 1994.* (na zajedničkoj sjednici oba doma hrvatskog Sabora, 22. prosinca 1994.).

²⁵ Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Specifičnosti demografskog razvitka u Hrvatskoj i njegove socio-ekonomske implikacije”, *Revija za socijalnu politiku* III (1996), No. 3-4: 256.

tion of a well-thought-out and active population and demographic policies in the broadest sense of the word. In this sense, Dr. Tuđman called on the Croatian Parliament and the Croatian Government to adopt a program for the demographic renewal of Croatia as soon as possible²⁶ and pointed out that “we need such a program of demographic policy which would ensure the demographic renewal of the Croatian people and the Croatian family. It must be based on spiritual (political-educational), economic and social assumptions. The increase in natural birth rate should be stimulated. (...) The proposed and other measures should promote responsible parenting and eliminate the material reasons for abortion as well as strengthen counseling with parents and spouses in an effort to accept and encourage the protection of the unborn child.” In addition to the above, Dr. Tuđman pointed out the importance of strengthening families, especially families with more children, both in terms of protection and promotion of motherhood and in the context of easier housing and tax policy. Considering that in 1994 Croatia was still at war and that significant parts of the state territory in the Croatian Danube region, western Slavonia, Banovina, Kordun, Lika and northern Dalmatia were under Serbian occupation, Dr. Tuđman rightly stated that demographic problems were further exacerbated by the state of war and the large number of displaced and refugee populations. As in previous cases, in the Report on the

²⁶ The most prominent Croatian demographers have warned about the importance and necessity of harmonizing the development of the population with the general economic and social processes in Croatia. Thus, A. Wertheimer-Baletić, while analyzing demographic changes and global demographic processes in Croatia after the Second World War, concluded that “the demographic problem is becoming one of the social problems of the highest priority in Croatia, which will require, along with economic reconstruction, within the overall development policy a complex and comprehensive program of population policies in in both of its variants: in the pro-natal and in the migration variant” (Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Demografske promjene i globalni demografski procesi u Hrvatskoj u poslijeratnom razdoblju”, *Encyclopaedia Moderna* XIII (1992), No. 2 (38): 249). M. Friganović and S. Šterc, starting from the Croatian demographic reality and constantly having in mind the real demographic perspective, regardless of the material (im) possibilities of Croatia, which were strongly determined by the war aggression, pointed out that “it is necessary and urgent to give priority to raising the birth rate of population. And that depends, therefore, on the consciousness, will, wealth and family circumstances of an individual or a married couple. (Mladen Ante Friganović, Stjepan Šterc, “Demografski razvoj i populacijska politika Republike Hrvatske”, *Društvena istraživanja* 2 (1993), No. 1 (3): 162). Twenty years later, A. Akrap warned that “Croatia should pursue a long-term pro-natal population policy. This means implementing a series of measures that will ensure that existential reasons have as little influence as possible on the decision on the number of children in the family.” At the same time, Akrap emphasized that “due to the predictable strong reduction of the inflow of young people into the labor market, it is necessary to shape immigration policy. In that sense, Croatia should look at its diaspora as one of the sources of revitalization.” (Anđelko Akrap, “Stanovništvo u Hrvatskoj: čimbenici silaznih trendova”, *Obnovljeni Život* 74 (2019), No. 3: 347).

State of the Croatian State and Nation in 1994, Dr. Tuđman linked the need for the demographic renewal of Croatia very closely to the issue of the return of Croatian emigrants to their homeland. This is understandable for several reasons, and among the most important, in the demographic context, is the number of Croatian emigrants, which is not negligible (about 3 million of all generations of emigrants). “If we keep in mind, on the one hand, the almost catastrophic demographic situation in the homeland, and on the other hand, the unenviable future of the latest emigrants (as temporary workers) who are threatened by assimilation in the most developed and democratic countries – then it is clear how necessary and of what far-reaching importance it is for a sovereign Croatia to take decisive steps for the return of emigrants” – warned Dr. Tuđman and continued: “It is understood that Croatia must carefully and comprehensively prepare for the desired return of thousands and thousands of people, of various occupations and financial statuses, families with several children, business people and pensioners, and young people with various preferences and aspirations.” Dr. Tuđman offered a range of different measures to stimulate the return of Croatian emigrants – from, for example, reducing customs duties and tax breaks for returnees, through reducing bureaucratic procedures to allocating or buying houses or land on favorable terms for returnees. According to Dr. Tuđman, “the program of returning Croatian people from other countries must become the state policy of a sovereign and independent Croatia.”

