

Zagreb: Population Change 1991-2001

Ksenija Bašić

While population change in the City of Zagreb was still positive in the last inter-census period owing to the growth of the suburban area, the inner city began to lose population. After a long-time but decreasing growth in the last few decades, Zagreb (as a morphological city) experienced a population decline of 16,675 persons or 2.4% in the 1991-2001 period. Although natural change in that period was negative as well, the principal factor of the population decline was net migration loss.

Key words: Zagreb, population change, natural change, net migration

Kretanje stanovništva Zagreba 1991.-2001.

Dok stanovništvo Grada Zagreba u posljednjem međupopisnom razdoblju i dalje raste zahvaljujući porastu u prigradskom pojasu, uže područje grada (naselje Zagreb) počinje gubiti stanovništvo. Od 1991. do 2001. godine stalno stanovništvo Zagreba se nakon dugotrajnog, ali posljednjih desetljeća sve sporijeg rasta smanjilo za 16675 osoba ili 2,4%. Iako je i prirodno kretanje u tom razdoblju bilo negativno, glavni čimbenik smanjenja stanovništva je negativni migracijski saldo.

Ključne riječi: Zagreb, ukupno kretanje stanovništva, prirodno kretanje stanovništva, migracijski saldo

INTRODUCTION

Zagreb contains 30% of Croatia's urban population, and is four times bigger than the second largest city, Split. Its metropolitan area, defined as a socio-economic urban region (an area larger than the City of Zagreb as an administrative territorial unit), has nearly one million inhabitants, which is more than a fifth of the total population of the country. Although 70% of the metropolitan population are concentrated in the central city, the focus of population growth has moved in the last few decades toward the outskirts of the urban region, especially to the satellite towns (Vresk 1997).

Depopulation of a considerable part of the national territory, as well as the population decline of the country as a whole in the last inter-census period, in contrast to the continued growth of the City of Zagreb, have "outshined" a negative change in population trend of Zagreb alone. In fact, for the first time after a more-than-a-century long intensive growth, Zagreb as a morphological city had a relatively small, but significant population decline. That is the subject of this paper.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

It is known that the recent change of the census methodology has rendered a comparison of the 2001 census results with the previous ones (that of 1991 and earlier) very difficult. The least incorrect calculation of inter-census population change according to the last census final results is achieved by linking the category "inhabitants of the place of census" (column 3 of the table Population by presence/absence in the place of census, by settlements - final results) with the former "total population" (or so-called permanent population, which comprised citizens in the country and abroad), as performed in table 1. However, while only the first results of the last census were available, not including the citizens enumerated abroad, linking the current "total population", that is usual resident population (column 2 - Statistical report 1137) with the former "population in the country" was more appropriate in principle (more detailed in: Pokos 2001). In the case of Zagreb that provided change indicators for the 1991-2001 period (Antić 2001) quite opposite from those arising from the final 2001 census results. For this reason, the permanent population of Zagreb was later in this analysis considered with and without the citizens abroad, confirming the introductory statement about the change of population trend in the last inter-census period.

Considering the population natural change in the 1991-2001 period, we also come upon several aggravating circumstances. First, until 1997, vital statistics had been worked out according to the permanent population principle, consistently with the previous census methodology, and since 1998, according to the "usual place of residence", upon which the new definition of total population is based. Second, births and deaths in the country and abroad were presented separately on the settlement level only in the 1993-1997 period: as to the earlier years, the births abroad were included in the total number of births, and from 1998 on, they have been completely disregarded; the same applies to the deaths. Therefore, any sum of births or deaths in that period can be only approximate, as well as the resulting natural increase. Finally, the war circumstances brought Zagreb a multiple increase of births abroad, which distorts the real picture of natural change.

Tab. 1 Zagreb: population change 1948-2001

Tab. 1. Kretanje stanovništva Zagreba od 1948. do 2001. godine

Census year	Population	Index	Total change		Annual change	
			absolute	rate (%)	absolute	rate (%)
1948	325443	100,0	-	-	-	-
1953	361804	111,2	36361	11,2	7272	2,12
1961	443038	136,1	81234	22,5	10154	2,52
1971	584863	179,7	141825	32,0	14183	2,76
1981	661750	203,3	76887	13,1	7689	1,23
1991	706770	217,2	45020	6,8	4502	0,59
2001	690095	212,0	-16675	-2,4	-1668	-0,24

Sources: Korenčić M., 1979: *Naselja i stanovništvo SR Hrvatske 1857-1971*. Djela JAZU, Zagreb.
Population censuses 1981, 1991, 2001. Državni zavod za statistiku, Zagreb.

