

# Changes in Political and Territorial Organization and their Impact on Croatia's Urban System and Regional Development

**Aleksandar Toskić, Dražen Njegač**

This work deals with changes in Croatia's political and territorial development and its impact on urban system development and overall regional development in the country. The general assessment is that the current division of the country into counties, as opposed to the old commune system, has contributed considerably to more stable regional development based on the growth of mid-sized cities and towns, and this in turn should alleviate some of the irregularities in the characteristics of the urban system.

**Key words:** Croatia, political and territorial organization, municipalities, counties, urban system, regional development

## Promjene političko-teritorijalne organizacije i njihov utjecaj na urbani sistem i regionalni razvoj Hrvatske

U radu se govori o promjenama u političko-teritorijalnoj organizaciji Hrvatske i o njenom utjecaju na razvoj urbanog sistema i regionalni razvoj Hrvatske. Ustanovljeno je da će sadašnja podjela na županije, za razliku od starog komunalnog sistema, znatno pridonijeti stabilnijem regionalnom razvoju, baziranom na razvoju gradova srednje veličine, čime bi se trebale ublažiti nepravilnosti u obilježjima urbanog sistema.

**Ključne riječi:** Hrvatska, političko-teritorijalna organizacija, općine, županije, urbani sistem, regionalni razvoj

## INTRODUCTION

After World War II, Croatia's development was characterized by a process of intensive industrialization, which in turn spurred deruralization and urbanization. This process brought with it complex economic, demographic, functional and spatial consequences. At the same time, a form of political and territorial organization was introduced in Croatia wherein the basic unit was the municipality – approximately one hundred in all. During the three decades (1963-1992) that this communal system existed, the municipalities became closed political and economic units. During this period, dominated as it was by social ownership and a non-market economy, each municipality created its own "municipal economy." The municipality was, in essence, the sole proprietor of economic potential in its territory. This even led to the formation of so-called "municipal enterprises," which had almost no competition within their own, local territory. In effect, this meant the creation of approximately one hundred closed markets, or even a "state within a state" (Tomac 1990).

The communal system, particularly through the political and economic decision-making system in municipal seats, influenced spatial structures and processes. The decision on the location of specific industrial or service activities was made in municipal seats, and usually the latter were accorded favorable consideration. In this way, municipal seats became spontaneous centers of polarized development at the municipal level, and this was reflected in the development of Croatia's urban system.

The communal system's impact on urban system development manifested itself in three ways: 1. directly (through institutionalization of state governmental bodies in municipal seats), 2. indirectly (through interconnected links and the process of circular cumulative causality) and 3. through the decision-making system. The specificity of the communal system lay precisely in its system of political and economic decision-making. This collusion between political and economic decision-making at the municipal leadership level resulted in the concentration of economic potential in municipal seats, while the laws of the marketplace had far lower importance. This was particularly characteristic of underdeveloped municipalities with smaller seats, in which elements of closed and command economies predominated. Market economy elements were more present, albeit not dominant, in larger cities and the adjacent municipalities.

A similar role was played by centers of political and territorial organization in certain other, today transition, countries, such as Hungary or Bulgaria (Beluszky, Timar, 1992; Koulov, 1992). Thus, Koulov stresses that in Bulgaria under the socialist system, the centers of political and territorial organization had complete control over territorial allocation of investments, goods and services in the corresponding political/territorial unit. This led to an excessive concentration of capital and political power in administrative seats – similar to the situation in Croatia.

After the changes made to the political system during the 1990s, a new form of political and territorial organization was introduced in Croatia. The Republic of Croatia was divided into 21 counties (including City of Zagreb) and 544 smaller, local units: municipalities (426) and administrative towns (128). Under the new system, the local units, as opposed to the municipalities in the old system, were much smaller in terms of territory and population, and—since a market economy was introduced—they do not have the wide-ranging political and economic decision-making authority that the old municipalities had. The new market economic conditions will contribute to changes in the influence of the new political and territorial organization on spatial structures and processes.

## THE URBAN SYSTEM AND REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

The principal feature of the urban system consists of three essential dimensions: hierarchical (vertical), spatial (horizontal) and temporal. These should be considered in terms of their interdependence (Vresk 2002). The hierarchical features of Croatia's urban system can be observed through an analysis of the rules of order of city size and the index of urban primacy. Application of the rules of order of size shows irregularities at the national level. Zagreb stands out as the capital city and the largest settlement, while all other settlements lagging far behind. The primacy index in Croatia is 3.9. The slight

declining trend noted in an earlier period (in 1981 it was 3.9, while in 1991 it was 3.7) did not continue due to depopulation in other larger cities, caused by either political events over the last decade or the intense process of suburbanization in other cities during the same period, a process which has been occurring in Zagreb for about thirty years. The irregular order of city size dates from earlier periods of urban development (when it was even more irregular due to the abrupt growth of Zagreb after World War II and the slower growth of other cities). An analysis of hierarchical features also shows the predominance of small towns and a shortage of mid-sized cities, while the last decade saw a reduction in the number of cities with over 50,000 inhabitants. Croatia today has a total of 7 cities with over 50,000 inhabitants, 13 cities with 20,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, 18 cities with 10,000 to 20,000 inhabitants and as many as 42 with 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants.

