

ARTICLES

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLICS IN THE DECADES PRIOR AND AFTER THE BREAKUP

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ABSTRACT:

Demographic characteristics of former Yugoslav republics in the decades prior and after the breakup

Demographic features of the population in all the republics of former Yugoslavia were far better prior to the war which started in this area at the end of the 20th century. Although certain republics experienced decline of some demographic indicators during the 1980s, there were no assumptions that several decades later the situation would significantly worsen. During the period of almost half a century mean population age increased for almost ten years in all the republics. The share of the older persons increased, and the share of the younger persons decreased, which resulted in the increase of the age index. War victims, as well as emigration and decrease in the birth rate and the increase in mortality rate with other factors led to further decline in demographic state year by year.

Population number fluctuations have been analysed for the period 1880-2011 (2013). Mean age, ageing index and youth index have been calculated for the demographic analysis. Demographic indicators were calculated on the basis of pre-war censuses (1971 and 1981) as well as on the basis of the censuses conducted at the beginning of the war and after the war in the 1990s and then compared. Precisely, the census data from 1991 were used together with two censuses conducted during the 21st century. The latest two censuses were not conducted at the same time in all newly formed countries, which additionally complicated the analysis.

KEY WORDS

ageing, depopulation, former Yugoslavia

1. Introduction

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was established on the foundations of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918), and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929). On the foundations of the aforementioned Kingdoms, during and after the World War II, subsequent countries were formed: Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (1943) and Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia, which was in fact the same country, but under a different name (1945). In the year 1963 the country was named Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Petranović, 1988; Ramet, 2009). It covered the area of 255,804 km² (Marković, 1972). After the World War II, SFR Yugoslavia was a prosperous country which built its own infrastructure, industrial objects, and certain parts of large urban blocks. It was the period when the process of industrialization and urbanization commenced, which caused migrations towards towns, i.e. emptying rural areas which lasted for decades (Žuljić, 1971; Dinić, 1972). The main reasons for migrations from villages were economic and educational. (Ivanišević and Barišić, 2015). Besides internal migrations of the population there were migrations towards Central and Western Europe, and across the Atlantic. According to the data of Federal Statistical Bureau from 1971, about 660,000 people from the area of former Yugoslavia worked in Europe. Majority of them worked in Western Germany (about 436,000), in Austria about 90,000, in France 57,000, in Switzerland about 27,000, and in Sweden about 22,000. Significantly smaller numbers of the people from this area worked in the following countries: Italy (about 6,500), the Netherlands (about 6,500), Belgium and Luxemburg (about 3,500), Denmark (about 3,500), Great Britain (about 3,000), and other countries (about 5,000). About 200,000 people from the area of former Yugoslavia worked in transatlantic countries (Baučić, 1972; Pavlica, 2005).

During the 1970s and the 1980s first economic problems emerged such as unfinished or unsuccessful five-year economy plans. Political problems were also present during the same period. Political dissidence among the republics of former Yugoslavia intensified in 1990 when Slovenia declared independence (December 23, 1990) followed by Croatia (June 25, 1991) (Vuković, 2004). It was the beginning of the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina which were long-lasting and had huge consequences for the population. Those two republics suffered the greatest population migrations. Several hundreds of Serbs were migrated from Croatia after the military operations Blitz and Storm in Croatia (Bubalo, 1999; Bubalo and Plavša, 2000; Bubalo, 2000; Lukić and Matijević, 2006). Moreover, large population numbers of all ethnic groups (Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks) were forced to relocate or to migrate from Bosnia and Herzegovina due to war activities (Lukić, 2005; Basic, 2014). Dayton Peace Agreement was signed on November 21, 1995 after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and ratified on December 14, 1995 in Paris) which divided

Bosnia and Herzegovina into two entities – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska (Alijević, 2010). After the declarations of independence in Slovenia and Croatia, Macedonia voted for independence on the national referendum on September, 8 1991. After those events only Serbia and Montenegro remained together among former Yugoslav republics until the year 2006, when Montenegro voted for independence on the national referendum in May (Đukanović and Jovanović, 2013).

Political events during the 1990s brought long-term consequences regarding economic situation in all the countries of former Yugoslavia and irreversible consequences for the population in this area. This research presents the consequences based on the basic demographic analysis. Poor demographic image of this area may also have long-term consequences for the economy, and survival of the population in this area.