Net migration, as a derivative of potentially doubtful indicators of population total and natural change, can be justly considered questionable. Still, although it is impossible to calculate net migration accurately, there is every indication that migration is the main factor of the Zagreb population decline in the last inter-census period.

POPULATION CHANGE UNTIL 1991

Having grown into a strong economic centre since the late 19th century, Zagreb has shown an intensive population growth and has been expanding into the immediate surrounding area. Although the growth rates were highest in the period between the world wars (total 70.8% from 1921 to 1931, or average 5.5% exponential growth annually), Zagreb experienced its biggest absolute growth in the second half of the 20th century, under the conditions of an intensive urban-based industrialisation and polarised development of Croatia.

As Zagreb had grown by very high rates, in 1948 there were already 325 thousand inhabitants within its present-day limits¹. That growth, in which migration had a key role (Nejašmić 1994), continued in the post-war period, at a quicker pace until 1971, as rural-urban migration was heading to its peak. The fact that the population of Zagreb has grown almost by the size of today's Rijeka, the third largest city in Croatia, only in the 1961-1971 decade, of which only one fifth was due to natural increase, illustrate the proportions of the migration pressure on the city. If we add the out-migration from the overcrowded central parts of the city, which have lost almost 16 thousand people at the same time (Žuljić 1974/75), it is clear to see the kind of spatial problems Zagreb had to face.

Their only solution was suburban development, which was reflected in the expansion of the city's administrative range. In 1974, ten inner city municipalities and two suburban ones, Velika Gorica and Zaprešić, were joined into Greater Zagreb (Gradska zajednica općina Zagreba), which since 1981 included Samobor and Sesvete as well. In 1990, the whole area was united into one municipality - the City of Zagreb, which was by later acts given a status of a county. Its area has been changed since then more than once, and according to the current territorial constitution it almost corresponds to the area of the former ten inner city municipalities with the addition of Sesvete. It is obvious that the present administrative range of Zagreb is not adequate to the needs of its metropolitan development, but that is a subject for another discussion.

Decline of the rural-urban migration (Nejašmić 1991; Mikačić 2000), residential and, to a lesser extent, employment suburbanization (Vresk 1984, 1986, 1997; Bašić 1989) and reduction of the natural increase (Nejašmić 1986, 1996) had slowed down Zagreb's population growth. The abating of migration pressure on the city is reflected in the composition of the in-migrant population according to the time of their arrival: in 1991 older contingents prevailed, in spite of the effect that mortality and re-emigration have on their decrease, while the major part of incomers in the satellite towns was made up of those who came after 1971 (Fig. 1). Besides, if we take into account the effect of natality on the increase of indigenous population, a relatively low and decreasing share of incomers in the population of Zagreb is not surprising (Nejašmić 1994). By 1991, that share dropped to 51.8%, compared with the average 70.7% of the satellite towns.

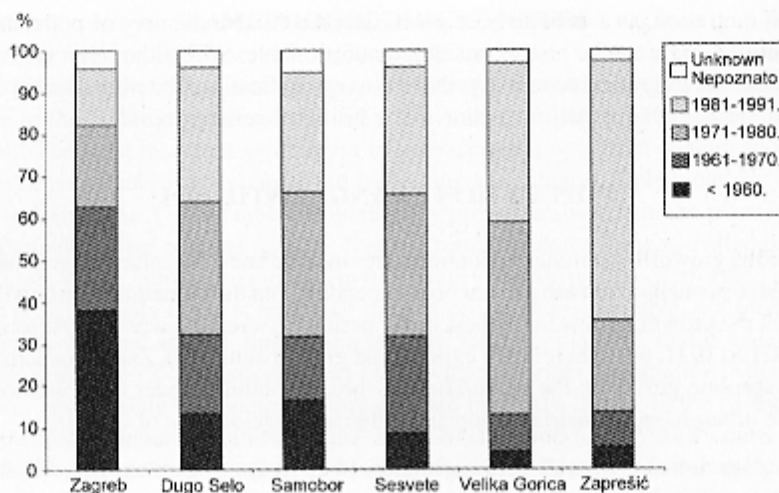


Fig. 1 In-migrant population of Zagreb and its satellite towns in 1991 according to the time of migration
 Sl. 1. Doseљeno stanovništvo Zagreba i satelitskih gradova 1991. godine prema vremenu doseljenja