An analysis of population trends based on settlement size categories during the 1971-2001 period indicates a constant decline in the population of the smallest settlements, those with up to 2000 inhabitants. On the other hand, since 1991, the share of the population of the largest settlements, those with populations over 100,000, grew. Even so, in 2001 their number fell. The reason is that Osijek fell into a lower category (50,000-10,000 inhabitants) due to more intense depopulation. This was the basic reason for the increase in the share of this category, which became all the more striking because Karlovac remained in it. It can generally be asserted that regardless of the shortage of mid-size cities (10,000 – 100,000 inhabitants), which account for the majority of the current county seats, their share in the population is growing. On the other hand, over one half of the former municipal seats belong to the smaller settlements category, i.e. up to 10,000 inhabitants (1991: 67, 2001: 68), which are the most subject to depopulation. In this category, the population share of the somewhat larger ones (pop. 2000–10,000) is stagnating, while the population of the smaller ones is constantly falling. (Table. 1). Over 40% of Croatia's cities have less than 5,000 inhabitants, while only four cities have populations between 50,000 and 100,000, and only an additional three have populations over 100,000. Ten years earlier (1991), four cities had between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, while an additional four had populations over 100,000. The domination of smaller towns is the result, among other things, of the general characteristics of Croatia's settlement patterns, wherein the settlement structure is dominated by small settlements (91% of settlements have less than 1,000 inhabitants). This predominance of small settlements certainly had an impact on the (under)development of Croatia's urban system and the course of urbanization as a factor in further spatial processes – concentration of the population in a smaller number of large settlements, accompanied by the depopulation of smaller, and especially rural, settlements. Nejašmić mentions depopulation as one of the most important population/settlement processes in Croatia, and states that *"the inherited population/settlement structure indisputably influenced postwar demographic development. The dispersions of settlements, the large number of small settlements (72% of settlements had less than 500 inhabitants in 1948), and the undeveloped system of microregional and regional centers spurred the redistribution of the population under new conditions. All of this primarily worked to the detriment of small settlements and insufficiently urbanized regions."* (1991: 270). In this sense, then, the totality of Croatia's settlement structure caused, in concert with the global processes of industrialization and urbanization, the concentration of the population into a smaller number of larger settlements.

Tab. 1 Population trends according to categories of settlements in Croatia  
 Tab. 1. Kretanje broja stanovnika prema kategorijama naselja Hrvatske

Category	1971	1981	1991	2001	1981/ 1971	1991/ 1981	2001/ 1991	2001/ 1971
100 000 and more	834203	1083116	23,5	1171793	24,5	1014561	22,9	129,8
50 001 - 100 000	94672	2,1	171555	3,7	254403	6,3	181,2	148,3
20 001 - 50 000	395074	8,9	349066	7,6	417842	10,1	88,4	119,7
10 001 - 20 000	124504	2,8	211679	4,6	251849	5,5	170	119,0
5 001 - 10 000	252238	5,7	288307	6,3	278146	6,3	114,3	96,5
2 001 - 5 000	440846	10,0	407007	8,8	457697	10,0	92,3	112,5
1 001 - 2 000	571029	12,9	527829	11,5	491126	9,9	92,4	93,0
1 000 and less	1713655	38,7	1562910	34,0	1461409	27,1	91,2	93,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4426221</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4601469</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4784265</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4437460</b>	<b>104</b>
								<b>104,0</b>
								<b>92,8</b>
								<b>100,3</b>

Source: Popis stanovništva, domaćinstva i stanova u 1981. godini, Tablica 193, S/ZS, Beograd 1986.

Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava, stanova i poljoprivrednih gospodarstava 1991., Dokumentacija 881, DZS, Zagreb, 1992.

Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2001., CD, DZS, Zagreb, 2002.

The spatial dimension of the urban system is reflected in regional differences. These are determined by a multitude of various factors: from population density and natural resources in a given region to entrepreneurial skills and inventiveness among the population and the accessibility of financial investment (Clout et al. 1994). Additionally, market demand for products from a given region has great importance, as does the functioning of transportation networks facilitated by accessibility of fuel, raw materials and other necessities in the region, and the distribution of finished goods to other regions (Brown, Burrows, 1977.). Therefore, the natural and geographic features of a given area can by themselves act as limiting factors to development. However, the decisive role, particularly today, will be played by socio-economic processes resulting from the physical dimension of human activity and changes in its natural and geographic constants. Cities have a particularly significant function here as drivers of development. Industry and other activities, as well as populations and infrastructure, are concentrated in cities. Wherever there are larger cities, their impact on the surrounding area will be positive, while regions with cities or with smaller towns will lag behind in development. Also, under conditions of economic restructuring, cities that adapt to new conditions prosper, while others will regress. Since the mid-1960s, the rural exodus and various reflections of urbanization in Croatia changed the distribution of the population.

The northwestern parts of Croatia are the most densely populated, where, due to Zagreb, the order of size of cities is the most irregular. The order of city size in the northern Croatian littoral is also irregular, for besides Rijeka and Pula there are no other larger cities, so over one fourth of the population and one third of the employed are concentrated in the macro-regional center, Rijeka (Njegač 2000). In contrast, the order of size of cities in Dalmatia and particularly in eastern Croatia is somewhat more regular. In these two regions, besides the macro-regional centers of Split and Osijek, there are several mid-sized cities, which by their function are regional or sub-regional hubs (Zadar, Šibenik, Dubrovnik in Dalmatia, and Slavonski Brod, Vinkovci, Vukovar, Požega and Đakovo in eastern Croatia). Highland Croatia is, due to unfavorable geographic factors, the least densely populated part of Croatia and the only one without larger settlements. The unfavorable features of the urban system depend on many spatial processes (spatial movement of the population, socio-economic transformation), because cities are stabilizers and regulators of these processes, and where cities are absent, so are these processes (emigration, poor socio-economic restructuring of populations, etc.).

Thus, for example, large centers that could positively redirect spatial processes and facilitate more harmonious regional development did not succeed in developing in transitional zones of impact of Croatian macro-regional centers (especially Lika, as well as Slavonian Podravina as a transitional zone of impact between Zagreb and Osijek). To a certain degree, the old communal system is responsible for this, as it had a counter-stimulative effect on the development of mid-size cities.

