

## DEPOPULATION IN NORTHERN MONTENEGRO CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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### ABSTRACT

In the second half of the twentieth century the biggest economic development in Montenegro begins thanks to intensive industrialization, which, due to the need for labor force has launched strong migration movements towards both the urban areas, and the central region, where industrial buildings were the most concentrated, and some time later towards the coastal region, which due to the development of tourism, has become attractive for immigration processes. At the same time, agriculture that was the most important economic activity of the northern region was neglected, which caused the mass deagrarization and emigration, starting from the 60s of the last century, which still continues. In the 80s of the last century the process of depopulation began in some parts, and later it affected the entire northern region.

In this paper, using statistical, analytical, synthetic and cartographic methods, pointed out will be the causes, intensity and consequences of depopulation of this region, which occupies more than half of the country's territory, and in which today lives less than a sixst of the population of Montenegro.

**Keywords:** industrialization, migrations, deagrarization, depopulation

### INTRODUCTION

The northern region of Montenegro administratively consists of 13 municipalities<sup>8</sup>, it covers an area of 7 304 km<sup>2</sup>, or 52.9% of the area of Montenegro. According to the results of the census of 2011 in northern region lived 177 793 inhabitants, or 13.9% of the state population. Average population density is 24.3 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>, and it is significantly below the population density of Montenegro (45.3 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>), while in the '60s, when intensive industrialization in Montenegro began, in this region lived 210 978 inhabitants, or 46.2% of the population of Montenegro. The average population density was 38.1 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>.

Economic development of Montenegro after the Second World War took place in the former Federal Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, except that Montenegro had its own specifics given that it was one of the least developed republics of the former state and it also had the unfavorable economic structure of the population. Development proceeded

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<sup>8</sup> Municipalities that belong to this region are: Andrijevica, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Gusinje, Žabljak, Kolašin, Mojkovac, Petnjica, Plav, Plužine, Pljevlja, Rožaje and Šavnik.

in the direction of the dominant development of heavy industry, traffic somewhat, while other branches of industry significantly lagged behind in development, which was, again, a specificity of Montenegro [3; 56]. Along with the development of industry and the growth of its social product, social product of agriculture declined, it was more and more becoming marginalized activity, which had far-reaching consequences for the demographic development of the northern region in which in the 60s of last century it was the main activity for 65% of the population [1; 224].

Through the analysis of the movement of population, migration characteristics, gender and age structure, changes in population size of rural and urban settlements in the region and municipalities, the paper will indicate the extent of depopulation, its causes and consequences.

### **DEMOGRAPHIC MOVEMENTS TILL 80'S OF THE XX CENTURY AND THE BEGINNING OF DEPOPULATION**

In the second half of the twentieth century this region was affected by the process of industrialization as well, although it in terms of volume, tempo, and the structure it was not as in had been in the central region. The largest number of industrial capacities, which are mostly located in urban areas of the region (Berane, Bijelo Polje, Pljevlja, Kolasin, Podgorica, Plav and Rožaje) were oriented to primary production, which in relation to the manufacturing branches was less productive and efficient [4; 84]. This was the main reason why all the industrial capacities during the transition period, which started in the 90s of the last century, had lost the race in the market, which caused a constant decrease in the number of employees, work with reduced capacity and finally it led to the closing of the largest number of the capacities.

The period from the 60s to the 80s of the last century was the most economically significant for the northern region. Changes in the economic development of the northern region directly affected demographic development. The growth of industrial production and its share in social production of Montenegro was followed by the growth of population in the region for 3 708 inhabitants. Regardless of economic growth, it should be noted that the migration in this region has always been strong and that the population growth was solely a consequence of the relatively high rate of population growth, which in the mid 60s totaled 16.4 ‰ [10]. and which managed at the regional level to compensate emigration, which was not the case with some municipalities (municipalities: Pluzine, Savnik, Zabljak, Andrijevica, Kolasin and Pljevlja undergone depopulation in the period 1961-1981- Table 1).

The population of the region in the 60s was young with 48.4% of the young aged and 11.8% of the old aged population. The participation of young population in municipalities ranged from 43.5% in Kolasin to 53.5% in the Rožaje, while the share of old population ranged from 6.1% in Rožaje to 12.9% in Šavnik [2; 68]. Although in the 80s the region had young population (39.9% of young and 11.8% of the old population) in some municipalities, where emigration was more pronounced the process of aging began. The municipalities of Durmitor area (Šavnik, Pluzine and Zabljak) were in particular

endangered - the participation of the old population increased significantly and participation of young population declined. On the threshold of old age population were the municipality of Kolasin and Podgorica as well. [1; 220].