POPULATION CHANGE 1991-2001

From 1991 to 2001, after a long-time but in the last few decades decreasing growth, Zagreb experienced a population decline of 16,675 persons or 2.4%. If we take into account only the population in the country, the decline comes to 12,554 persons or 1.9% (Tab. 3). Compared with the previous periods, it has evidently come to a change of the population development trend. Net migration gain had contributed to the population growth considerably more than natural increase, although the disproportion lessened in course of time (Nejašmić 1994). Both migration and natural change had their share in the recent population decline as well, but it is hard to tell, based on the available data, in what proportion.

Natural change

Since the early eighties, the population of Zagreb had shown a descending trend of the natural increase, owing to the lessening migration, ageing and fertility decline. Hence, the natural decrease in the early nineties (Tab. 2a) was a logical continuation of that trend, and the war only aggravated an already unfavourable demographic situation. A temporary improvement that then occurred was only apparent because it resulted exclusively from the multiple increase of the births abroad, which could be just to a lesser extent attributed to the increased emigration from Zagreb. This is evident from the share of the residents abroad in the permanent population of Zagreb, which even decreased from 4.8% in 1991 to 4.2% in 2001. Although a certain number of the refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina that came to Zagreb at the beginning of the war registered their residency there, and then some of them left for other countries, most "surplus" of the births abroad is being attributed to the Croatian emigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Croatian citizens, some of them have used the possibility of putting their children into Croatian registers of

births. If neither of parents had residency in Croatia, the majority of them decided to put their children into the Zagreb register (Akrap 1999; Pokos 1999).

At the same time, the population in the country has continued the negative trend of natural change, except for the short break in 1996. The total balance of births and deaths in the country from 1993 to 2000 (if we disregard the changed methodology of vital statistics from 1998 on) figured out at -3,283. If we estimate the number of births and deaths in the country for the years in which they were not presented separately from those abroad (1991 and 1992), the total natural decrease for the whole decade comes to -3,878 (Tab. 2b). The estimate is based on their share in the total number of births and deaths in 1993, when the proportions of the births in the country and abroad still corresponded to those of the population according to the 1991 census, while the number of deaths abroad was disproportionately smaller because of a better age composition.

The natural change arising from the total number of births and deaths is considerably more favourable (5,368 from 1991 to 1997), but unreal. If we reduce the number of births abroad in the period from 1994 till the end of the decade to their share in the total number of births in 1993, and estimate the number of deaths abroad in the 1998-2000 period according to their average share in the total number of deaths from 1993 to 1997, the natural change of the total population of Zagreb in the 1991-2000 period looks quite different: less unfavourable than the natural change of the population in the country alone, but negative as well (Tab. 2b).

Tab. 2a Population of Zagreb: natural change 1991-2000 (original data)

Tab. 2.a Prirodno kretanje stanovništva Zagreba od 1991. do 2000. godine - originalni podaci

	Natural change 1991 - 2000									
Births	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
in the country	...	...	7453	7517	7601	8059	8060	7380	7066	6841
abroad	...	...	378	1046	1404	1886	2399	...	...	...
total	7799	7700	7831	8563	9005	9945	10459	...	...	...
Deaths	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
in the country	...	...	7782	7869	7923	7877	8257	8080	7901	7571
abroad	...	...	84	94	114	234	189	...	...	...
total	7529	7982	7866	7963	8037	8111	8446	...	...	...
Increase/decrease	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
in the country	...	...	-329	-352	-322	182	-197	-700	-835	-730
abroad	...	...	294	952	1290	1652	2210	...	...	...
total	270	-282	-35	600	968	1834	2013	...	...	...
Vital index	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
in the country	...	...	95,8	95,5	95,9	102,3	97,6	91,3	89,4	90,4
abroad	...	...	450,0	1112,8	1231,6	806,0	1269,3	...	...	...
total	103,6	96,5	99,6	107,5	112,0	122,6	123,8	...	...	...