According to Vrišer (1969), irregularities in the formation of the urban system are conditioned by several important factors: 1. industrialization, 2. urbanization, 3. transportation technology, 4. consumption, and 5. "institutional" factors, i.e. the communal system. The communal system is therefore one of the essential causes of irregularities in the urban system. Until the 1990s, the dominant communal system had a direct impact

on which settlements would prosper, and which would stagnate, regardless of their past importance. This is how settlements with the status of municipal seats stood out in terms of development, while others lagged. The best example of this is small centers which, after acquiring the function of municipal seats, developed, while other traditional centers that which were denied this function began to stagnate (e.g. the municipal seat Korenica, in contrast to the traditional center Udbina, or the municipal seat Zlatar Bistrica as opposed to the traditional center Zlatar, and so forth). Therefore a frequent phenomenon accompanying the communal organization was unhealthy relationships between individual settlements.

### IMPACT OF THE COMMUNAL SYSTEM

Urban centers and municipal seats have an intense polarizing function which is reflected in the concentration of populations, jobs, etc. This leads to the accelerated growth of the centers, meaning their urbanization, while, on the other hand, a rural exodus ensues. It was precisely the political and economic decision-making system that distinguished municipal seats as drivers of development. Through its influence on the spatial distribution of economic activities, labor functions, gravitational zones of employment, population dynamics, and so forth, the communal system also influenced the urban system's development.

The consequences of such development emerges in population trends in individual groups of settlements. During the 1948-1971 period, the population of central settlements in Croatia increased 62%, while the population in remaining settlements declined 9%. The differences between central settlements themselves is also important: while municipal settlements increased 88%, other settlements only grew 8% (Friganović 1980-81). Such trends continued over the next two decades. The period between 1971 and 1991 is key to perceiving the changes to the spatial structure which emerged under the influence of communal organization. At the time, municipal seats in Croatia recorded their most intense population growth (31.1%), while the population of other settlements declined (-6.9%). Under conditions when approximately two thirds of Croatia's municipalities recorded declining populations, the municipal seats grew in numerical terms. Therefore, a spatial redistribution of the population occurred in the municipal seats, which became centers of polarized development at the municipal and even, for some, regional levels. In this sense, the municipal seats imposed themselves as the regulators and stabilizers of population development within the municipalities, because they absorbed a part of the population which would otherwise have left the territory of the municipality to move to larger cities.

As for labor functions, out of the total number of employed persons in 1991 (1,364,421), 82.4% worked in the municipal seats (1,124,140) (Toskić 2000). It is therefore apparent that municipal seats played a key role in the location of activities and employment. As many as 80 municipalities (78.4%) had a marked concentration of labor functions in their municipal seats (over 50% of the employed), while almost half of these municipalities accounted for over 75% of the employed in the municipal seat. Only 5 Croatian municipalities had a lower concentration in the municipal seats, less than 30% (Toskić 2000). These are municipalities whose seats developed under the influence of the new territorial organization, but these seats have still not attained the level of traditional centers which, for whatever reason, did not acquire the status of municipal seats.

