

# **BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION FROM THE CROATIAN EAST**

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**A**lthough the Croatian East, throughout its long history, has never been an integral part of Serbia, and Serbs have never constituted the largest ethnic group in total population, this part of Croatia became the scene of aggression of Great Serbia, causing great suffering and tremendous devastation. Tens thousand of people were forced into exile; mostly Croats, but also Hungarians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Slovaks, and even a small number of Serbs. During the offensives, and particularly in the course of a five-year occupation, Serbian aggressor by ethnic cleansing carried out regional and demographic occupation. According to the records of July 1, 1996, in Croatia were 210,341 displaced persons. The displaced from the Croatian East accounted for 39.6% (83,322 persons), and by its total number made up the majority of the Croatian displaced population. Great-Serbian aggressor has occupied 79% of the settlements in the Croatian East and expelled from them almost half of the total pre-war population (43.1%), mostly Croats (75,556 persons), Hungarians (3,788), Serbs (1,437), Ruthenians and Ukrainians (931), and other nationalities (1,610). These data reveal that the Croatian East has been completely ethnically cleansed of the Croats and for the most part of other non-Serbian population previously inhabiting the area. Other socio-demographic characteristics of the displaced population from the Croatian East mostly do not differ from those established by the 1991 census, which means that renewal and development of the area cannot be guaranteed or accomplished without systematic measures of the state in order to encourage social and economic revitalisation of the region.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**D**eveloping the idea of the revival of Great Serbia, its ideologists have included in their project, among several other Croatian regions, the region

of Croatian East.<sup>1</sup> This was the reason why the early nineties saw this part of the Croatian ethnic and state territory as the arena of a fierce war conflict, probably unprecedented since the beginning of the 16th century, and the times of Turks. Concurrently, Serbian scientists tried to vindicate the aggression to the public, at home and abroad, by describing the Croatian East as the "century-old Serbian territory", although it has not been true throughout the history of that area. It is well known that policy of Great Serbia is based mostly on misrepresented and false facts, as well as lies and forgery (Klemenčić, M., 1993), which was clearly confirmed by the events taking place in the Croatian East and surrounding area. Population inhabiting the Croatian East have been developing in the conditions of continuous clashes of different nations, cultures and worlds, but in spite of that, Croatian national features of that region, as well as unity with the Croatian state has never come into question. Since the early immigration of Croats into the region (over the period from 6th to 8th century) the east of Croatia acquired, kept and developed Croatian ethnic and legal-state characteristics (Živić, D., 1995b).

Favourable for settling owing to its natural resources (fertile land, stretching of important traffic lines, numerous rivers, woods), the Croatian East has been attractive to inhabitants since the ancient times. It was also a stage for the crucial historical events which marked not only demographic but total development of the region (Živić, D., 1995a). In view of this, migration of people and associated changes were regularly more than an exception. Over the centuries that followed, hundreds thousand of people were passing the area, many had permanently settled there and left trace in demographic development of the region. Thus, the history of the Croatian East has been marked by a very dynamic population development, in particular over the past hundred years. During the past decades (1948-1991) the growth-rate of the population of the Croatian East was double the pace of overall Croatian population increase (Croatian East 55.5%; Republic of Croatia 26.6%). The latter data point to comparatively greater attractiveness of that region in relation to the rest of Croatia. In this century, fertile soil and industry on the increase had attracted numerous inhabitants in their most convenient working and reproductive age (20 to 59 years), which considerably reinforced a demographic basis of the region, rather impoverished by the war and demographic losses following the two world wars (Maticka, M., 1990, Wertheimer-Baletić, A., 1993). However, over the past twenty years, demographic dynamics of the Croatian East has been essentially slowed down. In the period 1971-1991, the population increased only by 9.1%, and total Croatian population by 8%. It is the consequence of the changes in socio-economic relationships and trends, but also of deteriorated vital demo-

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The term "Croatian East" refers to the easternmost part of the Croatian state which, by January 1993, included the following communities: Beli Manastir, Osijek, Vinkovci and Vukovar. By new administrative-territorial organisation the region was divided between the two counties: Osječko-baranjska and Vukovarsko-srijemska. Other terms used in reference to this region are: Eastern Slavonija, Baranja and Western Srijem, as well as the Croatian Danube basin.

graphic determinants of the population trends, primarily of the basic demographic structures (such as age and sex), natural dynamics, and finally of the migration balance. The population of the Croatian East, as well as of the whole Croatia, rapidly grows old and natural migratory trends approach natural decline.<sup>2</sup> Over the past thirty years the Croatian East shifted from a typical emigration into an immigration area,<sup>3</sup> with proportionally inadequate intraregional distribution of population followed and stimulated by the rural exodus,<sup>4</sup> that is excessive concentration of the population in urban centres.<sup>5</sup> According to 1991 census the region of the Croatian East, covering approximately 3.500 square kilometres or at about 6% of the area of Republic of Croatia, had 402,152 inhabitants or 8.4% of the total Croatian population.

Although the Croatian East had never been a constituent of the Serbian state in the past (Pavličević D, 1993a, Pavličević D, 1993b), this was the region that became a scene of the fierce war conflict, which over the war years 1991 and 1992, as well as during the five-year occupation by the Serbian aggressor, resulted in great number of victims, caused enormous material destruction and forced several tens of thousand people – Croats, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians and others to flee their homes and to depart into exile all over Croatia, Europe and the world. Great-Serbian aggression radically disturbed the relationships and negatively determined new tendency of the population development of the Croatian East. Demographic indicators of the temporary occupied part of the Croatian East are not known, and are not therefore relevant for the estimation of current demographic processes in the region. Croatian state should not tolerate and accept as a final and lasting solution the banishment of more than 80,000 people, with concurrent colonisation of their abandoned homes by contemporary conquerors. Although precise and universal indicators of the Serbian aggression on the Croatian East will become known only when the situation will completely settle down, it is already possible to point to some negative demographic consequences of war and a five-year occupation brought about by the idea of achieving Great Serbia.

