

Socio-economic and political changes and its impact on economy and migrations in the northern region of Montenegro (1991-2011)

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The socio-economic and political changes which resulted from the disintegration of the Yugoslavia, the wars waged in the region, from the one in Slovenia in 1991 to the war in Kosovo in 1999, the economic sanctions imposed by the countries of the European Union and other countries, as well as numerous accompanying negative social phenomena and processes, had significantly impeded Montenegro's economic development. At the beginning of 1986, Montenegro's economic development reached a significant level, with industry as its main component. Although economic growth seemed to be stable, there were some indicators that called for caution: the level of foreign debt, i.e. the companies' international debts through the banks of Yugoslavia amounted to USD 850 million; also, although the number of employees amounted to 152,000, around 40,000 workers were seeking employment. (Radojicic, 2015, 299-301).

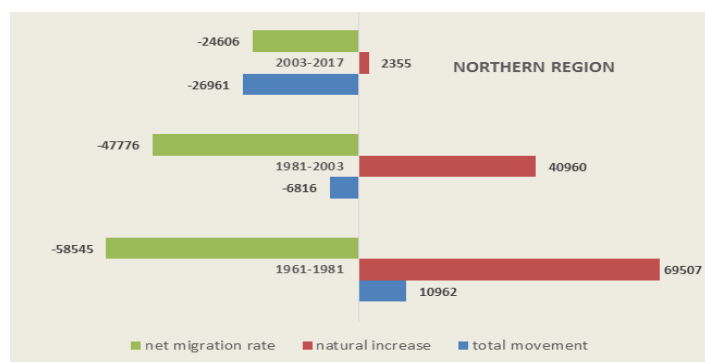
The transition period has left dire consequences for the Montenegrin economy. According to the data of the Independent Trade Unions, from 1992 to 2014, 45,000 workers remained unemployed, which is the size of a population of the city of Bijelo Polje, for example. Out of this number, 25,000 workers remained unemployed in the period 2009-2014 alone. At the same time, in mid-2014, around 40,000 people worked in Montenegro without a contract of employment. National per capita income has fallen by three times by 2015, although according to earlier development projections and predictions at the end of the 20th century, it was expected to increase threefold. During the last decade of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first century, emigration became very common in Montenegro. Due to poor economic conditions, the population was forced into external and internal migrations. Additionally, the wars in the Yugoslav territory contributed significantly to the population movement. Due to the war activities, the population from the endangered areas came to Montenegro, most of whom remained to live there, thus contributing to the changes in the country's ethnic composition. Internal migrations, i.e. population relocation within Montenegro, indicate that these depopulation tendencies are present in the Northern Region which comprises 11 municipalities and takes up almost 53% of the territory of Montenegro. The largest population outflow was recorded in Bijelo Polje.

Results and discussion

The fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the unification of the two Germanys (1990), the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union (1991) marked the end of an era. The at that time current bipolar order, with its opposing sides - military-political and economic blocs of the West and the East, led by the USA on the one side and the USSR on the other, ceased to exist. This inevitably had an impact on the position of socialist Yugoslavia, which in the time of the "Cold War" and the bipolar division of Europe and the world, played the role of a bridge-buffer-zone between east and west. In the second observation period, from 2003 to 2017, the northern region lost 24,606 inhabitants due to emigration, while it received only 2,335 people through natural increase. In the recent period, there has been an emigration decrease in comparison with the previous period, not thanks to the measures of the state, but due to the emptiness of this region and the negative natural increase in almost all municipalities, which will result in a steep population decline in the future, regardless of the decrease in the emigration rate. In addition to the internal, this region is also characterized by external population movements, although they are numerically less represented. In the period 2008-2017, out of 16,935 - the total number of migrants from the region, 4,837 or 28.6% of them went abroad, but it should be emphasized that in the last ~10 years, the emigration intensity has increased due to the very poor economic situation in the country and high unemployment rates. Aggravating circumstances for these migrants are the numerous administrative, linguistic and other, preventing from leaving the country on a more massive scale.

Conclusions

All municipalities in the northern region have had negative net migration rates since the beginning of the observed period. The highest annual negative rates of net migration were represented in the municipalities of the Durmitor area - Plužine -3.8 (in the period 1961-2003) and -2.2 (in the period 2003-2017), Šavnik -3.6 in the first and -2.7 in the second period and Žabljak -2.8 in the first and -1.1 in the second period. Kolašin stands out from other municipalities in the region at a high emigration rate -2.6 in the first and -1.4 in the second period.



Net migration rate of the northern region in the period 1961-2017