

Démographie spatiale des Balkans : tendances et enjeux
Spatial demography of the Balkans: trends and challenges

IVème Conférence internationale de Démographie des Balkans
IVth International Conference of Balkans Demography

(Budva, Monténégro, 13-15 mai 2010/ 13th – 15th May 2010)

POPULATION DYNAMICS AND COMMUTING IN SERBIA

(Séance / Session 4)

VESNA LUKIĆ

Population Dynamics and Commuting in Serbia¹

Abstract: Commuting flows represent links between settlements and regions with different population dynamics and socio-economic development. Huge disparities that exist between economically developed and undeveloped regions in Serbia have negative effect on population dynamics and demographic potentials of less developed, usually rural settlements in Republic of Serbia. On the one hand, there is decrease in number of population in economically undeveloped settlements and those with poorly equipped infrastructure. On the other hand, super concentration of population becomes evident in major urban and functional centres, where economic, cultural, educational, health and similar facilities are also concentrated. In the actual conditions of negative population growth in Republic of Serbia, the most prevailing influence onto current demographic trend has population mobility. Results of exploring of rural population's total mobility indicate that most of the rural settlements in Serbia have negative both migration and commuting balance together with population decline. Bearing in mind co-dependence between commuting and demographic, traffic and socio-economic factors, this paper illustrates the main characteristics of commuting flows on territory of Republic of Serbia, their significance in development tendencies, as well as changes that have occurred because of attenuation of rural settlements' agricultural function and changes of population's socio-economic structure.

Key words: commuting, socio-economic disparities, population decline

Dynamique des populations et les migrations quotidiennes en Serbie

Résumé: Les migrations quotidiennes représentent le lien entre les communes et les régions aux dynamiques des populations et au développement socio-économique différents. De grandes différences entre les régions économiquement développées et non développées ont un impact négatif sur la dynamique des populations ainsi que sur les potentiels démographiques des régions sous-développées, le plus souvent des régions rurales de la République de Serbie. D'un côté, nous pouvons constater la diminution du nombre d'habitants des communes économiquement non développés et pauvres en infrastructure et de l'autre côté le surpeuplement des centres urbains majeurs et fonctionnels où sont concentrés les établissements économiques mais aussi ceux du domaine de la culture, de l'éducation, de la santé, etc. Dans les conditions présentes de la croissance démographique négative en République de Serbie, la mobilité de la population a une influence dominante sur la tendance démographique actuelle. Les résultats de l'étude de la mobilité spatiale de la population rurale indiquent un bilan migratoire négatif, soit absolu soit quotidien, suivi de la dépopulation, de la plupart des villages en Serbie. Etant donné la dépendance de la migration quotidienne et des facteurs démographiques, socio-économiques, l'utilisation du transport, cette étude illustre les caractéristiques principales des flux de la migration quotidienne sur le territoire de la République de Serbie, leur importance pour les capacités de développement ainsi que les changements qui ont eu lieu en raison de l'affaiblissement de la fonction agricole des régions rurales et du changement de la structure socio-économique de la population.

Mots-clés: les migrations quotidiennes, les inégalités socio-économiques, la dépopulation

Introduction

Negative values of the population growth of Serbia (without Kosovo and Metohia), recorded since 1992, have influenced that migrations more and more gain on significance, considering that predominantly in different extent, they represent the decisive factor of the population increase. Therefore, the awareness is becoming stronger on the necessity of larger "strategic approach for

* Geographical institute "Jovan Cvijić" Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Djure Jakšića 9, 11000 Belgrade; Serbia; v.lukic@gi.sanu.ac.

¹ This study was supported by the Serbian Ministry of Science and Technological Development under project No. 146011.

managing the location and mobility of human resources, as for the sake of individuals and their households, so for enterprises and society as a whole” (Pooley C., Turnbull J., Adams M., 2005). More recent demographic population development of Serbia was influenced by the following migration flows: migrations of refugees from regions of the former Yugoslav republics, internal migrations and daily migrations. Concerning migration from abroad, the share of immigrants was only 0.9% of the total number of migrants in Serbia in 2002 (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2004).

In 2007, negative population growth was recorded in almost all municipalities in Serbia (157 out of 165). Municipalities with positive population growth were mainly those which had more expressed share of national minorities (Albanians, Bosnians) that were characterized by relatively high birth rate. In given conditions of the population growth, the massive migrations of refugees, which progressed at the end of the 1990s, contributed considerably to the population increase of Serbia. There are estimations that without refugees, the population number of Serbia would be reduced by 6% in the inter-census period from 1991 to 2002 (Ladjević, Stanković, 2004). The spatial distribution of refugees in Serbia has shown that almost half of all refugees sought refuge in the area of Vojvodina (48%), then in Belgrade (38%), while small number of refugees inhabited other regions (Lukić V., 2005). Owing to positive migration balance rate of 6.6‰, the population of Vojvodina increased in the last inter-census period even besides negative population growth of -3.8‰ (CDI-IDN, 2004). The non-existence of corresponding migration policy within the frames of the population policy, and which resulted in elemental settling of refugees, influenced the fact that the rural settlements and regions of Central Serbia with enduring problems of insufficient birth and depopulation such as Eastern Serbia is for example, were least settled by refugees, as well as the border regions (with small population density).