2. Material and methods

This research comprised six countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia), which constituted a single country from 1918 up to 1991 and 2006. Since the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established on this territory up to the World War II there were two population censuses in 1921 and in 1931. After the World War II on the territory of the newly formed Yugoslavia up to its disintegration there five population censuses were conducted (1948, 1953, 1961, 1971 and 1981). During the period of development and prosperity of the country the population censuses were conducted without any problems. The population censuses were conducted simultaneously in the whole country.

After the breakup of Yugoslavia, the census was conducted in all former republics in 1991, but the Federal Statistical Bureau did not process the data nor publish the results obtained. Instead, each republic published their results separately. During the process of collecting data for the 1991 census certain problems emerged on the territory of southern Serbian Autonomous Province Kosovo and Metohija. Albanian population boycotted the census. After the 1991 census the problems also emerged in organization and conducting the next censuses in other republics as well. Only in Croatia the census was conducted every ten years (2001 and 2011). In Bosnia and Herzegovina the next census was conducted in 2013. In Montenegro the censuses were conducted in 2003 and 2011. Two censuses (1994 and 2002) were conducted in Macedonia after it declared independence. The 2011 census had been planned, but it was not conducted. Thus, the census in Macedonia had not been conducted for 16 years, which makes this country one of the rare in the world without conducting the population census for over a decade and a half.

In Serbia the censuses were conducted in 2002, when Serbia and Montenegro were in the union and in 2011 when Serbian was an independent country. However, those two censuses as well as the census in 1991 were not conducted on the whole territory of Serbia. Albanian population in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as in the municipalities in the south of Serbia (Tutin, Preševo, Bujanovac and Novi Pazar) boycotted the population census.

Therefore, Federal Statistical Bureau of Serbia did not obtain the data on the population in Serbia on the whole territory. For the 1991 census there were estimations for the territories where the data were not collected and then the census data were published. Similar to this the following censuses in 2002 and 2011 did not record the data for those parts of Serbia. In the year 2011 the authorities of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo conducted the census on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija. The census was not completely conducted in four municipalities in the north of Kosovo (Zubin Potok, Zvečan, Leposavić and Severna Kosovska Mitrovica) where the Serbian population boycotted the census. The majority of Serbs boycotted the census in other parts of Kosovo and Metohija which resulted in incomplete data for that census.

Due to the irregular pattern of conducting the censuses, as well as for poor territorial coverage during the population census in certain republics of former Yugoslavia, it is hard to provide adequate demographic comparison since the censuses in newly formed countries were not conducted simultaneously. Despite, this research will give the review of the demographic condition prior to the war and according to the results of the latest census conducted in newly formed countries. The research comprises the results of the analysis of the changes in the population numbers, mean age population value, ageing index and youth index.

3. Results of the research and discussion

Demographic situation of newly formed countries of former Yugoslavia in the last thirty years is the consequence of population fluctuations that occurred after the World War II and numerous factors that contributed to those fluctuations. For that reason, we analysed the fluctuation of the population numbers in former Yugoslavia at the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century, which will help understand demographic changes that occurred at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century.

Population in former Yugoslavia increased in the period 1921-1931 for 15.9% but with different increase rate for certain parts of the area. The total area of former Yugoslavia prior to the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was the part of different territories. Slovenia and Croatia were parts

of Austria-Hungary. The *Congress of Berlin* (1878) gave *Austria-Hungary* the right to administer *Bosnia* and *Herzegovina* for 30 years. *Montenegro* was recognized as an independent country and its territory was mainly the present area of *Montenegro*. *Serbia* gained independence at the *Congress of Berlin* (1878).

However, the area of *Serbia* at that time was bordered by the *Sava River* and the *Danube River* in the north, the *Drina River* in the west; the border in the east was similar to the present one, whereas in the south the border stretched south from *Vranje*, *Prokuplje*, and north from *Novi Pazar*. The area of the present *Kosovo* and *Metohija*, former *Raška*, i.e. *Sandžak* (as the territory was named upon the arrival of the *Ottoman Empire*), southern part of the present *Central Serbia* and *Macedonia* remained within the *Ottoman Empire*. *Vojvodina*, the northern province of *Serbia*, was the part of *Austria-Hungary*. *Austria-Hungary* annexed *Bosnia* and *Herzegovina* in 1908, thirty years after the *Congress of Berlin*.