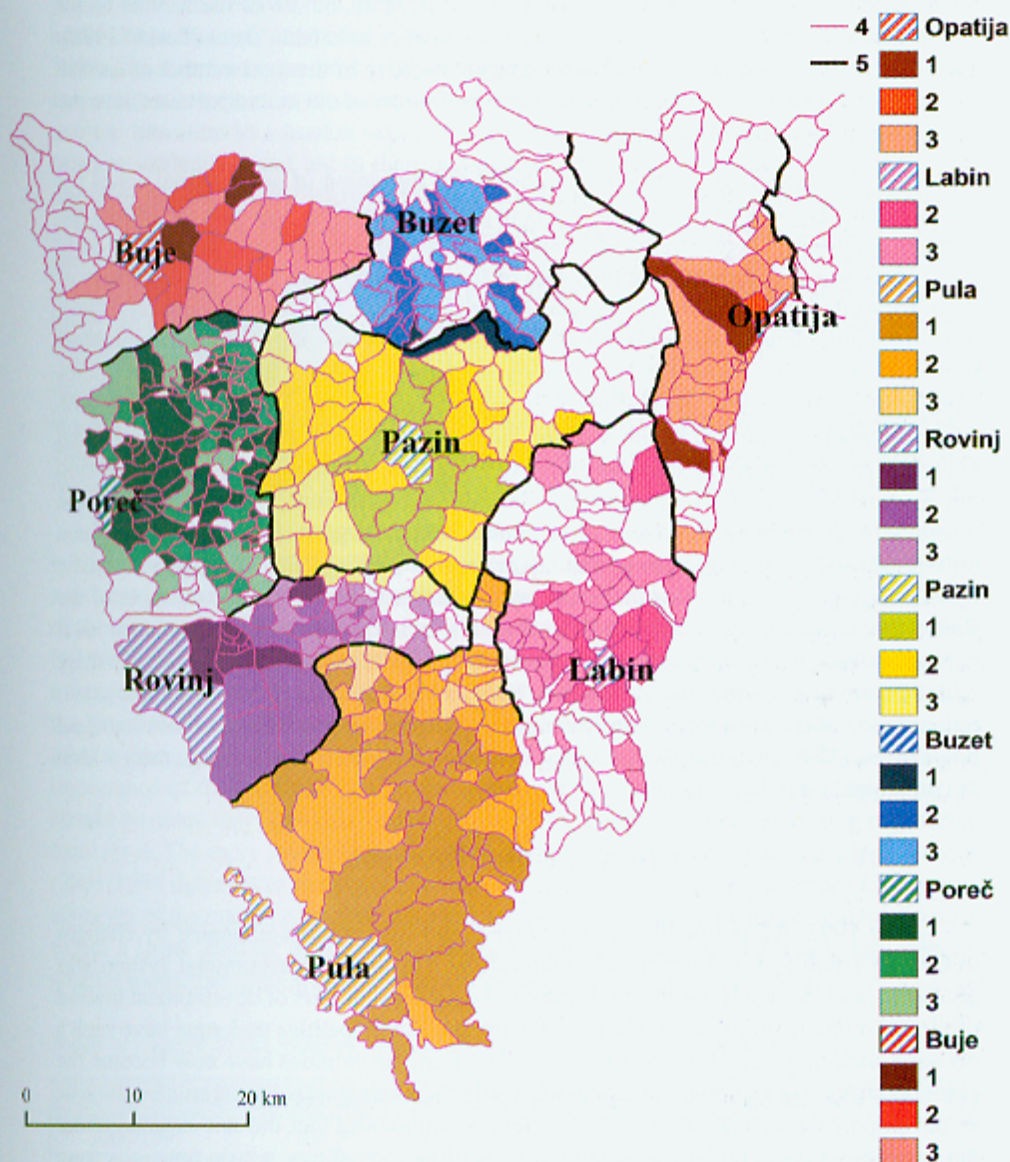


Fig. 1 Gravitational zones for daily commuters in former municipal seats in Istria, 1991 (1: 75% and over daily commuters out of the total employed in municipal seats, 2: 50-75%, 3: 25-50%, 4: settlement boundaries, 5: municipal boundaries)

Sl. 1. Gravitacijska područja dnevnih migranata bivših općinskih centara Istre 1991.g. (1: 75% i više dnevnih migranata od ukupno zaposlenih u centre općina, 2: 50-75%, 3: 25-50%, 4: granice naselja, 5: granice općina)

The spatial organization of economic activity in Croatia is also characterized by a concentration of enterprises in municipal seats. In 1991, 67.2% of the service sector enterprises and 75.3% of the industrial enterprises were located in them (Toskić 1998). Two thirds of the municipal seats have a simple majority of the total number of service sector enterprises in the municipality, while three fourths of the municipal seats have the same share of industrial enterprises.

The communal organization also induced the formation of gravitational zones for employment. The links between employment and the municipal seat increased under the communal system. Therefore, in 1961, out of 36 centers of employment, the share of daily commuters was less than 50% in only two of the municipal seats (with the exception of Zagreb), while in all others it was greater. At the same time, the share of commuters from the same municipality was over 80% in 22, and over 90% of the total number of commuters in 8 municipal seats (Vresk 1989). Twenty years later (1981), the intensity of commutes from municipalities grew. At that time, 23 centers had 80%, or 15 seats with over 90% of the commuters from the territory of the municipality (Vresk 1989). The gravitational zone of individual municipal seats/centers of employment during the 1961-1991 period did not expand, i.e. they remained within the confines of the municipal territory. Only the intensity of daily commutes to municipal seats within them grew. So interaction between individual, and even neighboring municipalities was lacking. This was a characteristic of all municipal seats, not just the small ones, which can be seen in the example of the Pula regional center (1991: pop. 62,378) (Fig. 1.). In Istria, one can see the almost ideal correspondence between the gravitational zones of municipal centers with the 25% share of daily commuters in the total population. Even in Pula, as the regional center, the gravitational zone of the most intense daily commutes does not spread outside of the municipal boundaries, although during the intercensal period from 1981 to 1991, its intensity within the municipal boundaries grew.

## COUNTY ORGANIZATION

After 1992, the political system changed, and this was accompanied by changes to Croatia's political and territorial organization. The previous communal system was abolished, and the newly-established counties became the drivers of development instead of the old municipalities, while the new, far smaller municipalities no longer have such a decision-making potential as the old ones. Therefore, the counties have now become the planning drivers of regional development, while the county seats have assumed the role of developmental centers at the regional level – something that did not succeed under the preceding system under the existing unions of municipalities, whose functions were not clearly defined. Instead of the previous 110 settlements as the centers of polarized development at the local level, the current 20 county seats are centers of polarized development at the regional level. The former municipal system with its imprecisely defined role for unions of municipalities prevented this type of polarization function at the regional level. It is clear that this reorganization of political and territorial organization caused essential and major changes which have influenced the demographic and economic development of former municipal seats.



An analysis of population trends in the former municipal seats during the 1991-2001 period shows that in over half of them (66) the population declined (Fig. 2, Table 2)<sup>1</sup>. This cannot be exclusively attributed to direct or indirect wartime events in the first half of the 1990s. It is therefore apparent that other factors played a role in this process, particularly the loss of the administrative functions, which also implies a loss of the associated privileges, and the transition to a market economy. All of this together reduced the attractiveness of these settlements and led to their demographic stagnation and even depopulation. A declining population was also noted in most county seats, while only 8 of the 21 recorded a growing population. These are mostly located in the most densely populated, northwestern part of Croatia, which additionally did not endure any significant wartime damage. The other county seats, located in less densely populated parts of Croatia and also the hardest hit by the war, are undergoing a phase of demographic decline. This is particularly true of Vukovar and Gospić, but also of Karlovac, Sisak, Osijek, Zadar and Dubrovnik. Also the demographic depopulation occurred in those cities that were not directly hit by the war but had a numerically significant Serbian minority which largely emigrated (Rijeka, Pula, Split). For some it is simply a matter of changes to administrative boundaries, i.e. territorial reduction, which was then in turn reflected in a lower population (Dubrovnik, Rijeka).

Essential from the economic aspect is the very noticeable growth of business entities in these settlements, which indicates that despite the recorded fall in the populations in most county seats, they nonetheless retained an important role in the spatial organization of economic activities and contributed to their functional significance. Most county seats (13) recorded growth in the number of business entities during the 1991-2000 period by a factor of two or even more. It is worth mentioning that such intense growth is largely the result of the transition to a market economy, but if the growth index for business entities in county seats (164.7) is compared with the nationwide figure (124.7), the outright importance of these centers to Croatia's regional development is obvious. However, it should be noted that the former municipal seats have retained their polarizing role at the local level. The more intense growth of business entities in the former municipal centers (2001/1991 index) than in the county seats is due to the fact that even before 1991 some elements of the market economy were already present to a great measure, and this in turn meant a larger number of business entities, so their growth after 1991 was less than in smaller municipal seats which only recorded very high growth after 1991.