Source: Births and deaths by settlements. Tables for years 1991-2000. Državni zavod za statistiku, Zagreb.

Although these are just rough estimates, because actual balances of population natural change are impossible to calculate out of the available data for the last decade, unfavourable biodynamic features of the Zagreb population are beyond dispute.

Tab. 2b Population of Zagreb: natural change 1991-2000 (recalculated)

Tab. 2.b Prirodno kretanje stanovništva Zagreba od 1991. do 2000. godine - korigirani podaci

Population	Natural change 1991 - 2000											
	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total	
Total												
births	7799	7700	7831	7898	7987	8468	8469	7754	7424	7188	78518	
deaths	7529	7982	7866	7963	8037	8111	8446	8225	8043	7707	79909	
increase/decrease	270	-282	-35	-65	-50	357	23	-471	-619	-519	-1391	
In the country												
births	7423	7328	7453	7517	7601	8059	8060	7380	7066	6841	74728	
deaths	7449	7897	7782	7869	7923	7877	8257	8080	7901	7571	78606	
increase/decrease	-26	-569	-329	-352	-322	182	-197	-700	-835	-730	-3878	

Calculated according to the table 2a

Net migration

As there is no adequate migration statistics, the only way to calculate net migration is by means of the vital-statistical method (Tab. 3)². If we take into account just the population in the country, where the estimate of the natural change is reliable enough, the net migration loss accounts for about two thirds of the Zagreb population decline. In the total permanent population, whose natural change is more favourable because of the increase abroad even when the estimated "surplus" of births among the Croatian citizens without residency in the country is discounted, the net migration loss severalfold surpasses the population natural decrease. In any case, it appears that the principal factor of population decline was net migration loss.

Although the conclusion about the net migration loss has been obtained indirectly, it is supported by some more facts. The last census data about the in-migrant population by counties show that in the 1991-2001 period, the City of Zagreb had the net migration loss to the other counties of 9,516 persons (37,039 in-migrants minus 46,555 out-migrants). The City of Zagreb lost population to seven counties, most by far to the County of Zagreb: -17,229 (5,167 in-migrants minus 22,396 out-migrants). The major part of the immigration came from Bosnia and Herzegovina (42,153) and was directed to the areas out of the city itself - Sesvete and the settlements south of the tangential road (Antić 2001), which explains a remarkable population growth in those areas during the last inter-census period (22.8%). Residential suburbanization of Zagreb has evidently gone far, and the suburban area has become the focus of the agglomeration population growth. Besides the fact that the migration pressure on Zagreb has switched over to the suburban settlements, strengthening of the migration flow from the city to its surroundings indicates a new stage in Zagreb metropolitan development.

Moreover, although there is no legal obligation for notice of departure when emigrating, the territorial register shows that emigration from Zagreb intensified in the post-war years. Emigration waves were registered in 1997 and 1999, when the number of migrants more than doubled compared to the war years' average. That can be easily explained by a bad economic situation, especially by the unemployment growth (Antić 2001).

Tab. 3 Zagreb: components of population change 1991-2001

Tab. 3. *Određnice općeg kretanja stanovništva Zagreba od 1991. do 2001. godine*

Population	Total change			Natural change			Net migration	General population trend
	1991	2001	Change	Births	Deaths	Change		
total	706770	690095	-16675	78365	79954	-1589	-15086	E-4
in the country	673843	661289	-12554	74583	78637	-4054	-8500	E-4

Calculated according to the tables 1 and 2b

General Population Trend

The main determinant of the Zagreb general population trend in the last inter-census period is net migration loss, but unfavourable features of the natural change will play an ever more significant role in future. This is indicated by a continued fertility decline, accompanied with a rapid ageing of the Zagreb population.

In 1990, the estimated total fertility rate (in absence of the fertility tables calculated from the ratio of the live-births and female population in fertile age) figured out at 1.46, and ten years later at 1.22 – below the Croatian average (1.38 according to the Statistical annual of the Republic of Croatia 2002) and far below the level of simple population reproduction. In that period the ageing index grew from 70.1 to 98.2, which is also more adverse than the Croatian average (90.7).