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In the period 1981-1990, total birth-rate of the ex-communities beli Manastir, Osijek, Vinkovci and Vukovar (13,443) decreased by 55% in relation to the total natural population increase in the period 1961-1970 (29, 616).

3

Migratory balance (the relationship between the natural population increase and registered changes in the number of inhabitants) was as high as 16,664 inhabitants in the period 1961-1971, - 3,294 inhabitants in the period 1971-1981, and only 62 inhabitants in the period 1981-1991.

4

In the period 1953-1981 out of the total number of 103 settlements (1981 census) in the Croatian East, 70.9% of them had a decrease of inhabitants (Nejašmić, I., 1991, p. 313).

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In four former community centres – towns of the Croatian East (Beli Manastir, Osijek, Vinkovci and Vukovar) in 1991 lived nearly half of the total population of the area (48.5%).

Demographic data on the population of the displaced from the Croatian East will undoubtedly once more confirm statements on Great-Serbian untenable ethnic, historical and legal claims to that territory and will emphasise the assumptions on ethnic cleansing of the Croatian East, as an indelible trace of war crime committed over the Croatian people of this region. In this paper, by analysing the territorial origin, age and sex structure, marital, school, and employment status of the displaced, basic socio-demographic characteristics of the displaced population from the Croatian East will be indicated, as a fundamental precondition for the development of an acceptable concept of return and socio-economic renewal and transformation of that area.

## PROPORTION OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION

According to the data of the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees of the Government of Croatia, on July 1, 1996,<sup>6</sup> there were a total of 210,341 displaced, that is, 4.4% of the Croatian total population. The total number of Croatian displaced had been changing during the five-year war period. At the time of the greatest and heaviest attack on Croatia (second half of 1991 and first half of 1992), more than 700,000 people or as many as 15% of ethnic Croats were exiled. Many of them temporarily resettled in Croatia, and a considerable number went abroad (Rogić et al, 1995). During 1993 and 1994, a certain number of displaced returned to their homes, mostly into those non-occupied villages located near the front-line, and thus directly exposed to war destruction, in which by the peace settlement signed in Sarajevo on January 3, 1992, a relative peace was established (Osijek, Vinkovci, Karlovac, Zadar). However, even in the period when the occupied territory of Croatia was taken care of by UNPROFOR first and UNCRO later (1992-1995), the exile continued and during 1993 and 1994, new population groups were sheltering in the free areas of the Republic of Croatia. In April 1992 Croatia had almost 250,000 of the displaced, in July approximately 197,000 and in July 1995 slightly more than 198,000 (Rogić et al, 1995). This data should be added to the fact that a part of the exiled population from Croatia found their temporary home in other European countries (Germany, Hungary, Slovenia), and certain number of them remained statistically non-registered, which cannot be precisely expressed in numbers. A part of this population returned in 1995 and 1996 in Croatia, and enlarged the number of Croatian displaced resettled within the borders of Croatia to approximately 211,000 (data of July 1, 1996).

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As a basic source of data this paper used data basis on the displaced persons provided by the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, showing status on July 1, 1996. It should be mentioned that incompleteness of data were due to inaccurate records on the population of displaced, which has partly prevented adequate analysis of sociodemographic characteristics of the Croatian displaced as well as the displaced from the Croatian East. This primarily refers to the working and educational status of the displaced as will be mentioned in the chapter dealing with this segment of sociodemographic structure.

On July 1, 1996 the Office for the Displaced Persons and Refugees registered 83,322 of the displaced from the Croatian East. This means that the displaced from the Croatian East who do not make up one tenth of the total Croatian population (8.4%), constituted at that moment more than one third of the total Croatian population of displaced (39.6%). The very disproportion between the number defined by the 1991 census and number of the displaced point to the scope and intensity of Serbian aggression on the east of Croatia. According to the data of July 1, 1996, the aggressor exiled 19,985 persons from Baranja (former community of Beli Manastir), and from the former communities of the town of Osijek 12,689, Vinkovci 16,184, Vukovar 34,464. By the end of 1991 the aggressor has occupied almost four fifths of the villages/towns (124 out of 127 or 79%) which covered the area of 2.600 square kilometres (75,7% of the area of the Croatian East; 4.6% of the total of Croatia). Before the war in these settlements lived 193,513, that is 4% of the population of Croatia, and almost half (48.1%) of the total population of the Croatian East. In other words, from temporarily occupied villages/towns even 43.1% inhabitants were exiled.

## **TERRITORIAL ORIGIN OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION**

Territorial origin of the displaced population varies, but the areas of their greater and/or lower numbers and proportion can be emphasised in relation to the number of inhabitants before the war, and in relation to the total number of the Croatian displaced population. Taking this into account the whole Croatian region can be divided into several large areas of exodus. By the number of displaced persons on July 1, 1996, in the first place, as the largest area of exodus, was the Croatian East with 83,322 of displaced persons (39.6%), followed the region of Dalmatia with 58,375 (27.8%), third area of exodus was Banovina and Kordun 47,260 (22.5%) of the displaced, fourth was Western Slavonija 14,811 (7%) and finally, fifth was Lika 5,571 (2.6%) of the displaced. In relation to the total number of inhabitants before the war, majority of displaced were also from the Croatian East (20.7%), followed Banovina and Kordun (14.4%), Western Slavonia (13%) and Dalmatia (12.1%), whereas the least number of the displaced were from Lika (4.9%).

Table 1 shows the number and proportion of the displaced by the community<sup>7</sup> of displacement in the total population of displaced of Croatia. According to the data on July 1, 1996 the highest number by the community of displacement were as follows: Vukovar, Beli Manastir, Vinkovci, Petrinja, Osijek, Zadar and Drniš, and the lowest: Duga Resa, Otočac, Vojnić and Donji Lapac. These data show

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The term "community" refers to administrative-territorial organisation from 1974. This term was replaced by the term "county" involving new organisation introduced in 1993. The data discussed in this paper were analysed and categorised by communities, as provided by the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

that all four communities from the Croatian East (Table 2) were among the first five communities in Croatia by their number of displaced persons in the total number of the displaced in Croatia. Three former communities of the towns of Vukovar, Beli Manastir and Vinkovci occupy first three tragic positions. This shows that the displaced from these communities, which constituted in 1991 only 5% of the Croatian population (236.899 inhabitants), made up as much as one third (33.5%) of the Croatian displaced according to the data on July 1, 1996.