*Index of change in the number of business entities in Croatia, 2000/1991*

	County seats	Municipal seats (former)	Croatia
2000/1991	164.7	180.8	124.7

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, 1991 and 2000

The importance of county seats to Croatia's regional development is shown by the increase in the share of business entities in them, while the increase of this share is even more remarkable at the level of former municipal seats. On this basis, one can assert that the county seats at the regional level and the former municipal centers at the local level will maintain their role as centers of polarized development.

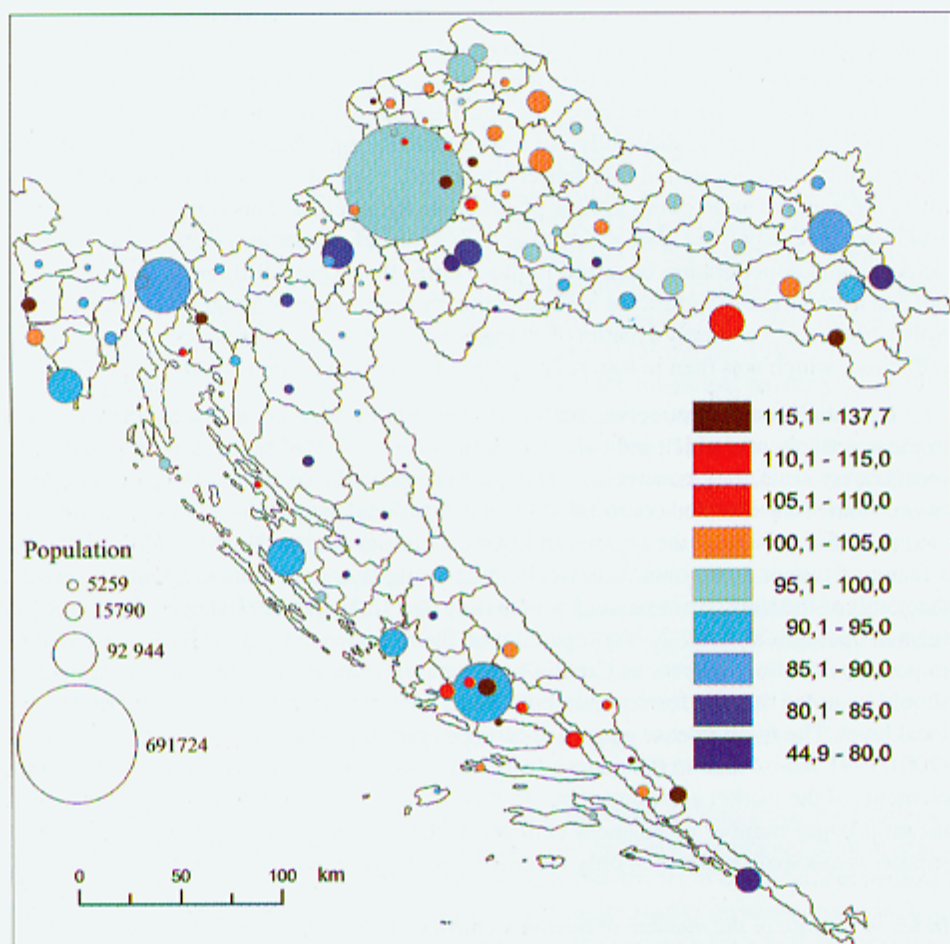


Fig. 2 Index of changes in the population of former municipal seats (2001/1991)

Sl. 2. Indeks kretanja stanovništva bivših općinskih centara 2001./1991.

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Tab. 2 Index of changes of population of former municipal seats in Croatia

Tab. 2. Indeks kretanja stanovništva bivših općinskih centara Hrvatske

Općinski centar	2001/ 1991	1991/ 1981	1981/ 1971
Poreč	137,7	118,2	148,3
Dugo Selo	136,4	119,0	142,2
Vrgorac	128,9	125,7	115,7
Solin	126,0	105,9	164,9
Crikvenica	123,6	107,5	116,7
Pregrada	118,9	125,2	110,8
Supetar	117,4	124,7	138,6
Vrbovec	117,2	122,0	138,4
Metković	115,4	121,7	137,4
Županja	115,3	116,4	115,8
Makarska	113,9	146,5	119,7
Donja Stubica	113,1	115,2	141,6
Pag	111,6	105,5	100,0
Krk	111,3	145,5	135,7
Sv. Ivan Zelina	109,3	115,9	125,9
Imotski	108,7	123,7	133,5
Ivanić-Grad	108,6	125,9	115,7
Omiš	108,0	133,0	129,5
Kaštela	107,1	105,6	98,9
Trogir	106,2	119,5	139,0
Slavonski Brod	105,3	117,0	122,9
Rovinj	104,3	114,5	127,1
Ludbreg	104,1	110,1	135,1
Krapina	103,7	112,1	129,1
Čazma	103,3	111,9	141,9
Ploče	103,2	112,2	121,0
Bjelovar	103,2	106,8	119,3
Đakovo	102,9	112,2	113,2
Križevci	102,7	113,5	118,5
Zlatar Bistrica	102,4	109,0	117,9
Koprivnica	102,4	116,5	128,9
Ivanec	101,7	113,2	116,1
Hvar	100,8	112,7	126,9
Sinj	100,8	130,6	132,7
Jastrebarsko	100,7	113,0	126,3
Daruvar	100,7	100,9	114,1
Slavonska Požega	99,5	105,9	109,3
Rab	99,4	103,8	123,3
Našice	99,2	120,8	117,9
Zabok	99,2	112,7	109,7
Varaždin	99,0	105,8	116,7
Biograd	98,9	116,6	130,8
Kutina	98,8	113,5	120,1
Orahovica	98,8	107,7	118,1
Orešnica	98,7	115,5	124,3
Čakovec	98,7	108,8	124,9
Ozalj	98,3	197,7	82,2
Novi Marof	98,2	136,1	138,9
Zagreb	97,9	108,8	113,2
Korčula	96,7	109,4	111,1
Đurđevac	96,7	100,4	105,8
Virovitica	96,4	88,2	111,9