Nevertheless, a city of a complex functional structure like Zagreb will always be attractive for certain social categories, which will at least mechanically rejuvenate its population, so that the "extinction" trend (E_x), indicated by the actual components of population change, does not reflect a real perspective of its population development. In the conditions of diminished migration potential of the areas from which the greater Zagreb have received population, weakening demographic base of its surroundings could become a confining factor of its development. Even in the suburban area the ageing process has moved away (except for the satellite towns, that have the most favourable bio-dynamic population characteristics, the ageing index is in few settlements below 60), and births are insufficient for positive natural change (in 2000, the total fertility rate in the County of Zagreb was insignificantly higher than in the city: 1.29).

CONCLUSION

After the culmination in the sixties, the population of Zagreb grew more slowly, so that the decrease of 2.4% in the last inter-census period was a logic continuation of a long-standing tendency. Such development resulted from the weakened migration potential of the areas from which Zagreb had received population, shifting the focus of the agglomeration population growth from the city to its surroundings, and the decline of natural increase. Finally, the war and unemployment actuated emigration. Putting the population change of Zagreb alone, Zagreb urban region and Croatia side by side (Fig. 2) shows that, even under the conditions of weakened and negative general population dynamics, polarisation in the population development of the country continues, together with a simultaneous agglomeration decentralisation (Bašić 2003).

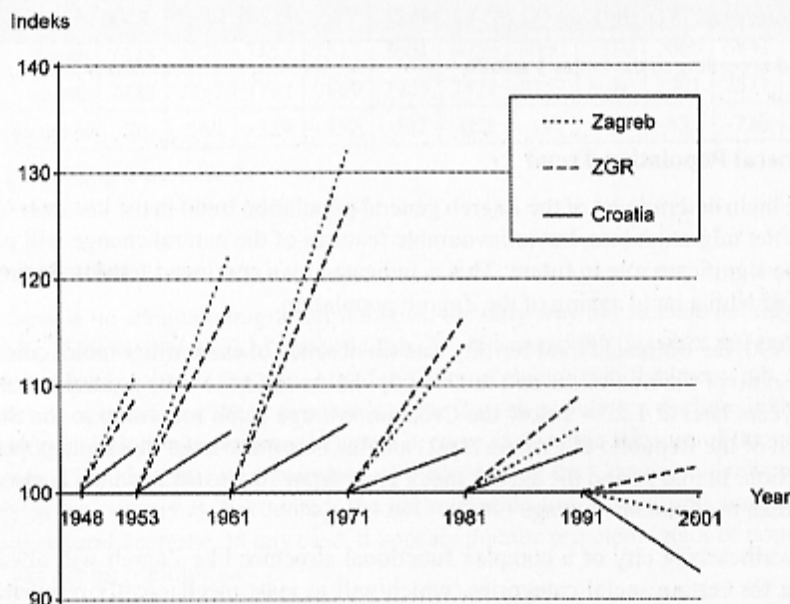


Fig. 2 Zagreb, Zagreb urban region (ZGR) and Croatia: population change 1948-2001

Sl. 2. Kretanje stanovništva Zagreba, Zagrebačke gradske regije (ZGR) i Hrvatske od 1948. do 2001. godine

Apart from methodological difficulties in calculating the components of the Zagreb population general change in the last decade, it is definite that the net migration loss considerably surpassed the population natural decrease. Although net migration loss is the key determinant of the recent decline, natural change will play an increasingly important role in further population development of Zagreb and its surroundings. It is important, therefore, to prevent further fertility decline and insufficient biological reproduction by adequate measures of population policy, or else demographic regression could soon become a confining factor for development of the Zagreb urban region – the area of the greatest concentration of people and economic potential of the country.

NOTES

1. Original census data have been adapted to the present-day territory of Zagreb by adding up population of the annexed settlements. For territorial changes until 1976 see: Korenčić 1979. After that Blato, Glogovec Zaprudski, Otočec Zaprudski, Otok Zaprudski and Remetinec Stupnički were annexed, as well as larger parts of Botinec, Hrelčić, Jakuševec and Sveta Klara.
2. In order to coordinate the vital statistics data with the exact period between the censuses (31 March 1991 to 31 March 2001), the numbers of births and deaths in 1991 were reduced for a fourth, and in 2000 they were increased for a fourth. That is the reason why the figures in this table differ from the totals in table 2b.

