

# Urban Opportunities: Demography and Mobility in a Rural Community (Tomaj, Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries)

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## Introduction

This article examines the demography of the Karst region of Tomaj from a long-term perspective. The focus is on the historical population trends within the parish of Tomaj, with particular attention to specific segments of its territory. The area under investigation is situated within the so-called ‘mother Karst’ region in the western part of today’s Slovenia and encompasses all the natural geographical features of the karstic environment (Melik 1960; Panjek 2006). The territory of the Tomaj parish lies in the most prolific part of the ‘mother Karst’ region. Thanks to favourable pedological and climatic conditions, prosperous activities such as viticulture and fruit growing have thrived in this area, alongside agriculture and farming husbandry (Moritsch 1969, 75).

Another characteristic of the Tomaj area is its neighbourhood with the municipality of Trieste and its relative proximity to the city of Trieste, the main seaport and one of the largest urban agglomerates in the Habsburg Monarchy. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the Karst region, which forms the immediate hinterland of Trieste, belonged administratively to the land lordships of Devin, Senožeče and Socerb (in the Kranjska region) and Rihemberk, Švarcenek and Novi grad (in Goriška county). In the time of the Republic of Venice, most of the Karst area economically gravitated more towards Gorica, as the main trade outlet to the Venetian territory, rather than towards Trieste. The influence of Trieste was more linked to the Triestine noble families who held the Karst manors and to the area’s eccle-

siastical affiliation to the Trieste diocese. This meant religious and spiritual relations between the area and Trieste, and the employment of upper-class Trieste citizens in ecclesiastical positions in Karst parishes. However, as Trieste changed from a communal coastal town under the administration of the local patriciate to the main port and maritime mercantile centre of the Habsburg monarchy, the influence of the maritime city grew from the early eighteenth century onwards and was increasingly reflected in the socio-economic level as well as in the demographic dynamics of the Karst region.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the socio-economic relations between the city and its surrounding countryside did not develop linearly over time. The economy and social development of the rural areas were affected by the expanding city to different degrees in individual historical phases. It should also be taken into account that in the territory of today's Slovenia, towns were mostly small and did not have the same direct economic and political impact on the countryside as in the countries organized on communal administrative systems. In the case of Trieste, which was developing into one of the economic poles on a nationwide scale in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the location and distance of individual rural areas from the city, their administrative political affiliation, and the development of traffic and other logistic infrastructure played an important role. All these elements were also reflected in the history of the Tomaj area, where the city was not within direct, so to speak, daily reach of the residents, as were the village communities within the Trieste municipal territory. This affected the extent and forms of involvement in the city's economic and social dynamics.

In the case of Tomaj, as in other Karst villages, illustrating the population's evolution and the underlying dynamics over the centuries poses a significant challenge. The birth and death datasets from the parish registers, starting in 1625, are incomplete until the 1820s, while a series of official censuses do not begin until the nineteenth century (ŠAK, ŽAT, SA 1820). The outcomes of earlier national censuses, inaugurated in the 1750s, remain unavailable or have not been preserved. We only have data of ecclesiastical origin on the number of souls for 1732 (ŠAK, ŽAT, MKK 1762–1784). Consequently, tracking population trends during the early modern era relies solely on indirect estimates. A further complication arises from the ecclesiastical administrative configuration. The territory of the parish of St Peter and Paul in Tomaj, first mentioned in 1272, did not change until the second half of the nineteenth century (Höfler 2016,

200). However, new curacies and chaplaincies (later elevated to parishes) were established in the area from the late eighteenth century onwards, each keeping its registers. Due to the challenging merge of data from all these ecclesiastical administrative units and the unreliability of discerning vital statistics by individual villages until the 1730s, this study adopts a dual-scale approach, referring to the entire parish territory until the 1780s. Subsequently, it narrows its focus to the territory of the Tomaj curacy. In terms of content, alongside an indicative reconstruction of population development, focus will be placed on how demographic dynamics intertwined with the opportunities for work and life presented by the nearby expanding port city of Trieste. This exploration will also consider the interconnections with social, economic, and political factors of both local and international significance.

### **Historical Traits of the Demography of Tomaj**

Discussing the population of the Tomaj area in the Middle Ages and early modern period necessitates specific research into fragmentary data from secular and ecclesiastical sources, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Even in the eighteenth century, due to the above-mentioned data series discontinuities, following demographic trends is only possible hypothetically. This paper aims to present only the main outlines of population development, with an emphasis on natural and social factors and the systemic aspects of their functioning. Therefore, we rely on available birth records from the early modern era as a basis for drawing conclusions about long-term demographic dynamics and roughly estimating the size of the population in various historical phases.

The birth data series indicates a historical demographic shift in the Tomaj area at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Throughout both centuries, short-term birth dynamics fluctuated greatly. However, in the seventeenth century, the population within the parish's territory remained relatively stationary in the long run. Conversely, the eighteenth century was characterized by consistent, and at times vigorous, population growth, which continued into the following century. The seventeenth century is renowned as the 'crisis' century of European demography. Unlike the sixteenth century, which saw overall positive demographic growth, the seventeenth century was marked by stagnation. The population experienced sharp fluctuations due to alternating periods of high natality or mortality, yet its overall size did not significantly change in the long term. The stationarity and fluctuations reflected the precarious

socio-economic situation, frequent crises, intermittent shortages, and epidemics, along with other factors. A similar pattern is evident in the Tomaj area, comparable to the neighbouring parish of Povir and the karstic area of the municipality of Trieste (Kalc 2017). A more detailed analysis of selected Tomaj family genealogies reveals elements suggesting a certain degree of deliberate birth control during economically challenging periods, alongside greater reproductive freedom during times of relative economic ease.

Gaps in the series of death records up to 1646 and between 1665 and 1702 only allow for a partial overview of the crisis moments in the vital dynamics of the parish of Tomaj in the seventeenth century. A significant crisis occurred in 1650 when the number of deaths nearly tripled compared to previous years and surpassed at one point the number of births. A second, less pronounced peak in mortality followed in 1663. Subsequent decades also witnessed fluctuating mortality rates, along with oscillations in the population, as indicated by more pronounced fluctuations in the number of births and other documents detailing the precarious economic situation and initiatives to secure food supplies (Panjek 2018, 38–9; 2021, 93–104). Given the inconsistencies of parish registers during this period, particularly in the recording of neonatal deaths, it is plausible that the mortality rate was even higher than the recorded cases suggest.