**Table 1**  
The number and proportion of the displaced persons in the total population of the displaced by the community of exile

Community of exile	Number of inhabitants 1991	Number of displaced persons	% of displaced in 1991 population	% of displaced in total population of displaced
Beli Manastir	54,265	19,985	36.8	9.5
Benkovac	33,378	9,914	29.7	4.7
Biograd na moru	17,661	1,775	10.1	0.8
Donji Lapac	8,054	23	0.3	0.0
Drniš	24,169	11,179	46.3	5.3
Dubrovnik	71,419	6,079	8.5	2.9
Duga Resa	30,485	982	3.2	0.5
Dvor	14,555	1,038	7.1	0.5
Glina	23,040	6,760	29.3	3.2
Gospić	29,049	1,392	4.8	0.7
Gračac	10,434	1,096	10.5	0.5
Karlovac	81,319	6,087	7.5	2.9
Knin	42,954	3,014	7.1	1.4
Kostajnica	14,851	3,602	24.3	1.7
Nova Gradiška	60,749	3,368	5.5	1.6
Novska	24,696	4,356	17.6	2.1
Obrovac	11,557	3,650	31.6	1.7
Ogulin	29,095	966	3.3	0.5
Osijek	165,253	12,689	7.7	6.0
Otočac	24,992	578	2.3	0.3
Pakrac	27,589	7,087	25.7	3.4
Petrinja	35,565	13,819	38.9	6.6
Sinj	60,210	5,450	9.1	2.6
Sisak	84,348	1,526	1.8	0.7
Slunj	18,962	9,902	52.2	4.7
Šibenik	85,002	5,648	6.6	2.7
Titova Korenica	11,393	1,516	13.3	0.7
Vinkovci	98,445	16,184	16.4	7.7
Vojnić	8,236	97	1.2	0.0
Vrginmost	16,599	3,447	20.8	1.6
Vukovar	84,189	34,464	40.9	16.4
Zadar	136,572	11,666	8.5	5.5
Unknown	0	1,002	0.0	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,439,085</b>	<b>210,341</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: 1991 census, Ethnic structure of the population of Croatia by settlements, documentation 881, RZSRD Zagreb, 1992; Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

**Table 2**  
**Displaced from the Croatian East by the community of exile**

Community of exile	Number of inhabitants 1991	Number of displaced persons	% of population in total Croatian population	% of displaced in total population 1991	% of displaced in total Croatian displaced population
Beli Manastir	54,265	19,985	1.1	36.8	9.5
Osijek	165,253	12,689	3.5	7.7	6.0
Vinkovci	98,445	16,184	2.1	16.4	7.7
Vukovar	84,189	34,464	1.8	40.9	16.4
Total	402,152	83,322	8.4	20.7	39.6

Source : 1991 census, Ethnic structure of the population of Croatia by settlements, Documentation 881, RZSRD Zagreb, 1992; Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

In relation to the pre-war number of inhabitants, the greatest proportion of inhabitants was exiled from the previous communities of: Slunji, Drniš, Vukovar, Petrinja, Beli Manastir and Obrovac, and the smallest from: Gospić, Ogulin, Duga Resa, Otočac, Sisak, Vojnić and Donji Lapac. More than a quarter from the total number of inhabitants in 1991 were displaced also from the communities of Benkovac, Glina and Pakrac. These data show that the greatest proportion in the total population of displaced of the Republic of Croatia hold communities of Beli Manastir, Osijek, Vinkovci and Vukovar (Croatian East). The town of Vukovar with almost 20,000 of registered displaced (24% of the displaced from Croatian East; 9.5% of the total Croatian population of displaced) has the largest population of displaced in Croatia. Almost every second inhabitant from Vukovar and its closest surrounding had to leave his home<sup>8</sup>. Among the settlements in the Croatian East, by the total number of displaced the following settlements also stand out: Beli Manastir, Bilje, Darda, Antunovac, Tenja and Ilok with more than two thousand of exiled. The settlements: Nijemci, Slakovci, Stari Jankovci, Cerić, Dalj, Bapska, Lovas and Tovarnik had from one to two thousand of the displaced, and as many as 22 settlements had from 500 to 1000 of the displaced. These are: Branjin Vrh, Šeminac, Grabovac, Kneževi Vinogradi, Koza-rac, Petkovac, Popovac, Aljmaš, Erdut, Ernestinovo, Laslovo, Sarvaš, Antin, Đeletovci, Ilača, Novi Jankovci, Tordinci, Donje Novo Selo, Lipovac, Marinci, Bog-danovci and Borovo. The rest of occupied settlements in the Croatian East had less than 500 of the displaced by the settlement.

## **TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION AND ACCOMMODATION OF THE DISPLACED**

According to the data on July 1, 1996, almost half of the displaced from the Croatian East (40,911 or 49.1%) were accommodated in its non-occupied settle-

<sup>8</sup>

According to 1991 census Vukovar had 44,639 inhabitants.

ments of the former communities of Osijek and Vinkovci. Thus the community of Osijek accommodated 26,184 of the displaced (31.4% of all displaced of the Croatian East), and the community of Vinkovci 14,727 (17.7% of the displaced from the Croatian East). The rest of the displaced (this refers mostly to the displaced from Vukovar) were settled in other places all over Croatia. In 25 former communities of Croatia, temporarily were accommodated at least 500 of the displaced from the Croatian East, and in some of them accommodated a considerably greater number of people. These were: Čakovec (1,069 of the displaced from the Croatian East), Donji Miholjac (1,287), Đakovo (1,167), Našice (1,572), Opatija (1,789), Slatina (1,205), Poreč (1,137), Pula (1,622), Valpovo (1,754), Zagreb (10,358) and Županja (1,215). These data show that the major number of the displaced from the Croatian East were settled in their broader native area of the Eastern Croatia, that is the microregion of Osijek. This was the area of accommodation and new temporary home for almost two third of the displaced from the Croatian East (50,162 of displaced or 60.2%). It is necessary to emphasise the population of displaced from Vukovar which is – by its size, markedly specific way of life in the war and the form of exile, as well as by the type of accommodation, the most tragic example of displacement. The data show that 34,464 of the exiled from Vukovar are accommodated in more than 500 settlement of Croatia.