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SAŽETAK

Kretanje stanovništva Zagreba 1991.-2001.

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Izrastajući od kraja 19. stoljeća u snažno gospodarsko središte Zagreb je bilježio intenzivan populacijski rast i prostorno se širio u neposrednu okolicu. Iako je najveći relativni rast stanovništva ostvaren još u razdoblju između dva svjetska rata, najbrži apsolutni rast, u kojem je doseljavanje imalo ključnu ulogu, Zagreb doživljava u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća, u uvjetima intenzivne urbano temeljene industrijalizacije i izrazito polariziranog razvoja Hrvatske. Nakon vrhunca dosegnutoga šezdesetih godina, sa slabljenjem ruralnog egzodusa u zemlji, suburbanizacijom funkcije stanovanja i, u manjoj mjeri, funkcije rada Zagreba, te smanjivanjem prirodnog priraštaja, usporava i populacijski rast grada, uz naglašenu tendenciju unutargradskog prerasprijestaja stanovništva u korist rubnih zona. O smanjenju migracijskog pritiska na grad svjedoči struktura doseljenog stanovništva prema vremenu doseljenja: dok u Zagrebu 1991. prevladavaju stariji doseljenički kontingenti, unatoč djelovanju mortaliteta i reemigracije na njihovo smanjivanje, u njegovim satelitskim gradovima glavninu čine doseljeni nakon 1971. (sl. 1).

Promjenom popisne metodologije znatno je otežana usporedba rezultata popisa 2001. godine s ranijim popisima stanovništva, kao i izračunavanje odrednica općeg kretanja stanovništva u posljednjem međupopisnom razdoblju. Najmanje pogrešan izračun međupopisne promjene stanovništva prema konačnim rezultatima posljednjega popisa dobiva se povezivanjem kategorije "stalni stanovnici naselja popisa 2001" (stupac 3 tablice Stanovništvo prema prisutnosti/odsutnosti u naselju popisa, po naseljima - konačni rezultati popisa) s ranijim "ukupnim brojem stanovnika" (stanovništvo u zemlji i inozemstvu), kao što je učinjeno u tablici 1. No, budući da nova definicija ukupnog stanovništva ne uključuje većinu građana u inozemstvu, promjena broja stalnih stanovnika Zagreba od 1991. do 2001. godine razmotrena je i bez njih (tab. 3).

Promjena definicije ukupnog stanovništva odrazila se i u vitalnoj statistici, pa su do 1997. podaci o vitalnim događajima obrađivani prema načelu stalnog stanovništva, a od 1998. prema "uobičajenom mjestu stanovanja". Osim toga, rođeni i umrli u zemlji i inozemstvu odvojeno se na razini naselja prikazuju samo od 1993. do 1997. godine: za ranija godišta rođeni u inozemstvu sadržani su u ukupnom broju rođenih, a od 1998. uopće se ne iskazuju; isto vrijedi i za umrle (tab. 2.a). Stoga je svaki zbroj rođenih i umrlih za ovo razdoblje samo približan, a isto tako i prirodni priraštaj koji iz toga proizlazi. Iz istog je razloga i migracijski saldo nemoguće precizno izračunati.

Od 1991. do 2001. godine stalno stanovništvo Zagreba se nakon dugotrajnog, ali posljednjih desetljeća sve sporijeg rasta smanjilo za 16675 osoba ili 2,4%. Uzmemo li u obzir samo stanovništvo u zemlji, smanjenje iznosi 12554 osobe ili 1,9%.

Zbog smanjenog doseljavanja, starenja stanovništva i pada fertiliteta prirodni priraštaj stanovništva Zagreba još od početka osamdesetih godina pokazuje silazni trend,

pa je prirodni pad devedesetih godina logičan nastavak toga trenda, do kojega bi došlo i bez ratnih okolnosti koje su dodatno pogoršale demografska kretanja. Preokret koji tada nastaje u ukupnom prirodnom kretanju stanovništva Zagreba nažalost je samo prividan jer proizlazi isključivo iz višestrukog povećanja broja rođenih u inozemstvu, koji se najvećim dijelom pripisuje Hrvatima iseljenima iz BiH koji su iskoristili zakonsku mogućnost upisa djece u hrvatske matične knjige. Istodobno, stanovništvo u zemlji nastavlja negativni trend prirodnog kretanja, samo nakratko prekinut minimalnim priraštajem u 1996. godini.