Općinski centar	2001/ 1991	1991/ 1981	1981/ 1971
Valpovo	96,3	107,8	114,8
Donji Miholjac	96,3	114,7	116,9
Vojnić	96,0	107,5	114,2
Mali Lošinj	95,9	125,2	122,6
Slatina	95,7	115,0	123,0
Delnice	94,8	107,9	101,0
Nova Gradiška	94,4	105,6	114,8
Pazin	94,4	109,1	134,6
Vinkovci	94,0	107,1	113,4
Pula	93,9	111,1	118,2
Buje	93,8	113,3	143,6
Buzet	92,8	106,4	204,2
Vrbovsko	92,5	102,7	97,8
Split	92,5	111,9	132,0
Vis	91,9	98,0	88,3
Senj	91,5	108,3	112,8
Klanjec	91,5	109,1	100,0
Korenica	91,5	132,1	156,3
Zadar	91,1	126,5	140,1
Grubišno Polje	90,6	114,4	111,6
Šibenik	90,4	111,0	120,6
Novska	90,3	117,1	134,4
Knin	90,2	112,8	149,8
Rijeka	87,9	105,4	120,6
Duga Resa	87,9	111,4	144,6
Slunj	87,7	102,9	105,9
Labin	87,5	105,9	117,5
Opatija	86,5	95,1	106,0
Ošijek	86,3	102,8	110,7
Čabar	85,6	95,1	95,2
Beli Manastir	85,5	111,3	122,1
Gvozd	83,0	111,9	131,4
Karlovac	81,8	109,0	115,7
Otočac	80,6	104,0	109,3
Sisak	80,3	105,3	113,1
Ogulin	80,2	106,7	102,5
Petrinja	73,8	118,6	129,8
Drniš	71,6	115,3	106,8
Benkovac	69,4	127,8	134,9
Vukovar	67,5	132,7	111,3
Gospić	67,5	103,4	108,4
Gračac	65,6	110,4	118,1
Obrovac	63,6	113,9	122,7
Lastovo	61,4	114,2	65,1
Dubrovnik	61,2	113,0	126,4
Pakrac	58,2	111,4	120,0
Hrv. Kostajnica	57,3	110,2	129,9
Dvor	55,8	113,8	126,8
Donji Lapac	45,3	112,6	123,6
Glina	44,9	119,7	125,7
Ukupno	93,5	110,5	118,5

Source: Popis stanovništva, domaćinstva i stanova u 1981. godini, Tabela 193, SZS, Beograd 1986

Popis stanovništva, domaćinstva, stanova i poljoprivrednih gospodarstava 1991., Dokumentacija 881, DZS, Zagreb, 1992.

Popis stanovništva, kućanstava i stanova 2001., CD, DZS, Zagreb, 2002.

*Share of business entities in county and former municipal seats in the total number of business entities in Croatia, 1991-2001*

	County seats	Former municipal seats (including county seats)
1991	41.9	49.4
2000	55.4	71.6

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Croatia, 1991 and 2000

The current developmental stage of Croatia's urban system resulting from its current development (i.e. its hierarchical and spatial features) has also led to problems that have ensued from the palpable differences in the functional importance of county seats. It is therefore worthwhile to consider the potential of county seats in the functional organization, because this will dictate whether Croatia's urban system will acquire more balanced features (a more equal distribution of cities with a specific functional importance in space), which is vital to the more balanced and harmonious regional development of the country. In this sense, the county seats play a very important role. This is because a certain concentration of populations and functions at the level of county seats is certainly in the interest of Croatia's development as a whole, but also at the regional level.

It can be assumed that the position and importance of the current regional centers as county seats will not change, while the county seats not entirely lacking any sub-regional importance should obtain a new impetus for development. These are seats with populations of 15,000 to 25,000, such as Koprivnica, Požega, and Virovitica – and Bjelovar can be added to them, which, although it was the seat of a former union of municipalities, did not meet the criteria for a fully-fledged regional center. This is confirmed by the fact that in the last intercensal period these centers exhibited, together with Slavonski Brod, the largest population growth index.

On the other hand, other centers can be distinguished which, although they have become county seats, will by virtue of their functions and size certainly not become county centers in the functional sense. These include Pazin, Krapina and Čakovec.

As the seat of Istria County, Pazin is located in the interior, as opposed to Pula as the regional center, and it certainly will not exert a greater influence on the functional organization of this area. The location of certain governmental administrative and other state-level institutions in Pazin will enhance its functional importance, but only to the degree that it will reinforce its position as a smaller sub-regional center in Istria's interior.

Due to the proximity of major centers, Zagreb and Varaždin, there is no larger center of polarization at the regional level in the territory of Krapina-Zagorje County. The county seat Krapina, with only 4,000 inhabitants, is the smallest county seat, with a considerably weaker degree of production/service concentration. In the functional sense, Krapina-Zagorje County is characterized by bipolarity expressed in the development of two smaller centers, Krapina and Zabok (as a very industrialized center in the southern portion of the Zagorje region). The grounds for the formation of this county should be sought in the preservation of a traditional region.

Čakovec, the seat of Međimurje County (whose territory is exactly the same as the territory of the former Čakovec Municipality), is only 14 kilometers away from Varaždin (the seat of Varaždin County) even though it is characterized by a great degree of functional independence in relation to Varaždin. Given the aforementioned, the impact of the county structure will not greatly influence the position of Čakovec in the functional organization (a limiting factor in the size of a gravitational zone). It should be noted that the reasons for the emergence of these counties, whose territory was initially meant to be part of a single county in the territory of the Varaždin region, should be sought precisely in their functional independence and in political and historical grounds.