The aforementioned borders remained the same until the *World War I*. After the *World War II*, major changes occurred in the *Balkans* and *Europe*. Newly formed *Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*, i.e. *Kingdom of Yugoslavia* was established on the territories of the two empires – the *Austria-Hungary Empire* and the *Ottoman Empire*. Different social systems, customs and culture in the two empires caused huge discrepancies of certain parts of newly formed country. Those differences are also visible in the population numbers change in certain parts of *Yugoslavia*. In the period between the censuses 1921-1931 the highest increase in population numbers was recorded for *Central Serbia* (24.9%) and *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (23.0%), whereas the smallest increase was recorded for *Vojvodina* (5.7%) and *Slovenia* (7.6%) (Table 1). As it can be observed, the smallest changes, with regard to the population increase, occurred in the parts that remained under the rule of *Austria-Hungary* (*Slovenia*, *Croatia* and *Vojvodina*) the longest, but the highest increase was observed in the parts that remained the longest under the rule of the *Ottoman Empire* (*Kosovo* and *Metohija* and *Macedonia*).

Significant increase of the population number was also recorded for *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, although it was under the rule of *Austria-Hungary* since the *Congress of Berlin*. The population fluctuations in certain parts were also influenced by the ethnic structure i.e. inherited norms of the behaviour as prominent features of certain ethnic groups. *Muslim population* living in *Kosovo* and *Metohija*, *Bosnia and Herzegovina* and *Macedonia* had significant impact on higher increase in the population numbers in those territories. Besides the birth rate, migrations also largely contributed to changes in population numbers. The same may be concluded for population fluctuations in *Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

Based on the available data and literature, it may be perceived that in the second half of the 19th century, majority of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina were the Orthodox Christians (between 43% and 53%). The percentage of Muslims was between 32% and 49%, whereas the percentage of the Roman Catholics was the smallest (between 11% and 22%) (Spasovski et al, 1992). The ethnic structure remained similar between the two world wars. With regard to the religious structure, the Muslim population was not dominant in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the population increase was among the highest at that time in Yugoslavia. Such increase was the result of migrations that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to certain researchers, e.g. Đ. Pejanović, it was recorded that between 180,000 and 200,000 people immigrated to Bosnia and Herzegovina during the rule of Austria-Hungary. The migrations contributed to the increase of the Roman Catholic population to slightly above than one fifth of the total population of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1931. The Orthodox Christians accounted for just under a half of the population, and the Muslim population accounted for just under one third of the total population.

The period between the two world wars is characterised with the emigration to European and transatlantic countries. According to Breznik (1991), almost two million people emigrated from Yugoslavia in the period 1921-1939. The emigration was the most intensive in passive areas, Dalmatia and mountainous parts of Croatia and Slovenia.

Table 1: Population in former Yugoslavia in the period 1921-1931 (in thousands).

Year	Yugoslavia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	Croatia	Macedonia	Slovenia	Serbia			
							Total	Central Serbia	Kosovo and Metohija	Vojvodina
1921	12,545	1,890	311	3,427	809	1,288	4,819	2,843	439	1,537
1931	14,534	2,324	360	3,789	950	1,386	5,726	3,550	532	1,624
Changes 1921/1931 (in %)	15.9	23.0	15.8	10.6	17.4	7.6	18.8	24.9	21.2	5.7

Source: Breznik, 1991

In the period between the censuses 1931-1948 not only migration process occurred, but also there were numerous war victims. Therefore, it is difficult to obtain precise numbers of deaths in Yugoslavia, but definitely it was among the countries with the highest death toll in the world (about 1.7 million).

Only Russia and Poland had higher numbers of victims during the World War II (Sindbæk, 2000). Regardless the death toll and emigration process, Yugoslavia had the increase in the population number for 9.0 % between the censuses. The highest population increase rate was recorded for the Republic of Macedonia (21.4%).