The eighteenth century, as already mentioned, witnessed a new period of demographic vitality, leading to persistent long-term population growth. This century's development can be analysed in more detail using the population estimates displayed in table 7.1. The data in column (a) are derived from the ratio between the population in 1732 (the only available population data) and the average number of births over the nine-year interval from 1728 to 1736. The resulting birth rate of 43.7 per thousand, or a ratio of one birth for every 22.9 inhabitants, is then multiplied by the average annual number of births for the nine-year interval in question. A natality rate of over 40 per thousand was not uncommon in the period under scrutiny, considering that in some parishes in Carniola in the mid-1750s it was 41.5 per thousand and that in 1762 it was as high as 48.3 per thousand in the Carniolan part of the Ljubljana diocese (Valenčič 1958, 49–50; Šircelj 2006, 55). However, it can be highly volatile, making population projections using a constant coefficient very approximate and sometimes misleading. A higher-than-real birth rate produces lower population results, while downward deviations increase the population excessively. Therefore, in column (b), the population figures obtained by adding (or, before 1732, subtracting)

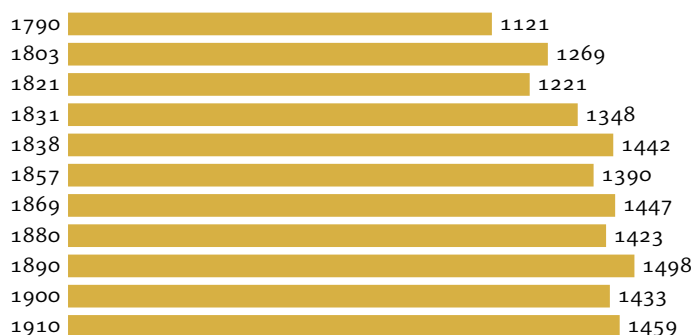
**Table 7.1** Population in the Parish of Tomaj 1700–1780

Year	Population		Annual growth rate (‰)	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1700	2750	2750		
1720	2816	2816	1.2	1.2
1740	2947	3292	2.3	7.8
1760	3353	3698	6.4	5.6
1780	3479	3964	1.8	3.3

*Notes* (a) estimate based on 1 birth for every 22.9 inhabitants, (b) estimate based on the natural balance. ŠAK, ŽAT, MKK 1663–1708, 1708–1737, 1738–1761, 1762–1784, 1785–1790.

the natural balance are compiled for comparison. This calculation is also imperfect since it does not consider migration, specifically the emigration balance, which was predominant in the case of Tomaj, thus potentially inflating the actual population numbers. Until the mid-1720s, original data on births and deaths are scarce, which led to a lump-sum estimate of the 1700 population as the most likely long-term average of the seventeenth-century population size. Consequently, the data in both columns are rough approximations, yet they adequately illustrate the growth trends in the parish of Tomaj up to the 1780s.

A new historical chapter in the demography of the Tomaj area, beginning in the early eighteenth century, is characterized by more stable birth dynamics. Moreover, in the initial decades of the eighteenth century, no significant mortality peaks occurred, resulting in slow population growth. However, in the 1720s and 1730s, there was a notable increase in the number of births, marking a phase of accelerated demographic increase. As mentioned, estimates based on birth rates yield lower results than actual figures, indicating that the population from 1740 onwards was reliably higher than indicated in column (a). During the period from 1720 to 1740, in particular, the birth rate presents a distorted picture, as the actual growth rate was undoubtedly significantly higher, as indicated by the natural growth rate in column (b). Consequently, the growth rate in the years 1740 to 1760 was slightly lower than shown in column (a), but the population experienced significant growth during this period. Growth slowed down in the following twenty years, particularly in the 1760s, when there were noticeable peaks in mortality. By 1780, the actual population of the parish was likely closer to the figure in column (b) than to that in column (a).



**Figure 7.1** Population in the Tomaj Curacy from 1790 to 1910

*Notes* 1790 – estimation based on birth rate; 1803 – diocesan visitation; 1821, 1831, 1838 and 1857 – Status Animarum; 1869–1910 – population censuses. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, MKK; ADTS V; ŠAK, ŽAT, SA; *Orts-Repertorium von Triest und Gebiet, Görz, Gradisca und Istrien* 1873; *Spezialortsrepertorium der österreichischen Länder* 1885; 1894; 1906; 1918.

In 1821, based on the census data,<sup>1</sup> the parish population totalled 4,484 inhabitants, marking a 28 percent increase compared to forty years earlier. This corresponds to an annual growth rate of 6.1 per thousand. However, the developmental dynamics during these forty years were far from linear. The population experienced rapid growth until the early nineteenth century, followed by stagnation and even a slight population decline.

This becomes readily apparent when the focus is directed on the narrower area of Tomaj's curacy, for which more detailed and reliable vital statistics from the 1790s onwards, alongside population data from 1803, are available (ADTS, V, *Situazione della Diocesi* 1803–1821). In addition to Tomaj, which serves as the ecclesiastical seat with the parish church, this administrative unit comprises the villages of Križ, Šepulje, Utovlje, Dobravlje, Grahovo brdo, and Filipčje brdo.<sup>2</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century and up until the First World War, this territory overlapped with the administrative municipality of Tomaj.

Estimating the population at 1,121 in 1790 based on the birth ratio method, we observe an annual growth rate of 9.5 per thousand until 1803, followed by a decline averaging 2.1 per thousand until 1821. This decline

<sup>1</sup> Reported in the Status Animarum (ŠAK, ŽAT)

<sup>2</sup> The villages of the Tomaj curacy are of medieval origin and are first documented in the following years: Utovlje (Vtendorf) and Šepulje (Sepulsach) in 1147, Križ (Crux) and Dobravlje (Dobrilach) in 1180, Tomaj (Tomay) in 1272, Grahovo brdo (Bredis) and Filipčje brdo (Bredis) in 1316 (<https://topografija.zrc-sazu.si/>).

coincided with a politically and economically turbulent period marked by French occupations, particularly evident during the era of the Illyrian provinces (1809–1814) when the broader north Adriatic area suffered from the British naval blockade and the greatly weakened Trieste economy. This economic crisis persisted and deepened in the initial years of the pre-March era, for other reasons as well (Kalc 2011). The demographic effects in the Tomaj curacy are also evident in marriage dynamics, a direct marker of social well-being, with the number of marriages declining by a quarter in the second decade of the nineteenth century. However, this stagnation represented only a brief episode within a long-term trend of positive growth that extended from the eighteenth century into the 1840s. During the 1820s and 1830s, the population experienced vigorous growth, with annual rates of 9.9 and 9.6 per thousand, respectively (table 7.2). This trend mirrors developments in the entire Slovenian ethnic territory, where the 1820s, 1830s, and partly the 1840s witnessed significant demographic expansion (Blaznik et al. 1970; Zwitter 1936). In less than 20 years, the population of the Tomaj curacy increased by almost a fifth. However, in the 1850s, this growth phase came to an end, marking the beginning of a new historical trend that lasted until the First World War and beyond. Over this period, the population registered negligible change, indicating a new long-term stationary dynamic. The annual growth rate from 1838 to 1910 was a mere 0.2 per thousand, resulting in a population growth of only 1.2 percent. Between 1869 and 1910, the population grew by just 0.8 percent.<sup>3</sup> In Goriška, one of the Austrian provinces characterized by lower demographic growth during that time, and within which the Tomaj area was politically and administratively situated, the population increased by 26 percent over the same forty-year period (Kalc 2013).