One can conclude that in terms of potential in the functional organization, four types of county seats can be distinguished in Croatia:

1. county seats whose functions surpass the boundaries of their counties, with the assumption of a certain deceleration of the polarization process to the benefit of expansion effects (Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Osijek);
2. county seats which are also true regional centers with a clearly expressed tendency of polarization at the regional (county) level as the most important centers of these counties (such as Karlovac, Varaždin, Sisak, Slavonski Brod, Zadar);
3. county seats with sub-regional importance that will be pushed toward development into regional centers (such as Virovitica, Koprivnica and to a certain extent Gospić), and
4. county seats whose potential in the functional organization does not encompass the entire territory of the corresponding county (such as Krapina and Pazin).

## CONCLUSION

The aforementioned shows that the former municipal seats experienced the most dynamic development. Here the process of circular cumulative causality which intensified regional differences stood out, inasmuch as planning measures did not influence them, which was not the case in the former system.

The introduction of a new political/territorial structure, based on smaller territorial units which no longer have the authority for economic decision-making, and larger, regional territorial organizations with far greater authority – counties, will modify the basic character of influences on the political/territorial organization on spatial structures and processes, and thereby the urban system and regional development. In this sense, several segments can be distinguished which, in our view, will differentiate the impact of the new organization on the urban system from the impact of the former communal organization. Under the new physical planning strategy, the counties have been determined as the basic planning units. In this manner the counties will assume the performance of tasks to balance and improve economic and social development in their regions. Therefore, the development of county infrastructure can be expected to exert an indirect influence on the accommodation of specific production and service activities. County seats which until now have not imposed themselves as regional centers will thereby acquire a new impetus for growth. As opposed to the old communal system, which did not have an affirmative

influence on regional development, the new territorial organization will contribute to more balanced regional development. Since the key factor of location is determined by the law of the market, one can expect the deceleration of concentration processes that will lead to a gradual decentralization of economic activities onto other centers, particularly regional centers, even though the old municipal seats retained some of their initial advantages.

## NOTES

1. due to different methods applied in the censuses in 1991 and 2001, data on the population are not completely comparable, so deviations from this number are possible.

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SAŽETAK

## Promjene političko-teritorijalne organizacije i njihov utjecaj na urbani sistem i regionalni razvoj Hrvatske

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U Hrvatskoj je šezdesetih godina XX. stoljeća uspostavljen oblik političko-teritorijalne organizacije u kojem je osnovna teritorijalna jedinica bila općina. U 30-godišnjem razdoblju postojanja (1963.-1992.) takvog sistema općine su postale zatvorene političke i ekonomske cjeline. Općina je bila vlasnik ekonomskih potencijala na svom području, što je dovelo do stvaranja stotinjak zatvorenih tržišta, odnosno "država u državi", dok su zakoni tržišta imali mnogo manje značenje. Elementi tržišne ekonomije bili su nešto zastupljeniji samo u većim gradovima i njima bližim općinama. Komunalni sistem je, dakle, putem sistema političkog i ekonomskog odlučivanja u općinskom centru utjecao na prostorne strukture i procese pa su na taj način općinski centri postali centri polariziranog razvoja na općinskoj razini, što je imalo posljedice na razvoj urbanog sistema Hrvatske. Sličnu ulogu imali su centri političko-teritorijalne organizacije i u drugim tranzicijskim zemljama, poput Mađarske ili Bugarske.

Promjenom političkog sustava 90-ih godina, u Hrvatskoj je uveden novi oblik političko-teritorijalne organizacije. Republika Hrvatska je podijeljena na 21 županiju i 554 manje, lokalne jedinice (426 općina i 128 upravnih gradova). Lokalne jedinice, za razliku od starih općina, površinom su i brojem stanovnika daleko manje i, budući da je uvedena tržišna ekonomija, nemaju više mogućnost odlučivanja kakvu su imale stare općine. Novi uvjeti tržišne ekonomije stoga će pridonijeti promjeni utjecaja nove političko-teritorijalne organizacije na prostorne strukture i procese.

Urbani sistem Hrvatske ima izrazito nepravilna obilježja. Zagreb kao glavni grad znatno se ističe svojom veličinom od ostalih naselja (indeks primarnosti u Hrvatskoj iznosi 3,9), dok u strukturi gradova prevladavaju mali gradovi, a nedostaju gradovi srednje veličine. No, bez obzira na nedostatak gradova srednje veličine (10 000 – 100 000 stanovnika), među koja spada većina današnjih županijskih središta, raste udio njihova stanovništva. Nasuprot tome, više od polovice nekadašnjih općinskih središta (68) spada u kategoriju manjih naselja, do 10 000 stanovnika, podložnijih depopulaciji, među kojima udio stanovništva onih nešto većih (2000 – 10 000 st.) stagnira, a onih najmanjih se konstantno smanjuje. Dominacija manjih gradova posljedica je, između ostalog, općih karakteristika naseljenosti Hrvatske u kojoj čak 91% naselja ima manje od 1000 stanovnika. Prevlad malih naselja utjecala je na (ne)razvijenost urbanog sistema Hrvatske i tokove urbanizacije kao čimbenik daljnjih prostornih procesa - koncentracije stanovništva u manjem broju većih naselja, a depopulacije manjih, posebice ruralnih naselja.