The Republic of Serbia had the growth of the population number of 14.0%. Migrations and natural growth contributed to this increase in the population numbers during the post war period. The smallest increase was in Slovenia and Montenegro, whereas in Croatia the decrease in the population number (-0.2%) was recorded. Decreased population number in Croatia is the consequence of the emigration of the Serbian population from the mountainous areas (Lika, Kordun, Banija and Dalmatia). Majority of the emigrants arrived to Vojvodina.

Table 2: Population number by republics in former Yugoslavia in the period 1948-1981.

Republics	1948		1953		1961		1971		1981	
	Millions	%	Millions	%	Millions	%	Millions	%	Number	%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2,563,767	16.2	2,847,459	16.8	3,277,948	17.6	3,746,111	18.3	4,124,256	18.4
Montenegro	377,189	2.4	419,873	2.5	471,894	2.5	529,604	2.6	584,310	2.6
Croatia	3,779,858	24.0	3,936,022	23.2	4,159,696	22.4	4,426,221	21.6	4,601,469	20.5
Macedonia	1,152,986	7.3	1,304,514	7.7	1,406,003	7.6	1,647,308	8.0	1,909,136	8.5
Slovenia	1,439,800	9.1	1,504,427	8.8	1,591,523	8.6	1,727,137	8.4	1,891,864	8.4
Serbia	6,527,966	41.4	6,979,154	41.2	7,642,227	41.2	8,446,591	41.2	9,313,67	41.5
DFY, FPRY, SFRY	15,841,566	100.0	16,991,449	100.0	18,549,291	100.0	20,522,972	100.0	22,424,711	100.0

Source: Federal Statistical Bureau, 1965; Federal Statistical Bureau, 1973; Federal Statistical Bureau, 1973a; Federal Statistical Bureau, 1984

Demographic transition occurred in the post war period due to intensive social and economic changes that significantly impacted the population development. The level and intensity of demographic transition was dissimilar for former Yugoslav republics. In Vojvodina, Croatia and Slovenia the process of demographic transition commenced much earlier than in other republics. However, it is difficult to talk about demographic transition in Kosovo and Metohija for that period (Hadživuković and Čobanović, 1978). It was only at the end of the 20th century when demographic transition may be described in the southern Serbian province.

Natural population fluctuation is a significant factor in population development. After the World War II, the highest population decrease was in Central Serbia, Vojvodina and Croatia, whereas the smallest decrease was recorded for the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

At the end of 1980s, prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia, birth rate fluctuated between 12.1‰ in Vojvodina to 29.7 ‰ in Kosovo and Metohija. Mortality rate also decreased in the same period ranging from 5.4 ‰ for Kosmet up to 12.0 ‰ for Vojvodina. Thus, the values of birth rates in 1980s were only 0.1 ‰ for the northern Autonomous Province to 24.3 ‰ for the southern Autonomous Province of Serbia (Breznik, 1991).

In concordance with natural population fluctuations, as well as mechanical, the republics and provinces had smaller or higher growth of the population numbers. Due to the extremely high rate of natural growth for the period 1948-1981, the population of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija increased for 116.1%. In the same period, the population growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina was 60.9 %, in the Republic of Macedonia 65.6 %. On the other hand, the smallest increase in population numbers was recorded for the Republic of Croatia (21.7 %), for the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (24.0 %) and for the Republic of Slovenia (31.4 %) (Table 2).

Migrations as one of the factors in population changes had significant impact on both the growth and fall in population numbers in certain provinces and republics. The best examples are Croatia and Vojvodina. During the post-war migrations in 1945 and 1946, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina was populated with 216,306 migrants from passive areas of the following republics: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Slovenia, and also from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija (Đurđev, 1995). Those migrations as well as the similar but smaller scope migrations after the World War I made a connection between the populations from two most distant parts of the country, which later on became the basis for future migrations in the decades following the World War II. Namely, those decades were characterized by migrations from the same passive areas. In the period 1953-1960 Vojvodina was populated with 256,341 people and in the following period 1961-1970 it was populated with additional 97,311 people. Without those migrations the population number in Vojvodina would be significantly smaller. Moreover, those migrations were the last example of agrarian motives for migrations to Vojvodina. Examples of such migrations are also recorded worldwide mainly from mountainous areas to fertile plains (Ćurčić, 2006).