Analysis of the type and character of accommodation of the Croatian and East-Croatian displaced exhibits certain specific characteristics. A great majority of the displaced (76.2% Croatian; 72.9% Eastern-Croatian) are accommodated in the private, and significantly less number in an organised accommodation (23.8% Croatian; 25.4% Eastern-Croatian). More than two thirds of the displaced (68.5% Croatian, 74.6% Eastern-Croatian) live in own households, which means in a rented or own apartment/house. In hotels are accommodated 10.4% of the Croatian i.e. 9.1% of the Eastern-Croatian displaced. It should be mentioned that in the collective camps and resorts only 6.7 % of the Croatian displaced (7.2 % Eastern-Croatian) are accommodated.

## **ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION OF DISPLACED**

Data on ethnic structure of the total and displaced population from the Croatian East undoubtedly show that Serbian territorial aspirations are unjustly grounded. By constant exposure of precise and complete data on the ethnic structure of the population of Croatia, Croatian part should prove that "Great-Serbian truths" about most Eastern part of Croatia as "century-old Serbian region" have never been true.



**Table 3****Ethnic structure of the population of the Croatian East in 1991 (July 1, 1996)**

Ex-community	Total	Croats	Serbs	Hungarians	Others and unknown
Beli Manastir	54,265	22,740	13,851	8,956	8,718
Osijek	165,253	110,934	33,146	3,056	18,117
Vinkovci	98,445	78,313	13,170	1,644	5,318
Vukovar	84,189	36,910	31,445	1,375	14,459
<b>Total</b>	<b>402,152</b>	<b>248,897</b>	<b>91,612</b>	<b>15,031</b>	<b>46,612</b>

  

Ex-community	Total	Croats	Serbs	Hungarians	Others and unknown
Beli Manastir	100	41.9	25.5	16.5	16.1
Osijek	100	67.1	20.1	1.8	11
Vinkovci	100	79.6	13.4	1.7	5.3
Vukovar	100	43.8	37.4	1.6	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>11.6</b>

Source: 1991 census, Ethnic structure of the population of Croatia by settlements, Documentation 881, RZSRD Zagreb, 1992.

Table 3 shows data on ethnic structure of the population of the Croatian East according to the 1991 census. It can be seen from the table that in the total population in the Croatian East, Croats make up 61.9%, Serbs 22.8%, Hungarians 3.7% and Ruthenians, Ukrainians and Slovaks the remaining 11.6%. In the total number of settlements in the region (157), Croats were representing majority in 91 (58%), and Serbs in only 48 settlements (30.6%). In the remaining 18 settlements (11.4%) ethnic majorities were Hungarians, Ruthenians and Ukrainians. It can be concluded that the Croatian East is ethnically a comparatively homogeneous Croatian region; the total number of ethnic Croatian population is 2.5 times greater than that of ethnic Serbs in the region. Therefore, the Serbs or the state of Serbia cannot have any ethnic claims to the territory of the Croatian East.

It should be mentioned that in the temporarily occupied settlements of the Croatian East the majority of population is also made up by the Croats, as is illustrated in Table 4. In 1991 in these settlements lived 44.5% of Croats, 34.9% Serbs, 6.7% Hungarians and 13.9% others. In the total number of occupied settlements (124), Croats were in the absolute or comparative majority in 61 settlement (49.2%), the Serbs in 46 (37.1), and Hungarians, Ruthenians and Ukrainians in 15 settlements (12.1%) of the Croatian East.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Serbs have attacked, devastated and occupied a part of Croatia in which in 1991 they represented only slightly more than one third of the total population. The aggression was primarily focused to conquer the Croatian East in order to gain control over the Danube, and majority of the villages with Croatian,

<sup>9</sup>

According to 1991 census in the settlement of Podunavlje there was one Croat and one Serb, whereas the settlement of Sudara was represented in the census with no inhabitants.

Hungarian, Ruthenian and Ukrainian population were destroyed (Šterc, S. and Pokos, N., 1993). Serbs have also tried to occupy one of the most fertile agricultural spaces in this part of Europe, with the aim to turn it into economic centre of some new Serbian state in the West (Šiljković Ž, 1994). To achieve this they applied ethnic cleansing so as to exterminate any suggestion of the Croatian name as well as of Croatian historical, religious and cultural heritage.

**Table 4**  
**Ethnic structure in the occupied settlements in the Croatian East according to the 1991 census (July 1, 1996)**

Community of exile	Number of occupied settlements	Population of occupied settlements	Indicator	Croats			Serbs		Hungarians		Others and unknown
				Absolute	Proportional	Absolute	Proportional	Absolute	Proportional		
Beli Manastir	52	54,265	Absolute	22,740	13,851	8,956			8,718		
			Proportional	41.9	25.5	16.5			16.1		
Osijek	17	27,893	Absolute	11,030	13,124	1,290			2,449		
			Proportional	39.5	47.1	4.6			8.8		
Vinkovci	26	27,166	Absolute	15,416	9,141	1,333			1,376		
			Proportional	56.7	33.5	4.8			5		
Vukovar	29	84,189	Absolute	36,910	31,445	1,375			14,459		
			Proportional	43.8	37.4	1.6			17.2		
Total	124	193,513	Absolute	86,096	67,561	12,954			27,002		
			Proportional	44.5	34.9	6.7			13.9		

Source: 1991 census, Ethnic structure of the population of Croatia by settlements, Documentation 881, RZSRD Zagreb, 1992.