The low demographic growth observed in the second half of the nineteenth century and up to the First World War characterized the entire Karst area, except for villages within the municipal territory of Trieste. In the case of the Tomaj area, this trend was even more pronounced. As evidenced by table 7.3, which compares data with the neighbouring parish of Povir and the Karst villages of the municipality of Trieste, the popula-

<sup>3</sup> The population increase would have been even more modest if not for the establishment of the School Sisters convent, along with a school and boarding facility, in Tomaj in 1898. Starting from 1902, students from more distant areas were also accommodated there (Cencič 2013, 293). This development contributed to the sex disparity observed in the final Austrian census of 1910, which recorded 238 men and 330 women in Tomaj (*Spezialortsrepertorium der österreichischen Länder 1918*).

tion of the Povir parish experienced more significant growth than that of the Tomaj parish from the 1820s to the late 1860s. This difference became even more pronounced from the 1870s onwards. However, the growth of the Povir area in the latter period was primarily driven by Sežana and Divača. Sežana developed as an administrative and commercial centre, while Divača became a hub for railway transportation. The other villages of the Povir parish experienced the same slow growth or stagnation as those of Tomaj. This is also evident from housing statistics: in both the Tomaj and Povir parishes, the number of houses increased by only 11 and 14 percent, respectively, from the 1870s. The bulk of new constructions occurred in Sežana and Divača, where the number of houses had surged by 90 percent and 105 percent, respectively, between 1869 and 1910 (*Orts-Repertorium von Triest und Gebiet, Görz, Gradisca und Istrien* 1873; *Spezialortsrepertorium der österreichischen Länder* 1918).

The situation was markedly different in the eleven villages of the Karst region within the municipality of Trieste. Benefitting from the improved road network and the advantages of being closer to the city and administratively part of the municipality of Trieste, the population here was better positioned to capitalize on opportunities, both in agricultural and non-agrarian sectors, intertwined with the urban economy. Consequently, the population of these Triestine villages grew by more than three quarters from the 1820s to the late 1860s, and this demographic growth remained significant from the 1870s to 1910, with a 28 percent increase (Kalc 2018, 165). The number of houses also saw a corresponding increase, expanding fourfold compared to the villages of the Tomaj and Povir parishes. However, development in this area was uneven and closely tied to the evolution of the road network. Settlements located along both old and, especially, new roads constructed during the nineteenth century experienced more significant growth. This growth was facilitated by catering, commercial, transport, and craft activities. In contrast, areas with less favourable integration into urban labour and the wider economic market saw slower development, as they did not yield as much in terms of combined income from agrarian and non-agrarian economic sources (Kalc 2017). The effects of increased interaction with the urban economy, facilitated by shorter distances, improved transport connections, and the higher market value of local agriculture, were also noticeable in the villages of the so-called Breg, the northernmost area of Istria bordering the territory of the municipality of Trieste. By the 1870s, development in this region resembled that of the areas of Tomaj and Povir, with a population increase of 7.5 percent between

**Table 7.2** Population in the Tomaj Curacy

Year	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
1790	1121						
1803	1269	9.5	46.0	33.8	12.2	-2.7	-0.22
1821	1221	-2.1	40.3	34.9	5.4	-7.5	-1.40
1831	1348	9.9	38.4	27.6	10.8	-0.9	-0.09
1838	1442	9.6	36.7	28.9	7.8	1.8	0.24
1857	1390	-1.9	42.6	36.7	5.9	-7.8	-1.33
1869	1447	3.3	41.2	28.0	13.2	-9.8	-0.75
1880	1423	-1.5	43.0	35.9	7.1	-8.6	-1.21
1890	1498	5.1	42.8	29.7	13.1	-7.9	-0.61
1900	1433	-4.4	41.1	31.0	10.2	-14.6	-1.44
1910	1459	1.8	38.2	26.1	12.0	-10.2	-0.85
1926	1601	5.8	26.1	20.3	5.8	0.0	0.01
1931	1595	-0.8	17.8	13.8	4.0	-4.8	-1.19

*Notes* (a) population, (b) annual growth rate, (c) birth rate, (d) death rate, (e) natural balance (c - d), (f) migratory balance (b - e), (g) natural/migratory balance (f/e). Relative values in per thousand. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, MKK; ADTS V; ŠAK, ŽAT, SA; *Orts-Repertorium von Triest und Gebiet, Görz, Gradisca und Istrien* 1873; *Spezialortsrepertorium der österreichischen Länder* 1885; 1894; 1906; 1918; Cenčič 2013.

**Table 7.3** Population Growth in the Parish and Curacy of Tomaj, the Parish of Povir, and in the Karst Villages of the Municipality of Trieste

Years	Tomaj parish	Tomaj curacy	Povir parish	Villages in Trieste municipality
1821-1869	13.1	18.5	22.3	78.4
1869-1910	3.0	0.8	14.1	28.7

*Notes* In percent. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, MKK; ADTS V; ŠAK, ŽAT, SA; *Orts-Repertorium von Triest und Gebiet, Görz, Gradisca und Istrien* 1873; *Spezialortsrepertorium der österreichischen Länder* 1885; 1894; 1906; 1918; Kalc 2017; 2018.

1835 and 1869. Despite a decline in the 1890s and emigration starting at the turn of the new century, the population continued to grow, reaching a 27.3 percent increase by 1910 (Verginella 1990, 5).

After the First World War, the area of Tomaj saw a new phase of demographic growth. The population thus reached its historic maximum in the mid-1920s, but soon began to decline markedly. In the 1930s and the 1940s, the downward trend only deepened and took on the character of a partial depopulation, with the population falling by 27.3 percent by 1948. The negative trend continued in the 1950s and 1960s. In the years after the

**Table 7.4**

Population Number and Annual Growth Rate in the Tomaj Curacy

*Notes* Based on data from *Spezialortsrepertorium der österreichischen Länder* 1918; Cenčič 2013.