In the modern history of the Croatian state and the Croatian people, the year 1995 will be remembered for the final military operations (“Flash” and “Storm”) which liberated the occupied parts of the state territory in western Slavonia, Banovina, Kordun, Lika and northern Dalmatia. Thanks to them, the conditions were reached for reaching a political agreement on the implementation of the peaceful reintegration of the Croatian Danube region (formally started on 15 January 1996 and ended on 15 January 1998), thus ending the Homeland War, which left many, large, difficult and far-reaching human, demographic, material and economic consequences. On January 15, 1996, at a joint session of both houses of the Croatian Parliament, Dr. Tuđman submitted an annual report on the state of the Croatian state and nation in 1995²⁷ in which he, while stating the important tasks of Croatian state policy of the highest priority for 1996, emphasized that “in the scope of the general program of reconstruction and development (...) decisive programmatic, legal and economic steps need to be taken to systematically and gradually address the worrying demographic situation as a whole, and in particular in individual counties and municipalities”. “The program of demographic renewal”,

²⁷ *Izvjješće Predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, dr. Franje Tuđmana o stanju hrvatske države i nacije u 1995.* (na zajedničkoj sjednici oba doma hrvatskog Sabora, 15. siječnja 1996.).

according to Dr. Tuđman, “must be a constant concern and obligation of the overall state policy and administration at all levels, but also of all components of social life.” Referring to the activities carried out regarding demographic renewal in 1995, Dr. Tuđman pointed out the fact that the then Ministry of Development and Reconstruction completed and sent the National Program of Demographic Development, which “contains the basic settings of a number of activities necessary for demographic renewal, more specifically, through encouraging the return of Croatian emigrants, stopping the emigration of the young, educated and able-bodied people. In addition to the general strategy of spatial and regional development, the program also contains proposals for the revitalization of fragmented depopulated areas, especially in rural areas, as well as an overall strategy and incentive measures for the return of displaced persons and refugees”.

In the Report on the State of the Croatian State and Nation in 1996²⁸ submitted by Dr. Tuđman at a joint session of both houses of the Croatian Parliament on January 22, 1997, demographic issues in a broader sense were represented in four points: Emigration, Reconstruction and Development of liberated areas, the Return of Displaced Citizens and Serbian Refugees, and the Settlement Program, with special emphasis on areas of special state concern. Dr. Tuđman reminded that the Croatian Parliament adopted the National Program of Demographic Development in 1996 as a general strategic framework for demographic recovery, which included several points important for a stimulative quantitative revitalization of the population, especially regarding births and migrations, but it soon turned out that there was no coordinated system of measures and activities for their implementation. Namely, “the practice of countries that have implemented stimulating population policies shows that only a complex of mutually coordinated population policy measures that are implemented systematically and continuously gives good results in the long run.”²⁹ One of these undoubtedly key points was the issue of

²⁸ *Izvešće Predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, dr. Franje Tuđmana o stanju hrvatske države i nacije u 1996.* (na zajedničkoj sjednici oba doma hrvatskog Sabora, 22. siječnja 1997.).

²⁹ Alica Wertheimer-Baletić, “Specifičnosti demografskog razvitka u Hrvatskoj i njegove socio-ekonomske implikacije”, *Revija za socijalnu politiku* III (1996), No. 3-4: 257. Although much hope was placed in the National Demographic Development Program, as it was developed according to relevant theoretical and empirical standards of (incentive) population policy in all its variants, meaning pro-natal, immigration and redistributive, it did not meet far-reaching expectations in given social, political and economic circumstances. Namely, the principles and measures envisaged by the Program, adopted by the Croatian Parliament in early 1996, were largely not realized due to a deliberate or accidental deviation from the two basic principles of any population policy: the principle of integrity and the principle of long duration. This, in other words, means that the measures were designed and implemented partially, i.e. only a small number, and that their implementation was very limited in time (only