Ethnic cleansing in the territory of the Croatian East is best argued by the data on ethnic structure of the displaced population shown in Tables 5 and 6.

According to the status on July 1, 1996, in the total number of the displaced from the Croatian East, there were 90.7% of Croats, 1.7% Serbs, 4.5% Hungarians, 1.1% Ruthenians and Ukrainians, and 2% others. In the total number of Croats living in the occupied settlements, there were 87.8% exiled and of the total number of Serbs only 2.1%.<sup>10</sup> Statistical indicators show that today in the occupied territory live every tenth Croat out of the pre-war Croatian population (predominantly older generations), whereas the rest live in exile.

The data shown very clearly indicate that ethnic structure of the population in the Croatian East has been radically changed. It could be stated that Serbian demographic occupation of the Croatian East has taken place. Almost all Croatian inhabitants, as well as other non-Serbian ethnic groups, who were exiled or

<sup>10</sup>

Speaking of the number of exiled Serbian population it should be mentioned that it refers to the data obtained by the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the Serbs who were temporarily accommodated in the free parts of Croatia. The number of Serbs who voluntarily left the Croatian East and resettled in Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina or some other country is hard to determine.

killed, had their homes settled with Serbian families from the liberated parts of Croatia (mostly Western Slavonia) or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Estimated by the Croatian government and international community, the number of newly immigrated Serbs into the Croatian East range from several thousand to several tens thousand. By this present-day colonisation of the Croatian territories, corresponding to that already recorded in the history of Croatia over the past centuries, the trends of stable demographic development were interrupted and some of the basic demographic structures were completely changed with the serious consequences.

**Table 5**  
**Ethnic structure of the Croatian displaced population (July 1, 1996)**

Nationality	Indicator	Total Croatian displaced population	Displaced from Croatian East	Other Croatian displaced
Croats	Absolute	196,807	75,556	121,251
	Proportional	93.6	90.7	95.5
Serbs	Absolute	5,094	1,437	3,657
	Proportional	2.4	1.7	2.9
Hungarians	Absolute	3,874	3,788	86
	Proportional	1.8	4.5	0.1
Moslems	Absolute	1,049	292	757
	Proportional	0.5	0.4	0.6
Ruthenians and Ukrainians	Absolute	965	931	34
	Proportional	0.5	1.1	0
Albanians	Absolute	505	303	202
	Proportional	0.2	0.4	0.2
Czechs	Absolute	382	41	341
	Proportional	0.2	0	0.3
Slovaks	Absolute	258	218	40
	Proportional	0.1	0.3	0
Italians	Absolute	249	6	243
	Proportional	0.1	0	0.2
Germans	Absolute	239	229	10
	Proportional	0.1	0.3	0
Slovenians	Absolute	211	147	64
	Proportional	0.1	0.2	0.1
Others and unknown	Absolute	708	374	334
	Proportional	0.4	0.4	0.1
Total	Absolute	210,341	83,322	127,019
	Proportional	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

It is important to emphasise that Croats make majority even in the population of displaced; their percentage is as high as 93.6%, Hungarians make up 1.8%, Moslems, Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Czechs, Italians and others 2.2%, and Serbs only 2.4% of the displaced. It is therefore obvious that Serbian aggressor did

not intend to take only the land, but to establish there Serbian ethnic majority. It is particularly important for the Croatian East, since Serbian nationality has never before prevailed in the total population of that region until the autumn 1991.

**Table 6**  
**Ethnic structure of the displaced from the Croatian East by the communities of exile (July 1, 1996)**

Nationality	Indicator	Beli Manastir	Osijek	Vinkovci	Vukovar
Croats	Absolute	17,258	11,297	15,222	31,779
	Proportional	86.4	89.1	94.1	92.2
Serbs	Absolute	289	491	114	543
	Proportional	1.4	3.9	0.7	1.6
Hungarians	Absolute	1,949	685	666	488
	Proportional	9.8	5.4	4.1	1.4
Moslems	Absolute	70	49	22	151
	Proportional	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.4
Ruthenians and Ukrainians	Absolute	7	8	34	882
	Proportional	0	0	0.2	2.6
Albanians	Absolute	40	26	65	172
	Proportional	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5
Czechs	Absolute	9	3	4	25
	Proportional	0	0	0	0.1
Slovaks	Absolute	21	11	17	169
	Proportional	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5
Italians	Absolute	1	1	0	4
	Proportional	0	0	0	0
Germans	Absolute	154	32	2	41
	Proportional	0.8	0.3	0	0.1
Slovenians	Absolute	82	23	9	33
	Proportional	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1
Others and unknown	Absolute	105	63	29	177
	Proportional	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.5
Total	Absolute	19,985	12,689	16,184	34,464
	Proportional	100	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996

Statements on the aggression of Great Serbia in the Croatian East were also contributed by the data on confessional composition of the population of displaced, as shown in Table 7. The data of July 1, 1996 show that the proportion of Orthodox confession (2.4%) in the total population of Croatian displaced persons is insignificant in comparison to Roman Catholics (95.6%). In the population of displaced population from the Croatian East the proportion of Roman Catholics (94.2%) also significantly exceeds the proportion of Orthodox (1.8%).

**Table 7****Structure of the Croatian displaced population by confession (July 1, 1996)**

Confession	Indicator	Total Croa- tian displaced	Displaced from the Croatian East	Other Croa- tian displaced
Roman Catholics	Absolute	199,965	78,513	121,452
	Proportional	95.2	94.2	95.6
Orthodox	Absolute	5,099	1,461	3,638
	Proportional	2.4	1.8	2.9
Moslems	Absolute	1,242	366	876
	Proportional	0.6	0.4	0.7
Jews	Absolute	8	3	5
	Proportional	0	0	0
Uniates	Absolute	798	765	33
	Proportional	0.4	0.9	0
Protestants	Absolute	521	462	59
	Proportional	0.2	0.6	0
Others and unknown	Absolute	2,708	1,752	956
	Proportional	1.2	2.1	0.8
Total	Absolute	210,341	83,322	127,019
	Proportional	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

## AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION

Age and sex structure of a population of a certain region represents an exceedingly reliable indicator of the prevailing social and economic processes. It shows vitality and biodynamics of the population, as well as its economic potentials, in the sense of working and productive forces. Insight into the characteristics of age and sex composition of the total and displaced population from the Croatian East may be useful in order to predict abilities of the population that upon return, by own potentials initiates renewal and entire social and economic revitalisation of the region, devastated by the war.