In the area of the Republic of Serbia, internal migrations used to be mainly locally in village-town relation, i.e. towards municipal centres and suburban settlements. This process was the most intensive in the time of accelerated industrialization and deagrarization of the 1960s and 1970s as the result of general socio-economic development. Due to decline in demographic potentials of rural settlements, the extent of these migrations also decreased by the time, and so the current inward migrations are more and more regionally in smaller urban centres-larger urban and economic centres relation. Besides changes in the population number and gradual increase in the share of urban population in the total number, the influence of internal migrations has also been characterized by the change of spatial distribution of the population, that is, the super concentration of the population in larger towns. Thus for example, 27.8% of the population lived in four large towns (Belgrade and towns of 100 000 and more people-Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Sad), which was more than one-fourth of the total population of Serbia in 2002. On the other hand, the continual decline in the population number² has been recorded in most rural settlements both due to negative migration balance and insufficient reproduction, and so disproportions have increased in the population density and number between the spatial wholes, while more and more expressed demographic, economic and social polarization has arisen.

Uneven demographic and socio-economic development in the area of Serbia reflects the increased share of the population (primarily workers) that is involved in commuting flows. The share of commuters increased from 18% in 1961 to 22% in 2002. Besides the extent, the sex and socio-economic structure of daily migrants also changed throughout the time, while the major direction of commuting left unchanged and commuting flows are still most intensive in village-town relation³. In the period after the World War II, daily migrations developed in the light of changes in the economic structure of labour and transfer of the population from agricultural to non-agricultural activities in accordance with the increased needs of industry to engage labour. These processes were especially expressed in the area of fertile plain Vojvodina where the sudden increase of 13.3% to 18.9% was recorded in the share of commuters in the employed population in the period from 1961 to 1971. Most commuters from rural areas were still engaged in agriculture at that time, which influenced the relatively small decrease in the rural population, the so-called industrialization with insufficient urbanization. This phenomenon was characteristic for South Europe where the rates of industrialization were higher than the rates of urbanization, especially in the period from 1950 to 1970 (Roca O., 1986). By the time being, the share of agricultural population in the total population of Serbia decreased from more than 50% in 1961 to 11% in 2002, whereof the share of urban population was more and more

² Population number decreased in even 84% of rural settlements in the period from 1991 to 2002.

³ Slight increase is noticeable (from 24.3% in 1981 to 26.5% in 2002) in the share of commuting flows of the population with residence in urban settlements. Those are mainly daily migrants who work/acquire education in other municipality.

increasing. Nowadays, the social mobility of the population, which used to be characterised by the transfer of the population from agricultural to non-agricultural activities, develops in the direction of industrial activity – servicing activity, i.e. the economy structure becomes transformed from the domination of production into the expansion of servicing activities. Changed conditions for developing of commuting, characterized by weakened industry and current economic reforms and privatization of large state enterprises, as well as mentioned structural-economic changes on the local and regional level (which develop in the direction of more rapid growth in the significance of servicing sector in relation to productive one), have reflected the changes in the structure of commuters of Serbia according to different characteristics. The most expressed changes are gradual increase in the share of women in commuting flows, in accordance with more increasing education of women and process of the increasing share of women in labour, and decrease in the share of employed commuters in the primary and secondary activities, with the increase in the share of employed commuters in the tertiary and quaternary activities, in accordance with changes in the structure of employed population according to sector activity. On the other hand, commuting has its physiognomic, population, economic, social and cultural consequences that are most expressed in the settlements of Serbia which have been the starting point and destination of large number of commuters.