the return of Croatian emigrants, regarding which Dr. Tuđman stated that it is in Croatia's "lasting national and economic interest to encourage the return of emigrants and their investments in all forms of life in the Homeland (...) and that all formal and bureaucratic obstacles to faster return and integration of emigrants into the overall life of the Homeland should be removed". Given that 1996 was the first year of real peace, it is quite understandable that in the demographic context Tuđman's focus was on rebuilding war-torn parts of Croatia as well as the return of the pre-war population, i.e. the settlement of new populations, primarily refugees/expelled Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia (Vojvodina and Kosovo) in order to eliminate or at least mitigate the consequences of the war as soon and as efficiently as possible.³⁰ Seeing as how significant parts of formerly occupied areas were, even before the war, very plagued by emigration and depopulation due to economic and infrastructural lag, Dr. Tuđman warned about the importance of enacting two laws: the Act on Reconstruction and the Act on Areas of Special State Concern, while stating that these laws "ascertain special stimulative measures for the formerly occupied territories in order to eliminate the consequences of the war as quickly as possible, to achieve the return of displaced persons and refugees, and to achieve the most balanced development of all Croatian areas." In point 6 of the priorities of state policy for 1997, Dr. Tuđman emphasized the importance of demographic, economic, infrastructural, and spiritual renewal of war-affected, occupied and liberated areas, which should be achieved by state interventions to encourage birth rates, create conditions to reduce emigration from Croatia as well as by taking systematic steps in terms of the return of emigrants.

3 to 4 years). After 2000, the National Program for Demographic Development practically fell into oblivion, and until 2006 Croatia did not have a strategic document on population policy. In doing so, it was wasting precious time addressing accumulated demographic challenges. The situation has worsened to this day, because in the meantime the National Population Policy from 2006 proved to be largely unsustainable, so a new Strategy for the Demographic Revitalization of Croatia was drafted, the status of which remains unclear to this day. Demographic trends are increasingly unfavorable and in an increasingly pronounced downward trajectory. Can it be concluded that Croatian state policy as a whole has to some extent satisfied the declarative level of attitudes towards demographic issues, but that it has lagged far behind a systematic, comprehensive and long-term approach in implementing concrete measures of demographic revitalization and sustainability?

³⁰ According to available data, the total demographic losses of Croatia in the Homeland War can be estimated at 450,276 persons, of which direct demographic losses or war mortality are 22,192 persons, migration losses 418,507 inhabitants and birth rates of 9,577 (unborn) children. For more details, see: Dražen Živić, Nenad Pokos, "Demografski gubitci tijekom Domovinskog rata kao odrednica depopulacije Hrvatske" (1991. – 2001.) *Društvena istraživanja* 13 (2004), No. 4-5 (72-73): 727-750, as well as in the list of literature and sources used in this paper.

In the reports on the state of the Croatian state and nation in 1997 and 1998, which Dr. Tuđman submitted to the Croatian Parliament, demographic issues gradually, but visibly, fell into the background, i.e., they were very limitedly discussed only in the context of implementation of certain public policies, especially social,³¹ and not as a fundamental Croatian national interest that it was and still is.

Conclusion

From the above, four key attitudes of Dr. Franjo Tuđman towards the demographic situation in the Republic of Croatia and the need to implement measures and activities of demographic recovery as a crucial starting point for all progress can be surmised. Those are:

- (1) Spiritual and moral rebirth as pivotal components of demographic recovery.
- (2) Return and unity of emigrated and homeland Croatia as an important precondition for demographic recovery.
- (3) Post-war reconstruction and return of war-displaced persons and refugees without whom full demographic recovery is not possible.
- (4) The demographic recovery program must be a constant concern and obligation of all bodies and institutions of the Croatian state, both at the national and local levels.

Insight into the documents I refer to in this paper can, to some extent, help identify the alignment of Dr. Tuđman's political activities with the then current demographic trends and processes, or the need to reverse them in a positive direction, which means alignment with the needs of Croatian society and economy. But this does not seem to have had a lasting and comprehensive effect in terms of shaping such public policies, including population policy in the narrower and demographic policies in the broader sense of the word, which would have stimulating and affirmative effects on demographic trends and processes. Indicators of Croatia's demographic development have been extremely unfavorable for years and in an increasingly steep downward trajectory, which ultimately warns of the failure of state interventions in terms of demographic revitalization and sustainability of the Republic of Croatia.

³¹ Ana Malnar, Dario Malnar, "Demografska problematika u strateškim političkim dokumentima Republike Hrvatske", *Forum za sigurnosne studije* 3 (2019), No. 3: 57-58.

Bibliography

Akrap, Anđelko. "Demografski slom Hrvatske: Hrvatska do 2051.", *Bogoslovska smotra* 85 (2015), No. 3: 855-881.

Akrap, Anđelko. "Stanovništvo u Hrvatskoj: čimbenici silaznih trendova", *Obnovljeni Život* 74 (2019), No. 3: 335-350.