According to 1991 census, population from the Croatian East had slightly more favourable age structure than the total Croatian population, as can be seen from Table 8. Three basic characteristics speaking in favour of the population from the Croatian East in relation to the total population of Croatia were: larger proportion of young people (0 to 19 years of age), larger proportion of mature population (20 to 59 years), and considerably smaller proportion of old population (60 years and more). These facts clearly indicate that despite deteriora-

tion of some vital demographic processes (emigration, tendency toward natural decrease, demographic ageing), biodynamic abilities of the population in the Croatian East were in 1991 still slightly greater than those in the total Croatian population. This can be also confirmed by the data on proportion of working and reproductively most capable population groups in relation to young and aged generations. This proportion in the population from the Croatian East was 483,5 young and 278,5 aged inhabitants per a thousand mature inhabitants, whereas in the total population of Croatia there were only 477,2 young and as many as 318,1 older than 60 years per a thousand working and reproductively capable inhabitants. Data on age structure of the displaced population on July 1, 1996 reveal slightly different characteristics. First, the proportion of population over 60 years of age in the total population of displaced considerably exceeds the proportion of the same age group in the total population of Croatia. Almost every fourth displaced in the republic of Croatia is over 60. Although young population group represent slightly more than one quarter of the total number of displaced in Croatia, their proportion is smaller than proportion of the young in the total Croatian population. There is obvious proportionally greater, and less favourable loading of the total Croatian displaced population by older generations and proportionally smaller loading with younger (and potentially biodynamically vital) age groups. This is an indicator that deserves attention and suggests inability of the liberated regions of Croatia to develop solely on basis of their own (currently displaced) population whose age composition is significantly curtailed. Due to a continuous decrease of birth-rate, increased emigration and rural exodus, the number and proportion of the young in the total population as well as their influx into economically active age, will continue to decrease unless some crucial steps in planning and implementing a positive and stimulating populatory-colonising policy will not be taken. On the other hand, the number and proportion of old, economically inactive and supported groups will be on the increase. Almost one quarter of the Croatian displaced can hardly take an active part in the process of renewal and economic transformation of the regions devastated and afflicted by the war.

**Table 8**  
**Large age groups in the population of Croatia and Croatian East in 1991**

		Large age groups			
		0-19	20-59	60 and more	Unknown
Republic of Croatia	N	1,252,469	2,624,801	834,988	72,007
	%	26.20%	54.90%	17.50%	1.40%
Croatian East	N	108,945	225,328	62,749	5,130
	%	27.10%	56.00%	15.60%	1.30%

Source: 1991 census, Population by sex and age by the settlements, Documentation 882, DZSRH, Zagreb 1994.

**Table 9**  
**Structure of the Croatian displaced population by large age groups (July 1996)**

		Large age groups			
		0-19	20-59	60 and more	Unknown
Croatian displaced-total	Absolute	53,554	107,208	49,067	512
	%	25.5	51.0	23.3	0.2
Displaced from Croatian East	Absolute	22,825	44,758	15,582	157
	%	27.4	53.7	18.7	0.2
Other Croatian displaced	Absolute	30,729	62,450	33,485	355
	%	24.2	49.2	26.4	0.2

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

Age structure of the displaced from the Croatian East has more favourable features than total Croatian displaced population which is a result of the fact that according to 1991 census the features of age structure of the total population of the Croatian East were more favourable than that of the total Croatian population. In the population of the displaced from the Croatian East the proportion of young people is even greater than their proportion in the total population of the region. Although the proportion of older population groups among the displaced exceeds their proportion in the total population of the Croatian East, it is however, significantly smaller than proportion of population older than 60 in the total displaced population of Croatia. It is therefore reasonable that loading of the displaced population from the Croatian East with younger population is greater (510,0), or older population essentially smaller (348,1) than in the total population of the displaced. This speaks in favour of greater biodynamic potential of both total and displaced population from the Croatian East and therefore of a possibility that this population would more actively participate in the renewal and development of the war afflicted area. It is possible to assume that Croatian East will have proportionally greater own population force to support reconstruction and total socio-economic transformation of the region of eastern Croatia.

Indicators of the characteristics of age structure of the total and displaced population of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian East should be associated with basic sex features as shown in Table 10. In the total Croatian displaced population there is more women than men, which means that their proportion is 1100, 9 women per thousand men. Almost identical relationship can be observed in the displaced population from the Croatian East: 914,6 men per thousand women or 1093,3 women per thousand men. These data very slightly deviate from the values of the sex structure for the total Croatian population, and the total population of the Croatian East (Republic of Croatia: 48.5% of men and 51.5% women; Croatian East 47.5% of men and 52.5% women) which means that ethnic cleansing was not focused on one sex only, but it involved equally both women and men.

**Table 10**  
**Sex structure of the Croatian displaced population (July 1996)**

Sex	Indicator	Total Croatian displaced	Displaced from the Croatian East	Other Croatian displaced
Men	Absolute	100,121	39,803	60,138
	Proportional	47.6	47.8	47.5
Women	Absolute	110,220	43,519	66,701
	Proportional	52.4	52.2	52.5
Total	Absolute	210,341	83,322	127,019
	Proportional	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

## **MARITAL, EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF THE DISPLACED POPULATION**

Data on marital status of Croatian and Eastern-Croatian displaced persons can be seen in Table 11. Out of the total number of the Croatian displaced, almost half of them are married (46.2%), 38% are unmarried, 1.8% divorced, and as many as 9.7% widow/widower. The data on the number of widows/widowers is particularly important since it indicates that every tenth displaced experienced a loss of a partner in marriage and life. Data on marital status obtained for the displaced from the Croatian East only slightly differ from those for the total displaced population of Croatia. Number of the displaced from the Croatia East of 46.2% of married and 39.7% of unmarried is slightly higher than in the total population of displaced. The proportion of divorced in the population of displaced from the Croatian East (2.3%) also exceeds the proportion of the same group in the total population of displaced in Croatia. The only proportion widow/widower was considerably lower in the displaced population from the Croatian East (8.4%) than that in the total Croatian displaced population. Significant is only the fact that more than a half of the divorced from the total displaced Croatian population refers to the displaced from the Croatian East, which can probably be explained by a corresponding share of ethnically mixed marriages in the total population.