Procijenimo li broj rođenih i umrlih u zemlji za godine u kojima nisu odvojeno iskazani (1991. i 1992.) temeljem njihova udjela u ukupnom broju rođenih i umrlih 1993, bilanca prirodnog kretanja za cijelo desetljeće iznosi -3878. Svedemo li pak broj rođenih u inozemstvu od 1994. do kraja desetljeća na njihov udjel u ukupnom broju rođenih 1993, a broj umrlih u inozemstvu od 1998. do 2000. godine procijenimo temeljem njihova prosječnog udjela u ukupnom broju umrlih od 1993. do 1997., ukupna bilanca prirodnog kretanja stalnog stanovništva Zagreba 1991.-2000. manje je nepovoljna od samog stanovništva u zemlji (zbog povoljnije dobne strukture stanovništva u inozemstvu), ali također negativna (tab. 2.b).

S obzirom na nepostojanje odgovarajuće migracijske statistike, vitalno-statistička metoda jedini je način izračunavanja migracijskog salda (tab. 3). Uzmemo li u obzir samo stanovništvo u zemlji, gdje je puno manje nepoznanica glede prirodnog kretanja, na negativnu bilancu preseljavanja otpada oko dvije trećine ukupnog pada stanovništva Zagreba. U ukupnom stalnom stanovništvu, čije je prirodno kretanje zbog priraštaja u inozemstvu povoljnije i nakon što se odbije procijenjeni "višak" rođenih od hrvatskih državljana bez prebivališta u zemlji, negativni migracijski saldo višestruko nadmašuje prirodni pad stanovništva. U svakom slučaju, proizlazi da je preseljavanje glavni čimbenik negativnog kretanja stanovništva Zagreba u posljednjem međupopisnom razdoblju.

Iako je zaključak o negativnoj bilanci preseljavanja dobiven posrednim putem, u prilog mu govore još neke činjenice. Tako podaci posljednjega popisa o doseljenom stanovništvu po županijama pokazuju da je između 1991. i 2001. godine ukupan međuzupanijski migracijski saldo Grada Zagreba iznosio -9516 (37039 doseljenih, 46555 odseljenih). Negativnu bilancu preseljavanja Grad Zagreb imao je sa sedam županija, među kojima daleko najveću sa Zagrebačkom: -17229 (5167 doseljenih, 22396 odseljenih). Glavnina doseljavanja bila je iz Bosne i Hercegovine (42153) i usmjerena na područja izvan samoga grada - Sesvete i naselja južno od obilaznice. Očito je, dakle, da je tendencija suburbanizacije Zagreba uzela maha i da je prigradsko područje definitivno postalo težištem populacijskog rasta aglomeracije. Osim toga, iako u Hrvatskoj nema zakonske obaveze odjave prebivališta prilikom iseljavanja, podaci teritorijalnog registra pokazuju pojačano iseljavanje iz Zagreba u inozemstvo u poratnim godinama.

Iako je glavna determinanta općeg kretanja stanovništva Zagreba u posljednjem međupopisnom razdoblju negativni migracijski saldo, nepovoljna će obilježja prirodnog kretanja ubuduće imati sve značajniju ulogu. Na to upućuje pad fertiliteta, uz sve veći stupanj ostarjelosti zagrebačkog stanovništva. Ipak, grad složene funkcionalne strukture poput Zagreba uvijek će biti privlačan za naseljavanje određenih kategorija stanovništva, koje će makar "mehanički" pomlađivati njegovu dobnu strukturu, tako da trend "izumiranja"

(E₄) na koji upućuju aktualne odrednice općeg kretanja stanovništva ne odražava realnu perspektivu njegova populacijskog razvoja.

Usporedba kretanja stanovništva Zagreba samoga, Zagrebačke gradske regije i Hrvatske (sl. 2) pokazuje da se i u uvjetima oslabljene, pa i negativne opće populacijske dinamike nastavlja polarizacija u populacijskom razvoju zemlje u cjelini, uz istodobnu decentralizaciju aglomeracije putem procesa metropolitanizacije.

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