



SUMMARY

THE LONG SHADOW OF THE PERIPHERY

Contributions Toward the Revitalization of Croatian Outlying Areas

This anthology comprises texts which began as a result of initial research within the frame of the topic *Systematic Revival of the Croatian Periphery* which is a part of an on going program of scientific research activities conducted by the *Institute for Social Sciences Ivo Pilar*, and carried out in 1997. The main research program is entitled *Social Structures and Social Integration*.

The anthology is comprised of theoretical works along with reports of empirical research in the area of two different Croatian peripheral areas, namely inland Istria and Lika.

In the theoretical section the concept of periphery is defined with an accent on the frequent marginal territorial character of the area; with a low density of social energy, economic activity and political power along with separate cultural characteristics peculiar to the periphery. We asked detailed questions concerning the relationship between the center and the periphery; local centers as a fulcrum for reviving the peripheral areas along with general terms of reference and social mechanisms which would motivate local participants with the energy necessary to revive the periphery. Within this framework, we considered the necessity of the restoration of the periphery as a sign of prudent development with respect to »the common good« on one hand and with respect to the relationship between the marketplace and the periphery on the other. In particular, we paid special attention to the main dimensions and initial points of support in the revival of the periphery. Thus the focus of our attention were on social forces capable of reviving the periphery, above all local resources for revival and development; local social subjects along with their social energy and the development of local ideas.

In the second section of the theoretical analysis we show the ideational approach in revitalizing the periphery, through which we differentiate neoliberal, communitarian, etatist, and pragmatic approaches. These subsequent factors are appropriate for reviving the Croatian periphery which is varied, especially with regard to available resources. In the continuation we proposed a

series of objectives for the systematic revival of the Croatian periphery.

This anthology advances two types of peripheries which is much less than we have described in the headings in which we speak of the typology of the Croatian periphery. In other words, due to the specific territorial shape of the Republic of Croatia and due to other factors the number of different types of peripheries in Croatia is higher. The empirical part of the research was carried out with an almost identical questionnaire for the two mentioned areas, namely inland Istria and Lika. On the basis of the questionnaire we conducted interviews with the authorities of individual districts and cities. The work which we are presenting was gathered on the ground.

The first example is that of Lika. This narrow area of mediterranean hinterland can be examined as a mediterranean region or at least as a complementary mediterranean region. At issue is an almost homogenous region with predominate highlands but today with a lack of greater »personality«.

Within the methodic study of these cases we also researched and analyzed structural determinants (demographic, social and economic circumstances) along with dynamic determinants of development (state interest, counties, larger urban centers, local population, the situation of local subjects, the local development of well-being and ideas, together with the social integration of all these social components necessary for the action of revival).

The example of Lika with two less developed cities with the majority of the population living in small villages, the inadequate utilization of available space which is not adequately assessed, seeks a careful and interdisciplinary approach to the problem of strategic development. The current course of demographic and economic movements have above all abandoned the greater part of the area because the population has redistributed itself all over Lika or sadly which is the frequent trend, have moved out of Lika altogether. This is how this vast region experienced a decline in population or is on a guaranteed path in other populated areas to lose a significant number of its inhabitants. The long term devalorization processes are added together with the difficult aftereffects of the Homeland War when the greater part of Lika was destroyed and looted and its residents turned into refugees.

The developmental possibilities for Lika belong to those types of resources around which is suited a systematic exertion in a professional and financial sense. Lika has a favourable transportation position while its natural resources are huge and have barely been taken advantage of.

We believe that the county organization and the district networks in the territorial administration are in the position to organize projects in the uniformity and development of Lika's space. This offers a better and more successful valorization of natural resources. The only lack are people along with intelligent and appropriate developmental laws, projects and initiatives. The

development of the rural segment of Lika is perhaps more than anywhere else in Croatia a prerequisite condition of survival. From the viewpoint of this investigation local communities are very weak and therefore insufficiently included in developmental plans and projects. The question remains as to how far they were foreseen as active participants in the process of development.

The Istria interior is a specific periphery because one section is located on the edge of the territory of the Republic of Croatia while the larger section consists of rural and lesser developed spaces of the Istria peninsula. The empirical analysis shows that the local centers and the activities in them are a main footing that reproduces social life in this area but at the same time offers the main footing for its revival. The structure of settlement is definitely rural, the number of settlements is very large while the dominant activity consists of traditional family farms. Within such conditions the question of possible fulcrums for development can be raised. The empirical research provides an overview of the state of resources which can be utilized, along with the existing potential of the active participants and a small catalogue of local ideas. These suggestions are based on the investigation of the attitudes and thoughts of the local authorities.

The approach to the progress of abandoned and neglected peripheries is worthy enough to be situated on a various principles which would be sensible in a sociological, anthropological and ecological tangent. Above all this means that developmental projects are well suited on the foundation received from the support of the population. These projects should take into consideration their interests, respect their knowledge and make use of it, bringing together institutions in local centers. In this way the village areas and local village communities would become important performers in the execution of rational and national development strategies. We hold that local interests should not be neglected on account of the whole. This position changes the relationship between the city and the village, the center and the periphery in an important way.

Croatia has the task of deciding in favour of a contemporary and appropriate developmental strategy; that it exhibits this strategy transparently and represents it in the best possible way. A large majority of Croatia's territory is undeveloped (along with negative factors there are positive examples) and it is necessary to bring these concerns into play. These conclusions are of particular importance for rural and peripheral spaces which are the foundation of the economic and social integration of the country. The decision of which models to choose and the development of projects are of strategic importance and for this alone they demand a scientific preparation and implementation.

Translated by mr. sc. Marko Zlomislić