Analysis of the structure of the displaced population by their education was rather difficult because the census of the displaced populations has not included all age groups. The data available involved only educational status of the children of the displaced persons, and not that of the adults, which completely hampers any insight into actual educational level of the displaced, but also any comparison with the total Croatian population before the war. Therefore, the data shown in Table 12 related to educational level of the displaced population on July 1, 1996, have only an illustrative value.



**Table 11**  
**Marital status of the Croatian displaced population (July 1996)**

Marital status	Indicator	Total Croatian displaced	Displaced from the Croatian East	Other Croatian displaced
Married	Absolute	97,200	38,456	58,744
	Proportional	46.2	46.2	46.2
Unmarried	Absolute	79,965	33,063	46,902
	Proportional	38	39.7	36.9
Divorced	Absolute	3,741	1,902	1,839
	Proportional	1.8	2.3	1.4
Widow/widower	Absolute	20,444	7,009	13,435
	Proportional	9.7	8.4	10.6
Others and unknown	Absolute	8,991	2,892	6,099
	Proportional	4.3	3.4	4.9
Total	Absolute	210,341	83,322	127,019
	Proportional	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

**Table 12**  
**Structure of the Croatian displaced according to their schooling status (July 1996)**

Status	Indicator	Total Croatian displaced	Displaced from the Croatian East	Other Croatian displaced
Pre-school	Absolute	14,360	7,161	7,100
	Proportional	6.8	8.6	5.6
Elementary school	Absolute	23,217	10,087	13,130
	Proportional	11	12.1	10.3
Secondary school	Absolute	10,156	4,137	6,019
	Proportional	4.8	5	4.7
High school	Absolute	3,463	1,372	2,091
	Proportional	1.6	1.6	1.6
Nothing	Absolute	159,244	60,565	98,679
	Proportional	75.8	72.7	77.8
Total	Absolute	210,341	83,322	127,019
	Proportional	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

Among the presented data the essential is fact that in all educational categories, children of the displaced population from the Croatian East make greater part than in the total Croatian population of displaced. Although the data for 75.8% of the total Croatian displaced and 72.7% of the displaced population from the Croatian East are not obtained, which encumbers estimation of the level of education of displaced population groups, it is obvious that children of the displaced from Croatian East have pre-school, elementary school and sec-

ondary school education in greater proportion than those in the total displaced population of Croatia, which may possibly be an important stimulative factor for the future development of the region.

**Table 13**  
**Structure of the Croatian displaced by working status (July 1996)**

Status	Indicator	Total Croatian displaced	Displaced from the Croatian East	Other Croatian displaced
Children	Absolute	23,596	9,958	13,638
	Proportional	11.2	12	10.8
Pupils	Absolute	33,399	14,188	19,211
	Proportional	15.9	17	15.1
Students	Absolute	3,735	1,470	2,265
	Proportional	1.8	1.8	1.8
Employed	Absolute	41,927	16,691	25,236
	Proportional	19.9	20	19.9
Unemployed	Absolute	41,516	18,883	22,633
	Proportional	19.7	22.7	17.8
Retired	Absolute	28,890	11,247	17,643
	Proportional	13.7	13.5	13.9
Others	Absolute	36,075	10,511	25,564
	Proportional	17.2	12.6	20.1
Unknown	Absolute	1,203	374	829
	Proportional	0.6	0.4	0.6
Total	Absolute	210,342	83,322	127,019
	Proportional	100	100	100

Source: Office for the Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of Croatia, July 1996.

Basic finding obtained by analysing the structure of the Croatian displaced in view of their employment, as can be seen in Table 13, shows that minority of the displaced population had employment – only 19.9% of the total displaced population and 20% of the displaced from the Croatian East. The proportion of unemployed is very high in both groups of the displaced, and in the group from the Croatian East it is even higher than the proportion of the employed displaced persons. Proportion of the retired was approximately the same in both population groups of displaced and includes more than one tenth of the total number of displaced. This is explained by relatively aged structure of the population. The proportions of children, pupils and students were higher in the population of displaced from the Croatian East and lower in the total population of displaced. According to the data only one fifth of the displaced is employed, which is not surprising when one has in mind that most of the displaced had been employed in the firms or organisations that were (or still are) in temporarily occupied regions of Croatia, which means that after their exile they were not able to continue their employment. This is mostly true of the displaced from the Croatian East: more than one quarter of them were unemployed. Comparatively high proportion of retirees, unemployed and supported population, that will require considerable investment on account of state budget even

in the future, definitely will not have a stimulative effect on the total socio-economic revitalisation of the region. It is obvious that after the process of peaceful reintegration of the Croatian East, it will be necessary to renew economic resources of the region in order to ensure return, hopefully, of the majority of displaced. At the time of occupation and exile, humanitarian aid represented a reasonable form of assistance to the exiled, but after liberation that humanitarian aid should be replaced by the systematic economic stimulative measures of renewal and return. If not, social, psychological and economic consequences will be serious and far-reaching for the populations of displaced as well as for the whole community of Croatia.

## CONCLUSION

Presented basic demographic data related to the exiled population from the Croatian East in view of their territorial origin (ex-communities of exile), territorial distribution and types of accommodation, followed by ethnic and age and sex distribution, marital, educational status and employment, provided a relatively detailed picture on sociodemographic characteristics of an important part of the population of displaced.