Migrants rather quickly adopted the characteristics of the autochthonous population and significant changes in the population characteristics were not recorded in certain parts of Yugoslavia. Demographic polarization remained present after the World War II and continued to the end of the 20th century on the territory of former Yugoslavia. The habits obtained in the past remained present for a long period. Even the industrialisation and urbanization processes did not manage to balance demographic features of the population and demographic flows remained different for the territory of Yugoslavia.

Table 3: Certain demographic indicators according to the latest two censuses (1971-1981) in former Yugoslav republics.

Republics and Provinces	average age		ageing index		youth index	
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981
SFRY	31.2	32.8	0.33	0.37	3.00	2.73
Bosnia and Herzegovina	26.7	29.7	0.17	0.22	5.89	4.60
Montenegro	28.7	30.6	0.26	0.29	3.87	3.50
Croatia	33.8	35.3	0.47	0.53	2.12	1.90
Macedonia	27.9	29.6	0.21	0.24	4.86	4.16
Slovenia	33.2	34.2	0.45	0.46	2.22	2.17
Serbia	32.2	33.6	0.38	0.39	2.65	2.54
Central Serbia	33.4	35.3	0.43	0.48	2.31	2.08
Vojvodina	34.4	36.0	0.49	0.55	2.03	1.80
Kosovo and Metohija	23.6	24.1	0.13	0.12	7.47	8.14
Central Serbia and Vojvodina	33.6	35.5	0.45	0.50	2.23	2.00

Calculated from the following data sources: Federal Bureau of Statistics, 1973; Federal Bureau of Statistics, 1973a; Federal Bureau of Statistics, 1984

Average population age on the territory of Yugoslavia had a growing trend after the World War II. Average population age was 31.2 in 1971 and later on it increased to 32.8. According to the birth rate, the youngest population was in Autonomous Province Kosovo and Metohija, with the fact that the ageing process occurred there as well, but significantly slower than in other areas (Table 3). The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina had the oldest population in both censuses. Table 3 shows the area of Central Serbia and Vojvodina separately for better comparison with the following censuses when there were no census data for the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija.

Evidently, on the territory of the Republic of Serbia the most extreme data were recorded. The youngest population was in the north and the oldest in the south. Those were two areas which had been different in the past as well, not only due to the different social and political systems of the empires they were part of, but also due to the different ethnic structure. The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina has been ethnically versatile as a product of constant migrations, both planned and unplanned, towards this region since the 18th century onwards. Over twenty ethnic groups have formed a unique demographic character of this area which has had the depopulation flow for decades, due to negative birth rate from the mid 1980s.

Other republics are also polarized regarding their birth rates. Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had average population age lower than 30 years of age, but both of them had significant increase of average population age in the period 1971-1981. Macedonia had the increase of average population age for 2.7 years, and Bosnia and Herzegovina for 3 years. In Montenegro average population age also increased to over 30 years of age. Slovenia, Croatia and Central Serbia, as well as the aforementioned AP Vojvodina entered the same decade with the average population age which was high above 30 years of age. When ageing index exceeds the values 0.4 or 40.0 % it indicates that the population is old (Đurđev, 1998). As it can be observed in Table 3, the ageing index has been higher than the indicated border value for Slovenia, Croatia, Central Serbia and AP Vojvodina since 1971. Extremely low values of the ageing index were recorded for AP Kosovo and Metohija and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The index continued to grow until the year 1981 on the whole territory of Yugoslavia, but the republics and provinces with the ageing index lower than 0.4 did not exceed the borderline value. Contrary to the ageing index, youth index had the highest values in AP Kosovo and Metohija and in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to the high birth rate in Kosmet, youth index had the growing trend up to the year 1981, whereas in other republics as well as in AP Vojvodina it had the falling trend (Table 3).

Table 4: Population number in newly formed countries after the breakup of Yugoslavia, 1991-2011(2013).

	1991	1994	2001	2002	2003	2011	2013	2011(2013) /1971
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4,377,033				-	-	3,531,159	-5.7
Montenegro	615,035				1,960,127	620,029		17.1
Croatia	4,784,265		4,437,460			4,284,889		-3.2
Macedonia	2,033,964	1,945,932		2,022,547		2,058,539 ⁴		25.0
Slovenia	1,913,355			1,964,036		2,050,189		18.7
Serbia	9,778,991 ¹			7,498,001 ²		8,966,883 ³		6.2

Note: ¹ – data for the territory of Serbia according to the 1991 Census were estimated, due to the boycott of the census from Albanian population;

² – the 2002 census did not record data for Kosovo and Metohija, thus the data are only for the territory of Serbia without its southern province, and also without the Albanian population, who boycotted this census in the municipalities in the south part of the Central Serbia;

³ Total data for the territory of Serbia according to the 2011 census data on the territory of Serbia according to the data of the census conducted in Kosovo and Metohija.