Year	Population	Annual growth rate (‰)
1910	1459	
1926	1601	5.8
1931	1595	-0.8
1948	1003	-27.3
1953	985	-3.6
1966	914	-5.8

Second World War, the demography experienced the repercussions of altered national borders and the transition to the Yugoslav state and socialist socio-political order. The new national border cut the area off from its historical centre of gravity, Trieste, incorporating it into the newly conceptualized regional framework of western Slovenia, with Nova Gorica, Koper, and Sežana emerging as new centres. As part of the Iron Curtain, the Yugoslav-Italian border was heavily fortified, and mobility was severely restricted until the gradual opening to local populations and small-scale border traffic in the latter half of the 1950s.

Despite the nuances we have outlined thus far, the demographic trends within the Tomaj area align closely with the broader population evolution over the extensive historical period under examination. It mirrors the predominant characteristics of the wider Karst area, with the notable exception of the karstic portion of Trieste's municipal territory, which, as previously mentioned, exhibited unique behaviours due to its closer and distinct interrelation with urban economic and social dynamics. Regarding demographic factors, the population development in Tomaj can be delineated into two distinct periods. Initially, until the mid-nineteenth century, it was primarily influenced by natural growth determinants. Subsequently, migration, particularly emigration, exerted a crucial impact.

### **Natural Determinants of Growth: Natality and Mortality**

Population growth from the eighteenth century onward, following the demographic crisis of the seventeenth century, resulted from increased natality and its sustained excess over mortality in the long term. The absence of censuses and incomplete birth and death data series for the seventeenth century, and to some extent the eighteenth century, renders it impossible to accurately quantify this phenomenon or present it in terms of birth and death rates. However, the positive trend is evident in the balance between

the number of births and deaths (table 7.1), consistently showing a surplus over the decades, despite occasional years of deficit. The eighteenth century ushered in a more favourable socio-economic climate across the wider Inner Austrian region. The north-eastern Adriatic area experienced these changes even more directly with the establishment of the free port of Trieste. Although this cameralistic ‘experiment’ encountered significant challenges, and its success remained uncertain even by the mid-century, the development of transportation and infrastructure immediately provided tangible economic prospects for the hinterland of Trieste. The expansion of the maritime city and the growth of its mercantile economy in the latter half of the century further enhanced these opportunities, positively impacting the demographics.

The natality and mortality in the long nineteenth century are shown in detail in table 7.2, which refers to the area of the Tomaj curacy. The birth rate maintained its pre-industrial level until the twentieth century, except for the 1830s, well above 40 per thousand. Only in the twentieth century did a more consistent decline begin, heralding the end of the demographic transition. The final transition phase became evident, as elsewhere in Slovenia, after the First World War, when the birth rate fell by 12 per thousand points (Šircelj 2006, 56). The death rate had already fallen at the end of the eighteenth century, after (in rough terms) exceeding 40 per thousand in the 1780s. In the nineteenth century, it was on average almost 10 points lower than the birth rate, and exceeded the birth rate only in certain years. Such cases were common until the 1850s, and they usually occurred in conjunction with poor harvests and general deprivation due to bad weather, economic crises, or other factors that worsened the standard of living and compromised the population’s immune resistance. The years of deficit, when the number of deaths far exceeded the number of births, were 1805 and 1806, 1809, 1816, 1821, 1846 and 1855. A mortality crisis, when the number of deaths increases by two times or more than the normal average and can have a long-term negative impact on the reproduction of the population (Bertoša 1989, 8; Livi Bacci 1999), occurred only in 1809, but the successive negative years of 1805 and 1806 left an even larger gap in the population. The general increase in mortality due to the climatic consequences of the eruption of the Tambora volcano in 1815, which caused the so-called two years ‘without summer’ (1815 and 1816), appeared in Tomaj in 1816. It was somewhat less pronounced than, for example, in Istria, where the mortality took lives mercilessly in 1817 (Jelenić 2021, 169–70). The year 1821 saw the last episode of pronounced mortal-

ity in the post-Napoleonic period (Illyrian provinces), which was affected by diseases related to food scarcity and malnutrition. This was especially the case with dysentery, which appeared with all its force in Tomaj in 1819, causing most of the deaths. Twenty years later death rates fell well below 30 per thousand and population growth recorded its historical moment. Mortality increased again in the 1840s and hit hard in 1846. This time, too, various gastrointestinal infections were deadly. In 1855, the cause of increased mortality was cholera. This typically 'urban' disease, which first appeared in the north-eastern Adriatic in the 1830s and repeatedly hit Trieste and the Istrian coastal cities, found its way to the countryside through the population's contact with the cities. One death from cholera per year was also recorded in the village of Tomaj in 1836 and 1849. In 1855, when a real epidemic broke out both in Trieste and in the Koper district, with more than 10 percent of the city's population infected and thousands dying (Železnik 2010), the disease took a greater toll in Tomaj as well, more precisely 20, or a good half, of all deaths that year. However, the Tomaj parish, where the deaths increased by 30 percent, was less affected than the neighbouring Povir parish, which saw the mortality more than doubled.

Mortality rates continued to fluctuate from the 1860s until the end of the century, often surpassing birth rates. This trend was particularly evident during the agrarian and general economic crises of 1873 and 1874 when many people succumbed to lung diseases like angina. Although cholera reappeared in Trieste and Istria in the mid-1860s and mid-1880s, it did not affect Tomaj at this time. In summary, from the 1860s onward, mortality ceased to condition natural growth, unlike in earlier periods, and its trajectory decisively declined in the twentieth century. It surged again during the war years of 1915–18, registering a 30 percent increase compared to the preceding years, while the birth rate dropped by 45 percent at the same time. The decade following the First World War saw a rapid decline in mortality, dropping from 26.1 per thousand to 13.8 per thousand between 1910 and 1931. This, coupled with an increased birth rate in the immediate post-war years, led to population growth reaching the historical maximum. However, natality, which remained at 26.1 per thousand in the first half of the 1920s, declined to 17.8 per thousand in the second half.

Child mortality, a characteristic feature of pre-modern demography and, for a long time, of the demography of the industrial age, was always a key factor in mortality. Table 7.5 shows that children under the age of six accounted for 55 percent of all deaths in Tomaj from the 1830s to the First World War. In the last two decades of the eighteenth century and often in

the nineteenth century, the number of deaths in this age group represented more than 60 percent of all deaths. These instances coincided with the aforementioned peaks in total mortality, but also with periods of accelerated population growth, such as in the 1820s when child mortality declined less than overall mortality. It did not drop significantly until the 1890s, and more markedly in the 1920s.