The analysis showed that by the total number of displaced persons as well as by its proportion in the number of inhabitants before the war, the region of the Croatian East participates in the total population of Croatian population to the greatest degree. The region that participated in the total population with only 8.4% of Croats gave as many as 39.6% of the Croatian displaced (July 1, 1996).

The analysis of ethnic structure of the total and displaced population from the Croatian East confirmed that ethnic cleansing had been carried out over the past five years in this region. Despite being a minority, Serbs occupied almost four fifths of the settlements in the Croatian East and banished almost one half of their inhabitants, mostly Croats, but also Hungarians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians and even Serbs who had not embraced the idea of Great Serbia. It is therefore of great importance that during and after the process of peaceful reintegration and return of the inhabitants to the Croatian East, constitutional and political system of the state of Croatia would be implemented, that ethnic structure would be identical to that before the war. That is the only way to relieve if not completely remove all negative consequences of ethnic cleansing and war crimes. The framework in the sense of time of return is of particular importance, because further delay in keeping the displaced away from their homes may have a negative effect for their readiness to return.

Age and sex structure of the displaced population, its marital, educational and employment status revealed all relations that were caused by the war, but also by deterioration of vital demographic processes. Particularly disadvantageous is the age structure that becomes increasingly old. The consequences of this

process are known: a decrease in birth-rate and decline in economic activities of the population that stimulate development. The question is whether the population of the Croatian East will succeed to strengthen this area using its own natural dynamics in the post-war period. It seems more likely that the state of Croatia will have to introduce certain measures of revitalisation such as colonisation of the population from other over-populated areas, in order to strengthen the demographic basis of the Croatian East, which would consequently enable its renewal and socio-economic transformation within the borders of the Croatian state where it has always belonged.

Translated by Vesna Hajnić

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## TEMELJNE DEMOGRAFSKE ZNAČAJKE PROGNANIČKE POPULACIJE HRVATSKOG ISTOKA

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**P**remda hrvatski istok nikada u svojoj dugoj i bogatoj povijesti nije bio sastavnim dijelom srpske države niti su Srbi ikada imali većinu u ukupnom stanovništvu, ovaj je dio hrvatske države bio poprištem velikosrpske agresije, koja je uzrokovala velike žrtve, izazvala golema materijalna razaranja te natjerala u progonstvo desetine tisuća ljudi, najviše Hrvata, ali i Mađara, Rusina, Ukrajinaca, Slovaka, pa čak i mali broj Srba. Tijekom ratnih sukoba, a posebice tijekom petogodišnjeg zaposjednuća, srpski je agresor proveo etničko čišćenje dijela hrvatskog istoka i pritom izvršio njegovu prostornu i demografsku okupaciju. U Hrvatskoj se, prema stanju od 1. srpnja 1996., nalazilo 210 341 prognanika. Od tog je broja čak 39,6% (83 322 osobe) bilo prognanika s hrvatskog istoka, koji po svojem ukupnom broju najviše sudjeluju u hrvatskoj prognaničkoj populaciji. Velikosrpski je agresor okupirao 79% naselja hrvatskog istoka i iz njih protjerao gotovo polovicu prijeratnog broja stanovnika (43,1%), najvećma Hrvata (75 556 osoba), potom Mađara (3 788), Srba (1 437), Rusina i Ukrajinaca (931) te ostalih (1 610). To znači da je hrvatski istok etnički gotovo u potpunosti očišćen od Hrvata i velikim dijelom od drugog nesrpskog pučanstva toga kraja. Ostale sociodemografske značajke istočnohrvatske prognaničke populacije uglavnom ne odudaraju od njihovih značajki ustanovljenih posljednjim popisom stanovništva 1991., što znači da se obnova i svekoliki razvoj prostora ne mogu jamčiti niti zamisliti bez sustavnih i poticajnih državnih mjera za društvenom i gospodarstvenom revitalizacijom prostora.

## DEMOGRAPHISCHE GRUNDMERKMALE DER VERTRIEBENEN AUS DEM OSTEN KROATIENS

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**O**wohl der Ostteil Kroatiens in seiner langen und ereignisreichen Geschichte nie zu Serbien gehört hat und die Serben in der Gesamtbevölkerung nie in der Mehrzahl waren, wurde dieser Landesteil des kroatischen Staates Schauplatz der großserbischen Aggression. Die Folge davon waren zahllose Opfer, riesige Sachschäden und Tausende von Vertriebenen, größtenteils Kroaten, aber auch Ungarn, Russinen, Ukrainer, Slowaken und sogar eine geringe Zahl von Serben. Im Laufe der Kampfhandlungen, insbesondere aber während der fünfjährigen Okkupation führte der serbische Aggressor die ethnische Säuberung eines Teils des kroatischen Ostens durch und unterjochte das Land sowohl räumlich als auch demographisch. Nach dem Stand vom 1. Juli 1996 befanden sich in Kroatien 210.341 Vertriebene. Davon stammten sogar 39,6% (83.322 Personen) aus Ostkroatien; es war dies zugleich die größte Gruppe innerhalb der Population der kroatischen Vertriebenen. Die großserbischen Aggressoren besetzten 79% der ostkroatischen Dörfer und Ortschaften und vertrieben daraus fast die Hälfte der bis zum Krieg dort lebenden Einwohner (43,1%), zumeist Kroaten (75.556 Personen), aber auch Ungarn (3788 Personen), Serben (1437 Personen), Russinen und Ukrainer (931 Personen) und andere (1610 Personen). Das bedeutet, dass der Ostteil des Landes eine fast vollkommene ethnische Säuberung von Kroaten, größtenteils aber auch von anderen, nicht-serbischen Bevölkerungsteilen erfahren hat. Die übrigen soziodemographischen Merkmale der ostkroatischen Vertriebenen weichen, im Großen und Ganzen, von den in der letzten Volkszählung aus dem Jahre 1991 ermittelten Merkmalen nicht ab. Das bedeutet, dass der Wiederaufbau und die umfassende Entwicklung dieses Raums ohne systematische und stimulierende Staatsmaßnahmen zur gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Revitalisierung weder gesichert werden können noch aber denkbar sind.