**Table 1.** Changes of the number of inhabitants of the northern region and municipalities in the period 1961-2011.

	1961	1981	Index 1981/1961	2011	Index 2011/1981
Andrijevica	9792	7712	78,8	5071	65,8
Berane	24124	31270	129,6	28488	91,1
Bijelo Polje	38740	41281	106,6	46056	111,6
Gusinje	7427	7842	105,6	4027	51,4
Kolašin	14882	12669	85,1	8376	66,1
Mojkovac	8832	10753	121,8	8622	80,2
Petnjica	10156	10790	106,2	5482	50,8
Plav	11486	11718	102,0	9081	77,5
Pljevlja	46370	43323	93,4	30786	71,1
Plužine	9164	6254	68,2	3201	51,2
Rožaje	14700	20227	137,6	22964	113,5
Šavnik	7589	5620	74,1	2070	36,8
Žabljak	7716	5227	67,7	3569	68,3
NOTHERN REGION	210978	214686	101,8	177793	82,8

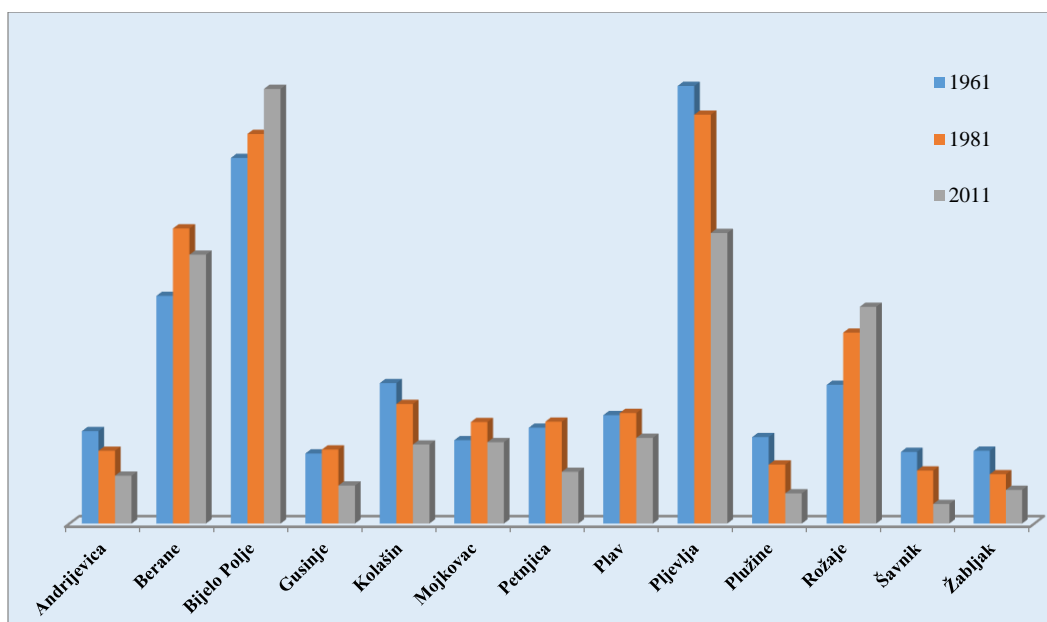
Source of data: [5] Monstat: Comparative overview of the number of inhabitants from 1948 to 2003, vol. 9 - Data by settlements, Podgorica, 2005; [7] Monstat: The first results of the census, Podgorica, 2011.

Based on the analysis of total and natural movement we have obtained data on the mechanical<sup>9</sup> movement of the population of the northern region in the period from the 60s to the 80s. When we talk about population growth, the region got 47 099 inhabitants, the actual population growth amounted to 3 708, i.e. thanks to emigration the region had lost 43 391 inhabitants. During this period, no municipality in the region had a positive migration balance; emigration was especially expressed in Durmitor area municipalities: Zabljak, Pluzine, Savnik, then Bijelo Polje and Pljevlja - Table 2.

The best indicators of depopulation of the region are the changes in the average size of villages in the period 1961-1981, because the depopulation first started in the villages. The average size of villages in the northern region declined from 377 to 349 inhabitants. The greatest depopulation had the villages of Andrijevica, then Pluzine and Zabljak municipalities. In this period, only villages in the municipality of Berane, Rožaje and Gusinje were not affected by depopulation. The development of industry in the region strengthened the internal rural-urban migration, which, in the initial phase had positive effects because agriculture was freed of excess and cities received the lacking amount of workforce. However, over time, urban settlements in the region were fed up, but that did not stop the migration from the countryside nor advanced deagrarisation process as it was

<sup>9</sup>The migration characteristics of the population were made only during the census of 2003, so we got migratory balance by calculating difference between the total population movements and population growth, which we calculated according to the population growth rates in the given periods.

indicated by the fact that in 1981 in the region there was only 23.2% of the agricultural population [1; 224]. In contrast to declining population size of villages, urban settlements in all municipalities in the region faced with the population growth in this period, especially Berane, Pljevlja and Bijelo Polje, which were the largest when we talk about population, and most developed when we talk about industry [2; 116].