A large proportion of child mortality in the first five years of life affected babies up to one year of age when young lives are at greatest risk of death due to poor nutrition, hygiene and other factors. This age group, as shown in the first column, accounted for up to one third of all deaths in some periods and 46 percent of deaths in the 0–5 age group over the entire period under consideration. In the 1890s, infant mortality (the 0–1 age group) also began to decline, but at a slower rate, so that its share within the 0–5 age group rose to 64 and 73.5 percent, respectively, during these decades. The age group 71–80 years was the second most notable with 10.8 percent of all deaths over the whole period. This class shows a more pronounced variability up to the 1860s, but from then on it indicates that mortality began to shift slowly from the youngest to the oldest segments of society.

### **Migration: From a Subordinate to a Systemic Factor**

Throughout the period under observation, migration accompanied the demographic development of the Tomaj and the wider Karst area, albeit with varying intensity and demographic effects in different historical phases. Migratory movements are evidenced by various indices in earlier centuries, allowing deductions about the departures and arrivals of inhabitants. For instance, the emergence of new surnames at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries indicates immigration, likely contributing to the rapid population growth during that period. In the later eighteenth century, vital statistics with natural balances surpassing the most optimistic estimates of the population's actual size suggest that the natural population increase was partly offset by emigration. However, migration did not have as pronounced an impact on population development as natural factors during this historical stage.

The situation considerably changed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as evidenced in table 7.2. Throughout this period, a largely positive natural balance, often surpassing an annual rate of 10 per thousand, ensured sustained positive natural population growth. However, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, such demographic vitality translated to actual population increase to a lesser extent, as a significant portion of the

**Table 7-5** Deaths in Tomaj by Age Group (1731–1910)

Years	0–1	0–5	6–10	11–20	21–30	31–40	41–50	51–60	61–70	71–80	81–	Total
1731–40	11.6	43.8	9.9	2.5	6.6	5.8	2.5	7.4	5.0	10.7	5.8	100.0
1741–50	17.3	50.0	6.7	6.7	2.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	1.9	11.5	8.7	100.0
1751–60	24.8	54.3	5.4	3.9	4.7	5.4	6.2	7.8	2.3	6.2	3.9	100.0
1761–70	32.0	57.4	4.1	4.9	2.5	3.3	4.9	5.7	0.0	10.7	6.6	100.0
1771–80	31.6	67.1	2.6	2.6	3.9	2.6	3.3	3.3	2.0	7.2	5.3	100.0
1781–90	27.3	61.7	5.8	2.6	6.5	1.3	1.9	9.7	1.3	5.8	3.2	100.0
1791–00	19.7	55.7	8.7	4.4	6.0	4.4	2.2	7.1	3.8	4.9	2.7	100.0
1801–10	23.3	53.3	0.8	5.8	2.5	5.8	5.8	4.2	3.3	14.2	4.2	100.0
1811–20	18.5	60.3	5.3	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.0	4.6	2.0	15.2	3.3	100.0
1821–30	33.6	64.8	0.0	1.6	4.0	4.8	0.8	8.0	2.4	7.2	6.4	100.0
1831–40	27.3	59.4	6.1	3.6	3.6	4.2	4.8	3.6	3.0	9.7	1.8	100.0
1841–50	28.4	56.8	4.0	4.5	2.8	0.6	6.8	5.7	2.3	13.6	2.8	100.0
1851–60	27.5	60.8	3.9	2.0	1.3	5.9	2.0	8.5	3.3	7.8	4.6	100.0
1861–70	29.1	57.7	4.4	4.9	6.0	2.7	3.3	5.5	2.7	11.0	1.6	100.0
1871–80	33.3	60.3	7.8	4.3	0.7	2.1	3.5	1.4	3.5	11.3	5.0	100.0
1881–90	22.4	52.4	4.2	4.2	2.1	4.2	5.6	5.6	2.1	11.9	7.7	100.0
1891–00	29.5	46.2	2.3	6.8	2.3	3.0	9.1	3.8	6.1	12.9	7.6	100.0
1901–10	20.8	28.3	5.8	4.2	5.0	3.3	1.7	8.3	10.8	25.8	6.7	100.0
Total	25.7	55.6	4.9	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.9	5.8	3.1	10.8	4.6	100.0

Notes In percent. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, MKU 1702–1739, 1739–1733, 1773–1790, 1790–1839, 1841–1933.

natural growth was curtailed by emigration. Such a tendency characterized the whole district of Sežana, to which Tomaj belonged administratively at that time, where the population increased by only 18.8 percent between 1869 and 1910. In comparison, the population of the entire Goriška region grew by 37.9 percent (Kalc 2013, 668–9). Within the curacy of Tomaj, the impact of emigration was even more pronounced, resulting in a population growth of only 0.8 percent. While emigration in the Sežana district accounted for up to 65 percent of the natural balance in the period 1869–1910 (Kalc 2013, 667), it absorbed 92 percent of the natural balance in the Tomaj curacy, nearly nullifying the natural reproductive effect.

Table 7.2 illustrates that from the 1790s, the migration balance remained consistently deeply negative, except for a brief period in the 1820s and notably in the 1830s, when substantial positive population growth occurred. This growth was attributed to immigration, alongside natural factors. However, during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the 1850s, the 1870s, and the 1890s, the outward migration was significantly higher than the natural increase, resulting in population decline. Until the 1870s, periods of heightened emigration coincided with the aforementioned crises, which also contributed to increased mortality. From the mid-century, and especially from the 1880s onwards, emigration can be paralleled with the general expansion of migratory movements in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (and in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe). This phenomenon manifested as a significant redistribution of the population from rural to urban areas within the country and abroad (Steidl et al. 2017; Fassmann 1994; Bade 2000; Cattaruzza 1979; 2002). Internal and international emigration continued to shape the demographics of Tomaj after the First World War, contributing to the rapid decline in population from the second half of the 1920s onwards. This trend persisted, albeit slowing, in the first decades following the Second World War. During both the interwar period and the immediate post-World War II years, emigration ceased to be solely a systemic element of socio-economic processes, instead increasingly influenced by political conditions and motives.

### **Emigration between Need and Opportunity**

Migration has been underrated in mainstream historiography concerning the Karst region, if not entirely neglected. Socioeconomic analyses have failed to consider migration as a constitutive factor in the socio-economic strategies of the population. Instead, it has often been viewed as induced negative consequences of large-scale socio-economic transformations or

**Table 7.6**

Spouses from the Tomaj Parish in the Eighteenth Century Trieste Marriage Registers	Decade	Grooms	Brides	Total	
		<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>	%
	1701–10	5	9	14	10.6
	1711–20	1	7	8	6.1
	1721–30	7	7	14	10.6
<i>Notes</i> Based on data from ACTS, LC 1671–1773;	1731–40	2	7	9	6.8
APMM, LC 1773–1820;	1741–50	5	3	8	6.1
APAT, LC 1780–1810.	1751–60	10	8	18	13.6
	1761–70	9	5	14	10.6
	1771–80	3	7	10	7.6
	1781–90	9	6	15	11.4
	1791–1800	13	9	22	16.7
	Total	64	68	132	100.0

as forced by political events (Cencič 2013, 62–3), rather than being also examined from the perspective of individual, familial, and community agency. The lack of information, coupled with the limited conceptualization of migration, has led to a general disinterest in the phenomenon, particularly concerning the period leading up to the late nineteenth century.