⁴ Estimated population numbers in Macedonia

Source: Lukić *et al*, 2012; Federal Statistical Bureau, 2001; Federal Statistical Bureau, Republic of Croatia, 2013; Federal Statistical Bureau, Republic of Macedonia, 2005; Federal Statistical Bureau, 2012; Federal Statistical Bureau, 2003; Federal Statistical Bureau, Republic of Montenegro, 2004, Federal Statistical Bureau, Republic of Montenegro, 2011.

The last census was conducted simultaneously on major portion of the territory of former Yugoslavia in 1991. This census was not conducted on the whole territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija and southern Serbia, since the Albanian population boycotted it. Thus, it is difficult to compare the results of the 1991 census on the territory of former Yugoslavia. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, the republics individually published the results of the 1991 census. Only Serbia and Montenegro, which remained together in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, jointly published the results of the census. The next censuses were not conducted at the same time on the whole territory of former Yugoslavia. Regular censuses every ten years were conducted only in Croatia (1991, 2001 and 2011). Bosnia and Herzegovina had the next census 22 after the 1991 census, and Macedonia independently conducted the first census in 2002. There are only estimated data for the year 2011 for Macedonia. For all those reason it is impossible to offer precise data on the population numbers in former Yugoslavia region after the 1991 census.

Despite the lack of the synchronized data, it may be estimated that there was a depopulation trend on the territory of newly formed countries after the breakup of former Yugoslavia. Minor growth in the population number in the period 1991-2011 was noticeable in Montenegro (0.81 %) and Macedonia (1.21 %). Economic stability contributed to the growth in Slovenia of 7.2%. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the population number decreased for one fifth, in Croatia for one tenth, and in Serbia for 8.3% (Graph 1). If we analyse the longer period (1971 – 2011 (2013)), it is evident that the census at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century indicated the smaller number of population compared to the population number during the 1970s in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia. Other newly formed countries had the increase in the population numbers: Macedonia for one third, Montenegro and Slovenia for almost one fifth and in Serbia without AP Kosovo and Metohija the number increased for 6.2 %. The decrease in the population number in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the result of several factors. There was the impact of natural increase, war casualties, but also emigration of the population first due to the war activities, but later on due to economic and political reasons (Botev, 2012; Jones, 2010). It is difficult to give precise data on emigrants and immigrants on the territory of former Yugoslavia during and after the war period. The area lost large number of population in the migration process, mostly the people from the working contingent. The emigration was directed towards Central Europe, America or Canada. By the end of the 1990s the number of emigrants to America and Canada reached 48,000 (Manojlović, 2009).

Table 5: Demographic indicators according to the latest census data (2011 or 2013) in the countries formed after the breakup of Yugoslavia

	Average age	Ageing index	Youth index
Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013	39.5	0.92	1.08
Montenegro 2011	37.7	0.70	1.43
Croatia 2011	41.5	1.15	0.87
Macedonia 2002	35.1	0.51	1.95
Slovenia 2011	41.7	1.18	0.85
Serbia 2011 ¹	42.2	1.14	0.84

Note: ¹ – Calculated on the basis of Federal Statistical Bureau data, Census 2011, without the data for Kosovo and Metohija.