Picture 1. Movement of population in the municipalities of the northern region in the period 1961-2011

In addition to the urban areas of the northern region, a large number of migrants went to other regions of Montenegro - central and coastal, and a considerable part of it, especially from the northeastern part (municipalities of Bijelo Polje, Plav and Rožaje) went beyond the borders of Montenegro. The reasons for the strong emigration from the area of the region should be sought in the neglect of agricultural production, which was, as pointed out, the leading economic sector. Agriculture was based on private land and it was of extensive type, so it easy lost pace with industrialization, which dragged off workforce from the countryside. Given that industrial capacities in the region were quickly filled with workforce, migration was directed towards the industrially much stronger central region, or towards the seaside in which intensive development of tourism began, in which workforce lacked. In this way, the northern region was freed of excess workforce, because it was the most vital region in terms of natural population movements. This period could be called the first phase of depopulation. It is characterized by significant depopulation in rural areas of Durmitor, then in the municipality of Andrijevica and the beginning of depopulation in Pljevlja and Kolasin municipalities. In other municipalities, only in the following period population decline was significant.

## DEMOGRAPHIC MOVEMENTS AFTER 80S OF XX CENTURY - THE SECOND PHASE OF DEPOPULATION

Deagrarisation process of the 80s of XX century was strengthened in the northern region, emigration also strenghtend, natural growth became negative (- 2.8 ‰) [9; 225], so all resulted in a significant decline of population - 36,893 untill 2011. In the period 1981-2011 only the municipalities of Bijelo Polje and Rožaje had population growth, all the others decline. The largest decline was recorded in the municipalities of Šavnik, Plužine, Petnjica, Gusinje and Zabljak. The participation of young population in the total population of the region declined to 26.4%, while the old increased to 21%, which indicated to a ripe old age population [8]. In the deep demographic age is the population of municipalities: Andrijevisa, Kolasin, Mojkovac, and in the deepest demographic age population of the municipalities of Podgorica, Šavnik, Plužine and Zabljak.

In the period 1981-2011 when it is up to population growth, the region got 23 378 inhabitants, but, given that it had a decline of population for 36 893, it means that in this period from the region emigrated 60 271 of inhabitants. According to these data it could be seen how much depopulation strengthened. Particularly high rates of emigration had municipalities of Rožaje, Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje and Berane - Table 2. Average size of villages in the region was further reduced to 227 inhabitants. With the exception of the municipality of Berane, where the average size increased slightly, in all other municipalities of the region the average size of villages has declined significantly, it was the lowest in the municipalities of Plužine 44 inhabitants, Savnik 61 inhabitants, Zabljak 68 inhabitants – Picture 2. Based on the analysis of these several parameters and their comparison we can see that the depopulation today engulfed the entire northern region. This is supported by the fact that according to the results of the agricultural census of 2010 in it only 14.3% of the agricultural population were presented (excluding municipalities of Šavnik and Andrijevisa all others had below 20% of the agricultural population) [6].

Table 2. Migration characteristics of the population  
of northern region and municipalities for the period 1961-2011