Najgušće su naseljeni sjeverozapadni dijelovi Hrvatske, gdje je, zbog Zagreba, najnepravilniji red veličine gradova. Izrazito je nepravilan i red veličine gradova u Sjevernom hrvatskom primorju gdje, osim Rijeke i Pule, nema većih gradova pa je više

od 1/4 stanovništva i 1/3 zaposlenih koncentrirano u makroregionalnom središtu Rijeci. Nešto je pravilniji red veličine gradova u Dalmaciji i posebno u Istočnoj Hrvatskoj, gdje osim makroregionalnih središta Splita i Osijeka, ima nekoliko gradova srednje veličine, po funkciji regionalnih ili subregionalnih središta (Zadar, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, odnosno Slavonski Brod, Vinkovci, Vukovar, Požega, Đakovo). U prijelaznim prostorima utjecaja hrvatskih makroregionalnih središta (u Lici ili u Slavonskoj Podravini kao prijelaznom prostoru utjecaja Zagreba i Osijeka) nisu se uspjeli razviti veći centri koji bi pozitivno preusmjerili prostorne procese i omogućili skladniji regionalni razvoj. To je, u određenoj mjeri i zasluga starog komunalnog sistema koji je destimulativno djelovao na razvoj gradova srednjih veličina. Gradski centri i općinska središta imala su izrazitu polarizacijsku funkciju koja se očitovala u koncentraciji stanovništva, radnih mjesta i dr. Komunalni sistem, dakle, jedan je od bitnih uzroka nepravilnosti urbanog sistema jer je direktno utjecao na to koja će naselja prosperirati, a koja će zaostajati u razvoju, bez obzira na njihovo značenje u prošlosti. Tako su se npr. neki mali centri nakon dobivanja funkcije općinskog centra naglo razvili, dok su neki tradicionalni centri, kojima je ta funkcija izmakla, počeli stagnirati. Stoga su česta prateća pojava komunalne organizacije bili i nezdravi odnosi između pojedinih naselja.

Godine 1992. promijenio se politički sustav, a samim time i političko-teritorijalna organizacija Hrvatske. Osnovane su županije kao planski nositelji regionalnog razvoja, a županijska središta preuzela su ulogu razvojnih centara na regionalnoj razini. Umjesto nekadašnjih 110 naselja, kao središta polariziranog razvoja na lokalnoj razini, današnjih 20 županijskih središta centri su polariziranog razvoja na regionalnoj razini. Takva reorganizacija političko-teritorijalnog ustroja uvjetovala je promjene koje su utjecale na demografski i gospodarski razvoj bivših općinskih središta. U više od pola (66) nekadašnjih općinskih centara u najnovijem se razdoblju smanjio broj stanovnika. Na to su, osim ratnih zbivanja u nekim područjima, utjecali i neki drugi faktori, prije svega gubitak spomenute funkcije te prelazak na tržišno gospodarstvo. Sve zajedno utječe na smanjenu privlačnost i demografsko stagniranje pa čak i regres tih naselja. U većini županijskih centara (12) primjetno je također smanjivanje broja stanovnika. Brojčano su porasli uglavnom oni koji se nalaze u najgušće naseljenom, sjeverozapadnom dijelu Hrvatske i još k tome nisu pretrpjeli ratna razaranja. Ostali, koji se nalaze u slabije naseljenim dijelovima Hrvatske, a ujedno i najjače pogođenima ratom, prolaze kroz fazu demografskog smanjenja. Posebno se to odnosi na Vukovar i Gospić, ali i na one gradove koji su imali brojčano izraženiju srpsku manjinu koja je djelomice iselila (Karlovac, Sisak, Osijek, Rijeka, Zadar). Kod drugih se pak radi i o promjeni administrativnih granica, tj. smanjenju teritorijalnog obuhvata, što se onda odrazilo i na smanjenje stanovništva (Dubrovnik, Rijeka). No, s gospodarskog aspekta, porastao je broj i udjel poslovnih subjekata u županijskim centrima. Većina njih (13) bilježi u razdoblju 1991.-2000. porast broja poslovnih subjekata čak dva i više puta, što je uglavnom rezultat prelaska na tržišnu ekonomiju. Bivši općinski centri također imaju porast broja poslovnih subjekata pa se na temelju toga može konstatirati da će županijski centri na regionalnoj razini i bivši općinski centri na lokalnoj razini i dalje zadržati ulogu centara polariziranog razvoja.

Trenutni stupanj razvijenosti urbanog sistema proizvodi probleme koji su rezultat osjetnih razlika u funkcionalnom značenju županijskih centara. Hoće li urbani sistem Hrvatske



poprimiti pravilnija obilježja (ravnomjerniji raspored gradova određenog funkcionalnog značenja u prostoru), što je od velikog značenja za ravnomjerniji i skladniji regionalni razvoj države, ovisi o potencijalima županijskih centara u funkcionalnoj organizaciji. U Hrvatskoj se, prema potencijalima u funkcionalnoj organizaciji, mogu izdvojiti četiri vrste županijskih centara: oni koji svojim funkcionalnim značenjem prelaze okvire svojih županija, s pretpostavkom određenog usporavanja procesa polarizacije u korist efekata širenja; oni koji su ujedno već pravi regionalni centri s jasno izraženom tendencijom polarizacije na regionalnoj (županijskoj) razini; oni subregionalni centri koji će dobiti poticaj u razvoju prema regionalnim centrima (npr. Virovitica, Koprivnica te donekle Gospić) i oni čiji potencijali u funkcionalnoj organizaciji ne dosežu cjelokupni teritorij pripadajućih im županija (Krapina, Pazin).

Uvođenje novog političko-teritorijalnog ustroja utemeljenog na malim teritorijalnim jedinicama koje više nemaju ovlasti ekonomskog odlučivanja te na znatno većim ovlastima većih, regionalnih teritorijalnih jedinica - županija, modificirat će osnovni karakter utjecaja političko-teritorijalne organizacije na prostorne strukture i procese, a time i na urbani sistem i regionalni razvoj. Za razliku od starog komunalnog sistema, koji nije afirmativno djelovao na regionalni razvoj, nova će teritorijalna organizacija pridonijeti uravnoteženijem regionalnom razvoju. Budući da ključni čimbenik lokacije postaju zakoni tržišta, može se očekivati usporavanje procesa koncentracije pa će, iako su stari općinski centri zadržali neke inicijalne prednosti, doći do postupne decentralizacije ekonomskih djelatnosti u druge centre.

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