We can learn about emigration from the Tomaj area in the eighteenth century from historical sources in Trieste. Trieste has traditionally relied on the population of its broader rural surroundings to meet its labour needs and to replenish a population that, in the pre-industrial era, often suffered from a deficit of natural demographic growth. With the granting of freeport status in 1719, the influx of immigrants intensified and became the driving force behind the city's demographic and socio-economic development (Kalc 2006; 2008).

The immigration to Trieste can be traced through the marriage registers of the city parishes, in which 64 grooms and 68 brides from the parish of Tomaj were recorded over the eighteenth century (table 7.6). Most of these individuals resided in the quarters of the old (*Città Vecchia*) and the new city (*Città Nuova*), while some lived in the suburban rural neighbourhoods (*contrade esterne*). With the increasing influx of young, single individuals, Trieste became a bustling marriage market and these Tomajans also met their spouses and wedded in the city after moving there for employment (Breschi et al. 2001).

The brides typically arrived in the city aged between 16 and 20. Save rare exceptions, they found work as housemaids in the city or the rural suburbs.

Employment in domestic service was the most common path for girls from the countryside to enter the labour market of Trieste. It represented an immigrants' prerogative, for girls from the city and the surrounding area tended to avoid this type of work due to the burdensome and obligatory cohabitation with employers (Kalc 2004; 2014). After a few years of service (life cycle servanthood), during which the girls contributed materially to, or at least relieved, their family's economy, they often married and permanently settled in Trieste. The grooms from Tomaj arrived in Trieste at about the same age as the girls, very likely as apprentices or journeymen. In the marriage registers, they are listed mainly as craftsmen, specifically as barrel-makers, carpenters, tailors, leatherworkers, and bakers. The presence of wedding witnesses from the ranks of professional companions and members of the upper social classes indicates that they were well integrated into the urban social environment by the time of their marriage.

Additional information about the Tomajans in Trieste can be found in the city population censuses. The census register of 1765 mentions 27 of them (BCTS, AD, Due Anagrafi 1735, 1765), while the one from 1775 lists 23 (BCTS, AD, Coscrizione Generale Della Città e Porto Franco di Trieste fatta nell'anno 1775 da me G. A. Tognana de Tonnefeld). However, there were likely more people from Tomaj, as many of them are hidden among the hundreds of immigrants from the Karst region, with no indication of their specific place of origin. The data regarding age and length of residence in the city again indicates that individuals from the Tomaj area were sent to Trieste continuously, with almost all being young (up to a maximum age of 25). The few older cases represent exceptions to the predominant pattern of migration as a socio-economic choice in the life cycle of individuals and as a strategy employed by their families of origin.

The censuses also indicate that males mostly held occupations that required vocational apprenticeships, such as masons, carpenters, and shoemakers. Shoemakers were the most numerous, and provide insight into the career paths of immigrants from Tomaj in Trieste, from apprenticeship to the role of journeymen and eventually to the status of master craftsmen. In the latter cases, by employing journeymen and apprentices, they became anchors for new immigration. Some Tomajans lacked vocational training and earned their living through unskilled labour. Many of them worked as porters (*facchini*), a widespread occupation in the port town, while females were often employed as laundresses. Married or widowed women were involved in both laundry work and portage, while single girls typically worked as domestic servants.

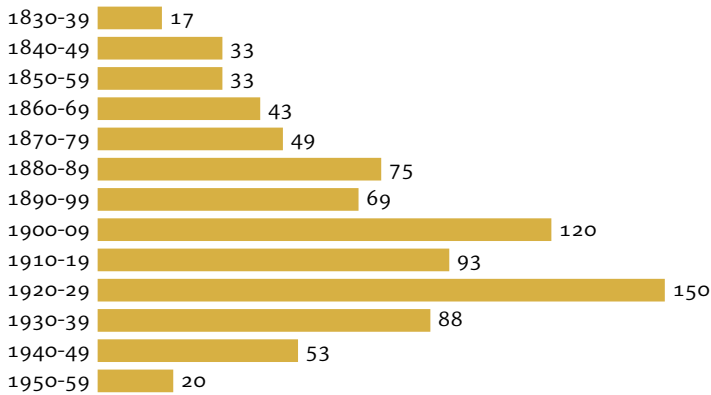
However, people from Tomaj came to Trieste not only for work and vocational training but also for general education. Some pupils attended the city's Pavinato and Scuola Grande schools. These examples also reflect the aspirations of certain Tomaj families and the circumstances that enabled them to educate their children, even before the introduction of general mandatory education with the Theresian School Ordinance of 1774 and the establishment of the first normal school in Trieste and then the so-called trivial schools in the countryside from 1775 onwards.

Although meagre, data from Trieste parish registers and population censuses testify that, in early modern times, migration represented a more prominent socio-economic praxis in Tomaj and the wider Karst area than the general historiography acknowledges to rural, land-bound communities. It is true, nevertheless, that this emigration cannot be compared in terms of scale and demographic effects to that of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. The following section outlines some characteristics of the 'great' emigration and the changes that occurred in its character during accelerated urbanization. Due to the lack of direct migration statistics, this account also relies on alternative sources, namely the Status Animarum.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 7.2 illustrates the course and extent of emigration over 120 years, during which this phenomenon had the most significant impact on the demographic and social development in the villages of the Tomaj curacy.<sup>5</sup> As demographic analysis has revealed, emigration began to intensify in the middle of the nineteenth century and reached its initial peak in the years preceding the First World War. The historical peak occurred during the 1920s. The period between the two world wars witnessed the most pronounced emigration in the Tomaj curacy, followed by the decline of this phenomenon after the Second World War.

<sup>4</sup> The Tomaj Status Animarum registers only exceptionally indicate the year or a more precise date of departure of the absent parishioners. In most cases, only the place or country where the person resides is recorded, and in principle only permanent emigrants are taken into account. Reconstructions of families provided by the esteemed priest, Albin Kjuder, constitute valuable assistance, significantly facilitating the detection of emigrants (Kjuder 1960; ŠAK, ŽAT, SA).