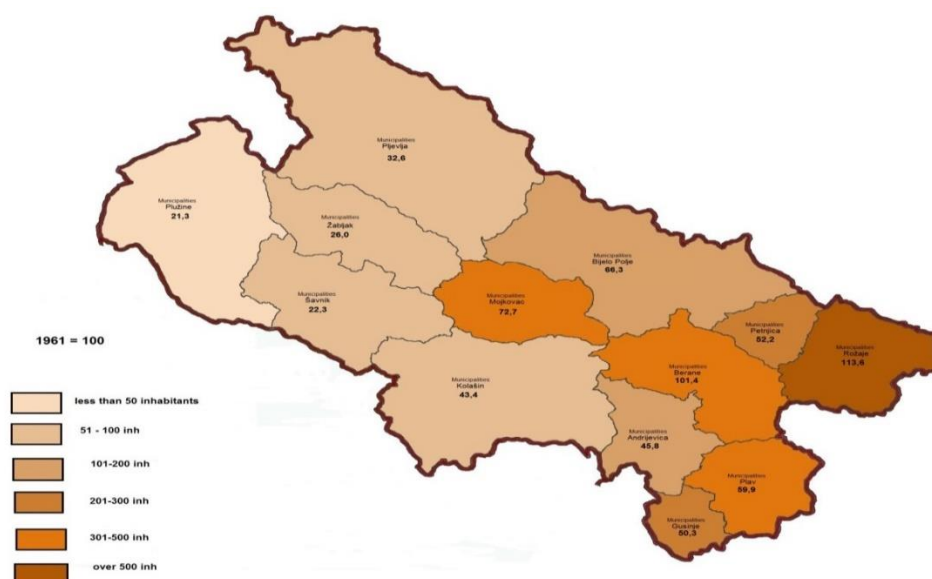
Municipality <sup>10</sup>		1961-1981	1981-2011
Andrijevisa	Total movement	-2080	-1997
	Natural growth		-204
	Migrational balance	0	-464
Berane	Total movement	7780	-855
	Natural growth	12812	10336
	Migrational balance	-5032	-11191
Bijelo Polje	Total movement	8983	-2175
	Natural growth	19928	12524

<sup>10</sup> The municipalities Gusinje i Petnjica are new formed (from 2013), those were a part of the municipalities Berane and Plav – for them there are no data on natural growth and because of that they are not included in the table.

	Migrational balance	-10945	-14699
<b>Žabljak</b>	Total movement	-1338	-1593
	Natural growth	1217	43
	Migrational balance	-2555	-1636
<b>Kolašin</b>	Total movement	-2226	-4142
	Natural growth	2938	562
	Migrational balance	-5164	-4704
<b>Mojkovac</b>	Total movement	1921	-1870
	Natural growth	3322	1887
	Migrational balance	-1401	-3757
<b>Plav</b>	Total movement	647	1744
	Natural growth	7018	4217
	Migrational balance	-6371	-2473
<b>Plužine</b>	Total movement	-2910	-2945
	Natural growth	1695	-63
	Migrational balance	-4605	-2882
<b>Pljevlja</b>	Total movement	-3361	-11149
	Natural growth	9955	2454
	Migrational balance	-13316	-13603
<b>Rožaje</b>	Total movement	7332	2737
	Natural growth	9110	20022
	Migrational balance	-1778	-17285
<b>Šavnik</b>	Total movement	-1964	-3465
	Natural growth	1026	-326
	Migrational balance	-2990	-3139
<b>NOTHERN REGION</b>	Total movement	-9380	-4686
	Natural growth	47099	23378
	Migrational balance	-52379	-59764

Source of data: [10] Republic Statistical Office, Titograd: Vital statistics for 1961 and 1981; [5] Monstat: Comparative overview of the number of inhabitants from 1948 to 2003, vol. 9 - Data by settlements, Podgorica, 2005; [7] Monstat The first results of the census, Podgorica, 2011.

Such depopulation of the area of the northern region is caused by the period of economic transition that began in 90s. Weak competitiveness of industrial capacities of the region, which, losing the race on the domestic and foreign markets, largely stopped working had already been emphasized. Getting out from the economic uncertainty was sought outside the region, or outside the country - in any case emigration was enhanced and more comprehensive than in the previous period. It was smaller only in demographic discharged municipalities of Durmitor area, while in the others, in fact, in the 90-ies of the last century it had the highest intensity.



**Picture 2.** The average size of villages in the municipalities of the region in 2011

## CONCLUSION

Depopulation in the northern region began in the second half of the twentieth century in Durmitor and Pljevlja area, but the highest intensity it had after 90s of the last century, when it affected all the municipalities in the region. Then began a period of transition of the economy, which for Montenegro was difficult, especially for the northern region. Its industrial capacities had not withstand racing on the market and were usually blow out one by one, which intensified emigration of population from the area of the region. Given that the natural population growth in the region at the beginning of XXI century was negative, the region on this basis was losing population as well, which resulted in the extreme demographic aging of the population of some municipalities. On the other hand, agricultural production, which was responsible for the development of the region, was brought to the brink of collapse due to missing and senilized workforce, poor mechanization, almost no investment and the impossibility of display products on the market and because of little number of farmers who remained.

The main demographic problem that requires urgent resolution of this region is a constant emigration of young people, especially the educated population that leaves the region because of weak opportunities of the economy for employment, and thus for retaining of the staff. If the State do not take urgent measures and adequate demographic and population policy to revive agricultural production and strengthen the economic power of the village, there will be a complete depopulation and demographic extinction of rural settlements in this region.

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