Friganović, Mladen. "Regionalne osobitosti novijega prirodnog kretanja stanovništva Hrvatske", *Geografski glasnik* (1970), No. 32: 79-88.

Friganović, Mladen; Pavić, Pero. *Uzroci i posljedice demografskih promjena u SR Hrvatskoj 1961. – 1971.* Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 1973.

Friganović, Mladen. "Socijalni aspekti demografskih kretanja u SR Hrvatskoj", *Revija za sociologiju* 5 (1975), No. 1-2: 32-50.

Friganović, Mladen Ante; Šterc, Stjepan. "Demografski razvoj i populacijska politika Republike Hrvatske", *Društvena istraživanja* 2 (1993), No. 1 (3): 151-165.

Izvešće Predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, dr. Franje Tuđmana o stanju hrvatske države i nacije u 1994. (na zajedničkoj sjednici oba doma hrvatskog Sabora, 22. prosinca 1994.).

Izvešće Predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, dr. Franje Tuđmana o stanju hrvatske države i nacije u 1995. (na zajedničkoj sjednici oba doma hrvatskog Sabora, 15. siječnja 1996.).

Izvešće Predsjednika Republike Hrvatske, dr. Franje Tuđmana o stanju hrvatske države i nacije u 1996. (na zajedničkoj sjednici oba doma hrvatskog Sabora, 22. siječnja 1997.).

Jandrić, Berislav. "Izvori i literatura za proučavanje povijesti Komunističke partije Hrvatske – Saveza komunista Hrvatske 1945. – 1978.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 14 (1982), No. 2: 129-178.

Malnar, Ana; Malnar, Dario. "Demografska problematika u strateškim političkim dokumentima Republike Hrvatske", *Forum za sigurnosne studije* 3 (2019), No. 3: 49-70.

Nejašmić, Ivica. "Prirodno kretanje stanovništva SR Hrvatske prema tipu naselja boravka", *Geografski glasnik* (1986), No. 48: 123-135.

Nejašmić, Ivica. "Osnovne značajke depopulacije u Hrvatskoj u razdoblju 1953. – 1981.", *Sociologija sela* 28 (1990), No. 107-108: 33-50.

Nejašmić, Ivica. "Emigration from Croatia – a quantitative approach to a century long process", *Geographical Papers* (1991), No. 8: 61-82.

Nejašmić, Ivica. "Iseljavanje iz Hrvatske od 1900. do 2001.: demografske posljedice stoljetnog procesa", *Migracijske i etničke teme* 30 (2014), No. 3: 405-435.

Tuđman, Franjo. *S Vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb: Narodne novine, 1995.

Tuđman, Franjo. *Usudbene povjestice*. Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1995.

Šterc, Stjepan. "The general demographic cross section of the Republic of Croatia", *Geographical Papers* (1991), No. 8: 1-38.

Wertheimer-Baletić, Alica. "Tendencije u razvitku stanovništva SR Hrvatske", *Ekonomski pregled* 40 (1989), No. 5-6: 231-250.

Wertheimer-Baletić, Alica; Gelo, Jakov. "Ukupno i prirodno kretanje stanovništva Hrvatske", *Sociologija sela* 28 (1990), No. 107-108: 1-18.

Wertheimer-Baletić, Alica. "Demografske promjene i globalni demografski procesi u Hrvatskoj u poslijeratnom razdoblju", *Encyclopaedia Moderna XIII* (1992), No. 2 (38): 238-251.

Wertheimer-Baletić, Alica. "Specifičnosti demografskog razvitka u Hrvatskoj i njegove socio-ekonomske implikacije", *Revija za socijalnu politiku III* (1996), No. 3-4: 251-258.

Wertheimer-Baletić, Alica. "Demoreprodukcijski procesi u Hrvatskoj", in: *Nacionalni program demografskog razvitka*. Zagreb: Ministarstvo razvitka i obnove, 1997, pp. 55-75.

Živić, Dražen; Pokos, Nenad. "Demografski gubitci tijekom Domovinskog rata kao odrednica depopulacije Hrvatske (1991. – 2001.)", *Društvena istraživanja* 13 (2004), No. 4-5 (72-73): 727-750.

Živić, Dražen; Pokos, Nenad; Turk, Ivo. "Basic Demographic Processes in Croatia", *Hrvatski geografski glasnik* 67 (2005), No. 1: 27-44.