Source: *Calculated on the basis of Federal Statistical Bureau data of the Republic of Croatia, 2013; Federal Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Macedonia, 2005; Federal statistical office, 2012; Federal statistical office, Republic of Montenegro, 2011.*

Huge demographic changes in all the countries are difficult to compare due to the different periods of conducting the censuses. Special emphasis is on Bosnia and Herzegovina which was the last one to conduct the census and Macedonia which had precise data on its population after the year 2002. Although the chronological data are missing for the total area, it may be concluded that population ageing occurred in all the countries. The oldest population was in Serbia (42.2 years), Slovenia (41.7 years) and Croatia (41.5 years). Other three countries had younger population due to the presence of Muslim population, higher natural growth, which further implied higher share of the young population. That was also confirmed by the ageing index and youth index. Ageing index exceeded the critical value and highlighted the old population, but in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia it was significantly higher. Quite contrary, the youth index in the previously mentioned countries was lower. The listed demographic indicators were the result of low natural growth which was the lowest in Serbia in 2010 (-4.6 ‰) and fell to -5.5 ‰ in the year 2017. Such intensive decline in natural growth would continue, or intensify due to the growing presence of the older population. According to the citations of certain scientists, population in Serbia would decrease to approximately five million people (Nikitović, 2013). Similar situation was in Croatia due to intensive emigration of the population after Croatia joined the European Union.

According to expert estimates, by the middle of this century, the Croatian population will have about three and a half million (Nejamšić and Toskić, 2013). Slovenia as the country with best economic and social policies managed to preserve the population number with the natural growth rate 2017 of -0.1 ‰.

However, according to forecasts by the middle of this century and in this country, the number of inhabitants will fall to about one million and eight hundred thousand (Stropnik and Kump, 2008; Bijak et al, 2007). In 2017 positive natural growth rates were recorded for Macedonia (0.6 ‰) and Montenegro (1.4 ‰) because of the Muslim population. For these reasons, it is estimated that by the middle of this century Macedonia will have about one million and one hundred thousand inhabitants, and Montenegro about seven hundred thousand (Vienna Institute of Demography, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, 2010). In Bosnia and Herzegovina natural growth rate was -1.8 ‰ in 2017 (United Nations, 2018).

4. Conclusion

Depopulation process spread to the larger portion of former Yugoslavia territory prior to its breakup. The process of depopulation was the result of natural growth decline and emigration. Natural growth decline was present in certain republics or provinces for decades, but it started a bit later in others. On the one hand the process started at the end of the 19th century in the northern parts of Serbia, AP Vojvodina, on the other hand natural growth decline started in the second half of the 20th century in AP Kosovo and Metohija. Central Serbia and other republics of former Yugoslavia also had the decline in natural growth in the second half of the 20th century. Population polarization from north to south was present in Serbia as well as in other northern republics which had lower natural growth than the southern republics. Such process was the consequence of historical heritage, social conditions, cultural development and numerous other factors.

Apart from natural growth, emigration was another factor that emerged in this area immediately after the World War II and later during the war in 1990s, especially after the war activities at the end of the 20th century. War activities did not spread equally to all parts of former Yugoslavia, but the migrations occurred in all the republics. The end of war did not bring peace, well-being, peaceful life, progress and prosperity. Collapse of the economy on the whole territory additionally contributed to population migrations. Most of the economic facilities that operated in former Yugoslavia were closed. In the 21st century new economic facilities have been opened as a result of foreign investments. However, the salaries have remained low and working population tends to migrate to European or transatlantic countries in large numbers. The drain of the working population group is recorded for all the republics of former Yugoslavia. Only Slovenia has a slightly smaller drain of the population because it joined the European Union in 2004 and the income per capita is significantly higher than in other republics (Internet 1).

Croatia is also the member of the European Union, but it faces huge emigration process which has been made easier with opening borders towards other EU members. Poor economic situation in other countries of former Yugoslavia also accelerated migration processes which became favourable for the countries receiving immigrants. The countries that accept immigrants from this area did not have expenses regarding their education which is a significant benefit. Working age population group which should be the leader of the economic development in the area is mainly emigrating. It is also the fertile contingent of the population and the pillar of the population survival.

Natural and mechanical population movements are the main factors leading to depopulation on the whole territory of former Yugoslavia. Average age of the population is still increasing, as well as the ageing index. The next census that is due at the beginning of the third decade of this century will show even worse demographic situation.

In order to improve demographic situation it is important to work on not only population policy, but also on normalization of human relations and on overcoming ethnic conflicts and religious intolerance that have been present for decades. Keeping constant political tension and highlighting geopolitical problems suits those who realize their own goals in this area. By overcoming those problems normal life functions would be restored and with economic development migrants would return to their countries of origin. Normalisation of human relations and economic development might lead to the increase of natural growth and decline of migration processes.

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