<sup>5</sup> The figure includes migrations prompted by economic or other reasons (including or associated with marriage) that led outside the Sežana district. Additionally, only cases in which the destination of emigration is known and those in which the time of departure could be determined are taken into account, totalling 843 out of 927 cases. The decade of emigration was determined based on explicit information or implicitly from the context, with most cases classified by adding twenty years to the decade of birth.



**Figure 7.2** Emigration from the Tomaj Curacy (1830–1959)

*Notes* Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, SA.

As previously noted, the primary direction and the most significant long-term geographical destination of Tomaj emigration was Trieste, which attracted over 58 percent of all accounted emigrants. The majority of them settled in the city, while approximately 20 percent settled in the surrounding countryside within the Trieste municipality. By the 1880s, a real geographical specialization had characterized the phenomenon, with 80–90 percent of emigrants heading towards Trieste. Subsequently, the range of destinations began to diversify in line with increasingly international migration trends. Even in the early twentieth century, however, half of the emigrants from the villages of the Tomaj curacy were still bound for Trieste. Throughout the period under examination, except for the 1920s, the ‘Trieste trajectory’ remained the primary route leading Tomajans on their migratory way.

With the general increase in labour mobility and migration within the Habsburg Empire from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, Tomajans increasingly departed for other Austrian provinces. The main destinations were Istria, Carniola, and Styria. From the end of the 1880s, as was the trend elsewhere in Slovenia, they were also drawn to America. The initial overseas emigrants set off to Brazil, which attracted numerous families and individuals from the Karst area with subsidized transatlantic transport and appealing contracts for acquiring farmland within the Brazilian colonization programmes (Kalc 1995). However, people’s interest was more in securing good earnings than better land, leading the Tomajans to shift their focus towards the industrial and mining centres in the USA.

**Table 7.7**

Emigration from the Tomaj Curacy to Trieste and Other Destinations (1830–1959)

*Notes* In percent. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, SA.

Decade	Trieste municip.	Other	Total	<i>N</i>
1830–39	88.2	11.8	100.0	17
1840–49	87.9	12.1	100.0	33
1850–59	90.9	9.1	100.0	33
1860–69	83.7	16.3	100.0	43
1870–79	85.7	14.3	100.0	49
1880–89	76.0	24.0	100.0	75
1890–99	68.1	31.9	100.0	69
1900–09	63.3	36.7	100.0	120
1910–19	50.5	49.5	100.0	93
1920–29	23.3	76.7	100.0	150
1930–39	48.9	51.1	100.0	88
1940–49	54.7	45.3	100.0	53
1950–59	35.0	65.0	100.0	20
Total	58.5	41.5	100.0	843

**Table 7.8** Emigration from the Tomaj Curacy by Destination (1830–1919)

Decade	Trieste municip.	Imper. Austria	Americas	Other	Total	<i>N</i>
1830–39	88.2	11.8	0.0	0.0	100.0	17
1840–49	85.3	11.8	0.0	2.9	100.0	33
1850–59	90.9	9.1	0.0	0.0	100.0	33
1860–69	83.7	9.3	0.0	7.0	100.0	43
1870–79	85.7	10.2	0.0	4.1	100.0	49
1880–89	76.0	14.7	6.7	2.6	100.0	75
1890–99	68.1	20.3	8.7	2.9	100.0	69
1900–09	63.3	19.2	14.2	3.3	100.0	120
1910–19	50.5	19.4	26.9	3.2	100.0	93
Total	71.1	15.8	10.1	3.0	100.0	532

*Notes* In percent. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, SA.

Here the labour market offered significantly higher wages and employment opportunities than in Trieste or elsewhere in the monarchy. Some individuals also migrated to Egypt, Italy, Hungary, and even faraway Australia.

With the transition of the area under the Kingdom of Italy after the First World War, the emigration trajectories shifted; the moves were driven also by fascist coercive Italianization and persecution of the Slovene

**Table 7.9** Emigration from the Tomaj Curacy by Destination (1920–1959)

Decade	Trieste municip.	Italy	Yugo- slavia	Ameri- cas	Other	Total	N
1920–29	23.3	10.7	28.7	30.0	7.3	100.0	150
1930–39	48.9	18.2	17.0	13.6	2.3	100.0	88
1940–49	54.7	17.0	13.2	9.4	5.7	100.0	53
1950–59	35.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	100.0	20
Total	36.7	14.1	20.9	19.9	8.4	100.0	311

*Notes* In percent. Based on data from ŠAK, ŽAT, SA.

population. The relative decline in emigration to Trieste in the 1920s can also be attributed to these political reasons. Due to immigration restrictions, only close family members of pre-war emigrants were permitted to join their relatives in the USA. Such cases were relatively numerous in the Tomaj municipality, illustrating how people seized opportunities to escape precarious economic conditions and a hostile political climate. Even more villagers emigrated to South America for the same reasons, particularly Argentina, where favourable economic conditions prevailed and, until the coup d'état in 1930, a democratic political order was in place.

Emigration to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was comparable in scale to emigration to America. Slovenes under Italian rule perceived Yugoslavia as their new 'homeland' from which they remained territorially excluded by the redrawing of the post-war political space. Political refugees, but also economic migrants, often travelled there illegally. Most Tomajans found homes and employment opportunities in Slovenia, spanning from Ljubljana and Maribor to Celje, Krajin, and Novo mesto, where large immigrant communities of Slovenians from Italy existed. Some ventured to the southern Yugoslav provinces, extending as far as Macedonia. Emigration to other Italian provinces also surged during this period, from northern cities and Rome to Apulia, Sicily, and Sardinia. Some were drawn inland by employment opportunities, while others migrated due to personal relationships and marriages with Italian partners. Civil servants were relocated arbitrarily and replaced in the Tomaj area with Italian personnel as part of Italianization programmes. Among other destinations, France emerged as a prominent choice, receiving numerous migrants from Yugoslavia as well as from Italy during the 1920s.

In the 1940s and 1950s, emigration again bore the imprint of war events and the post-World War II landscape transformations. Following the Peace Treaty and the new demarcation in 1947, which brought the Tomaj area

under Yugoslav rule, some Tomajans opted to relocate to Trieste, then under Anglo-American military administration, or to Italy. Subsequently, in the 1950s, many resumed overseas migration, particularly to Canada and Australia. These migrations were motivated by dire economic conditions and uncertain prospects, exacerbated by restricted economic ties with Trieste following border regulation, as well as a distrust of the socialist social order.

