

Spatial demography of the Balkans: trends and challenges

IVth International Conference of Balkans Demography (Budva, Montenegro, 13th – 15th May 2010)

On the initiative of the DEMOBALK Association, an international population conference will be held in Budva in May 2010 on the theme: *Spatial demography of the Balkans: trends and challenges*.

The aim of this conference will be to gain a deeper understanding of the multiple links between demographic and spatial dynamics in the countries of south-eastern Europe, in a region severely affected by the conflicts, crises and socioeconomic "revolutions" of the post-Communist era.

The effects of recent upheavals have combined with other deep-seated trends to bring about a redistribution of populations within the areas concerned and a new set of geodemographic dynamics. The characteristics of these dynamics, their spatialization, their consequences and the challenges they raise have not yet been clearly measured or analysed.

The conference will start by focusing on data collection (sources, concepts, data availability and reliability, time series, etc.) and will then move on to examine methodological questions, notably regarding the rationale of certain territorial zoning methods and the definition and usefulness of indicators. Spatial population dynamics will be analysed and compared (urban/rural, coastal/inland, mountains/plains). Their economic and social consequences at local and national levels will then be examined, making a distinction between short- and medium-term impacts, and consequences over the very long term. The last session will address the planning and development challenges facing the territories concerned.

First session: Sources and demographic data

The aim of this session is to draw up an inventory of available data (vital records, censuses, surveys) for analysing population dynamics in the regions concerned.

What data are currently collected, analysed and disseminated by the statistical offices of the Balkans with regard to the key components of population renewal in sub-national areas? How are data on fertility, mortality, individual mobility (internal and international), population age-sex structure etc. organized in terms of the different territorial levels? What periods do the data cover? How accurate and comparable are they?

The papers presented in the session will seek to examine how changes in the administrative zoning systems are tied in with changes in statistical data collection.

Second session: Measurement problems

This session devoted to methodological aspects will focus on the problems encountered in the study of population renewal in sub-national territories and in the analysis of spatial variations in behaviour.

It will examine the justification for certain territorial divisions and will address the question of just how far a territory can be usefully divided up in order to analyse population dynamics.

The topics covered in this session will include questions on highly localized population forecasting.

Third session: Population dynamics and territory

This session will focus on the interacting phenomena that govern population renewal.

The aim will be to identify the key trends underpinning these phenomena at different levels of territorial division, and to examine the most significant trend shifts and radical breaks observed since the end of the Second World War.

It will seek to identify the population dynamics of homogeneous areas – comprising contiguous territories with strong similarities – and to pinpoint the areas where spatial discontinuities in these dynamics are observed.

It will verify whether the main patterns of political and administrative delimitation or land ownership that exist today tie in with the results of the spatial dynamics analysis.

Fourth session: Population dynamics and indirect effects

Diverse population dynamics produce equally diverse results.

This session will be devoted to presenting and analysing the short-, mid- and long-range consequences – in economic, social and environmental terms – of the population dynamics currently being observed in the territories under consideration.

How will the distant future be affected by the deep-seated trends of population decline in certain regions and of rapid population growth in others?

Attention will focus on factors that may be a signal of radical change.

Fifth session: Planning and development challenges

The Balkan countries, like many others, include depopulated regions, sometimes in a serious state of abandonment, alongside other highly dynamic regions which attract an ever larger proportion of the population.

This demographic heterogeneity, varying in degree from one country to another, raises the question of the future development – as harmonious as possible – of demographically disparate national entities where prospects vary greatly between regions.

This last session will address the strategies and modes of action that can be implemented to promote balanced and sustainable coexistence, if not synergy, between regions with very different population dynamics and expectations.

Scientific Committee

Veselin Vukotic (Faculty for international economics, finance and business, Podgorica, Montenegro); Christophe Bergouignan (Institute of Demographic Studies, University of Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV, France); Corrado Bonifazi (Institute for research on population and social policy, Roma, Italia); Arjan Gjonca (London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom); Verica Janeska (Institute of Economics, Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia); Byron Kotzamanis (Laboratory of Demographic and Social Analysis, University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece); Snjezana Mrdjen (Department of Geography, University of Zadar, Croatia); Alain Parant (National Institute for Demographic Studies, Paris, France).

Organisation Committee

Radomir Djurovic (MONSTAT, Podgorica, Montenegro)-President; Francois Begeot (European Commission, Brussels, Belgium); Mirjana Devedjic (University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography, Serbia); Goran Penev (Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade, Serbia), Snezana Remikovic (MONSTAT, Podgorica, Montenegro).

Session organizers

Session 1: Byron Kotzamanis

Session 2: Christophe Bergouignan

Session 3: Snjezana Mrdjen

Session 4: Corrado Bonifazi

Session 5: Alain Parant

If you wish to present a paper or participate in the conference

please fill in the pre-inscription application form found in the Demobalk site (<http://www.demobalk.org/conferences.asp>) and return it to berber@prd.uth.gr.

(The deadline for the submission of Abstracts is the 12th of November 2009)