Emigration from the Tomaj curacy was evenly distributed according to the population of individual villages. Men (51.5 percent) were more inclined to migrate to distant destinations like America, whereas women tended to relocate to Trieste and other nearby areas in greater numbers. Before the First World War, this gender asymmetry reflected the different labour markets, which predominantly attracted male workers to industrial centres, while rapidly expanding cities like Trieste offered abundant job opportunities for women. Following the First and Second World Wars, changes in the nature and conditions of emigration led to an increase in the number of female emigrants even to transatlantic destinations, while between the wars a significantly higher number of men than women migrated to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Among emigrants to Trieste, as in previous historical phases, 80 percent of Tomajans of both sexes settled in the city, while the remainder found homes in surrounding, increasingly urbanized, suburban neighbourhoods.

### **Concluding Remarks**

To conclude, considering the demographic features of Tomaj over the centuries, we can distinguish three phases of development. The first phase, stretching from the seventeenth to the early eighteenth century, was characterized by population stagnation resulting from fluctuating natural demographic factors and fragile positive growth. Between the 1720s and the mid-nineteenth century, a period of sustained population increase ensued, despite occasional stagnation and decline. This growth was supported by the predominance of natality, which surpassed the still-frequent mortality peaks, ensuring a positive long-term growth balance. The third period, from the 1870s onwards, was marked by another phase of stagnation, though distinct in nature from that of the seventeenth century. Natural balance was not compromised by lacking demographic vitality, as the birth rate remained fairly vigorous until the First World War, and the mortality rate declined more sharply. What determined the stagnation was emigration, which emerged as a prominent structural phenomenon of the mod-

ernization process. Unlike the early modern period, this stagnation can be defined as a modernizing stagnation effect.

Among the factors influencing such demographic dynamics was the vicinity of Trieste, with its expanding labour market, demand for food resources and other economic opportunities. The ‘Trieste factor,’ however, had different effects in different parts of the Karst countryside. In the villages near the city, it favoured demographic growth because agricultural products such as milk, vegetables, and wine had privileged access to the urban market. Moreover, the population could easily participate in the city’s labour market and combine agricultural and other sources of income without leaving their villages. Noteworthy economic sectors include fishing, which in the coastal villages became an alternative economic resource for an increasing part of the population (Volpi Lisjak 1995). In some villages commercial activities and services benefitted from the traffic between the city and the hinterland as well as by meeting the local population needs and consumption. In the not-so-close areas, such as that of Tomaj, where such immediate modalities of access to urban economic resources were not possible, people became encouraged to leave the villages. Well-established relations and social networks facilitated that. So, Karst rural communities proactively exploited the opportunities offered by the nearby city, including through temporary labour mobility and permanent emigration, to maintain their socio-economic autonomy and adapt to the challenges of modernization. In the 1880s, as we have seen, Trieste was joined by internationally attractive areas incentivizing mid- and long-distance migration and relocations.

As noted, Trieste represented an opportunity even before the general rural-to-urban move took off in the second half of the nineteenth century. Setting off for Trieste was not a rare social and economic choice in the Tomaj area, at least from the beginning of the eighteenth century. The question is, in which cases and under what circumstances this option was exercised and how it changed over time and in various historical periods. Classical studies on family history, including those in the immediate Trieste countryside, highlight land property as a fundamental platform for interpreting migration as a strategic socio-economic pattern. In the village of Dolina, Verginella notes, emigration was always a choice taken at the family level, depending on the size and gender composition of the household, its landholdings, and economic perspectives. Families with smaller or no landholdings were more inclined to release their members. By moving to the city, these members sought to avoid social marginalization, secure a

better livelihood, and meet conditions for family reproduction. However, until the late nineteenth century, relocations to Trieste were rare in Dolina because the community acted in a 'protective' way and tended to retain its members as much as possible. This was also due to a reluctant attitude towards the city, which was considered socially inappropriate for rural people. From the 1880s, in contrast, village society began to expel the poorest and those with unfavourable prospects. In this way, and through careful marriage strategies, families and the community tried to maintain their socio-economic sustainability and resisted or adapted to the challenges of the times (Verginella 1990, 6–7).

A tendency to preserve the socio-economic structure of village communities and families based on land ownership and the peasant economy was also present in the area of Tomaj. Land served as the fundamental capital upon which the social status of families depended over the centuries, regardless of other economic resources. Demographic behaviour, from marriage and reproductive choices to migration, reflected the efforts to preserve this capital and the village social system. At the same time, the presence of Tomajans in Trieste throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suggests that there was less scepticism toward departures for the city in this part of the countryside than in Dolina and that such an option was more common in economic and social strategies. However, it must be questioned whether emigration can be interpreted simply in terms of expelling the 'exceeding' household members and associating the phenomenon with the poorest and weakest segments of village society. Females from the Tomaj area found in Trieste marriage registers and censuses came to the city with almost no exception via the route of domestic servanthood. They were presumably sent by families in economic need but also in search of optimizing the household labour supply. As for male emigrants, the data show that they were mainly engaged in craft activities in the city. Although these occupations were economically modest, directing the children along these vocational paths (through apprenticeships) entailed a certain economic input from their families. Given the continuity of the phenomenon, it appears that the migratory option was not merely an exclusionary practice to adapt the family size and composition in given circumstances. It seems that for females, but especially for males, planning the future of family members by undertaking the journey to the nearby city and social transformation played a role.

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, emigration became increasingly intertwined with the necessity of specialization and intensification

of market-oriented agriculture. On the other hand, growing segments of the population sought alternative economic paths out of agricultural activities through migration. Moreover, the migration towards Trieste and other destinations from the 1870s onwards was propelled by influences of modern life patterns and an increasing desire to escape the tradition-bound village communities for more dynamic and free-thinking social and cultural environments. At this point, emigration became a stimulus and a systemic factor of social modernization in itself. On one hand, it served a conservative function by preserving the rural world and adapting it to economic conditions. On the other hand, it facilitated alternative social development and the emergence of new cultural values. In the case of the villages in the Tomaj area and the wider Karst region, Trieste played a pivotal role in these processes, serving both as a source of opportunities and as a pull factor. Viewed from a long historical perspective, it left its mark on the traditional rural village framework while simultaneously promoting urban drift and social change.

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- ADTS, V: Archivio della Diocesi di Trieste, Visitazioni.
- APAT, LC: Archivio parrocchiale di Sant'Antonio Taumaturgo, Liber copulatorum in Parochia Civitatis Theresianae Tergesti.
- APMM, LC: Archivio parrocchiale di Santa Maria Maggiore, Liber copulatorum.
- BCTS, AD: Biblioteca Civica di Trieste, Archivio Diplomatico.
- ŠAK: Škofijski arhiv Koper.
- ŽAP: Župnijski arhiv Povir.
- ŽAT: Župnijski arhiv Tomaj.
- MKK: Matične knjige krščenih.
- MKU: Matične knjige umrlih.
- SA: Status Animarum.

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