Population Dynamics and Commuting in Serbia According to Groups of Settlements

Commuting in Serbia develops in conditions of very small settlement net in which rural settlements of the population size up to 1 000 people make the largest share. These settlements are characterized by relative exhaustion of demographic potentials, as well as unfavourable age and education population structure. Considering that functional relations between settlements are more intensive as the population number is larger (Ilić J., 1967), the study of the commuting flows was done for four different categories of the settlements according to the type and population size (rural settlements, rural settlements that belong administratively to large towns of Serbia of 100 000 and more people, small towns up to 20.000 people and medium-sized towns of 20 000 to 100 000 people)⁴. The results formed by a special data processing of the 2002 population census of Serbia were used as the data source on commuters. Crossing of data on convergent and divergent commuting flows, absolute migration balance, population dynamics, population size and type of starting point settlement (urban or rural) in the form of access base, enabled wider spectre of information about commuting, in relation to officially published census results that were relatively limited for scientific researches, showing only the divergent commuting flows in Serbia, as well as the studies on interdependence of commuting with other demographic and socio-economic processes. Putting paths into perspective and defining dominant directions of the population commuting flows with starting point in different types of settlements, have pointed out the functional influence of individual categories of settlements, as well as their connection with absolute migration balance in the period from 1991 to 2002, considering that commuting often results in definite migration. The commuting flows (represented as difference between convergent and divergent daily migrants) point to differences in the size of the contingent of labour, number of positions, as well as differences in the quantitative and qualitative demand for labour and degree of development and diversification of economy.

Observed globally, the decrease in the population number was recorded in most rural settlements of Serbia in the last inter-census period, which was followed by negative population growth, negative absolute migration balance and larger extent of divergent commuting flows than convergent ones, which has been manifested by negative values of daily migration balance. The population number in rural settlements decreased for more than 200 000 in this period, mostly due to negative population growth, but partly due to emigration.

The category of rural settlements which administratively belong to towns of more than 100 000 people had the increase in the population number even beside the negative population growth and owing to settling of the population in these settlements in the last inter census period mostly due to financial impossibility of migrants to be settled in the very town. In 2002 this category of rural settlements also had larger extent of divergent commuting flows than convergent ones, i.e. negative values of daily migration balance due to administrative affiliation, and often due to geographical closeness to belonging urban settlements. Further continuation of the process of the secondary urbanization is expected for these settlements, which can be shown through the transformation (changes of their

⁴ Intra-urban movements of daily migrant-workers for large towns-Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Sad are excluded from the analysis.

physiognomic, population and functional structure) of the former villages near towns into the urban settlements and spreading of urban zones on the account of rural areas⁵. Both in the first group of rural settlements and the second one, the number of divergent commuters is about four times larger than the number of convergent ones. The explanation for such relation can be undeveloped functions of numerous starting point settlements on the one hand and favourable geo-traffic position and good traffic connections of some settlements near large towns with attractive centres of commuting on the other hand.

Table 1 Categories of settlements of Serbia according to indicators of daily and definite migrations

Category	Absolute migration balance 1991-2002.	Convergent daily migrants 2002 .	Divergent daily migrants 2002 .	Daily migration balance
Rural settlements	-32.642	73.759	324.333	-250.574
Rural settlements which belong administratively to large towns of Serbia	47.085	22.282	97.380	-75.098
Towns up to 20.000 people	11.516	98.404	53.192	45.212
Towns of 20.000-100.000 people	36.099	154.365	32.589	121.776

Data source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2004b; 2005; 2007

If urban settlements are observed, the intensity of daily and definite migrations is in the strong connection with the population size of towns. In the period from 1991 to 2002, the increase in the population number was characteristic for the category of small towns up to 20 000 people which was to a great extent influenced by migrations (53%), and less positive population growth (47%). The functional attractiveness of these settlements for commuters can be seen through the relation of convergent and divergent commuting flows i.e. double number of commuters who come to work to these settlements in relation to those who depart from them. The medium-sized towns also had the increase in the population number in the same period, which was contributed to a great extent by migrations (88%) in relation to population growth (12%). Observed according to groups, not only that the inflow of commuters was the largest in these settlements, but the number of convergent migrants was also almost five times larger than the number of divergent migrants. In the last years, the weakening of industrial production in Serbia has influenced the phenomenon that the population of some towns in Serbia returned to agriculture and fruit growing, cultivating family estates that used to be deserted in the vicinity of towns. In Ivanjica town for example, the example of the commuting phenomenon was recorded to be of the opposite direction which was associated to raspberry patches in rural settlements (Marković S., I. Popović, M. Ostojić, 2005).

Demographic, Economic and Social Causes and Consequences of Commuting

The initial development of industry in Serbia required massive engagement of surplus labour from villages. Besides large number of rural population which were definitely moving to towns, more and more population were also becoming involved in commuting flows. At that time, there were numerous households of commuters with the so-called mixed sources of income. The members of households with mixed incomes were mostly commuters who had agricultural farms, but they acquired additional income in non-agricultural activities, representing usual economic and social link between village and town at that time. Considering that commuters were mainly unskilled or semi-skilled workers, they were bound by low earnings to their houses and estates as sources of additional incomes. Dual sources of incomes for household were characteristic for 1960s. Since then the changes in the structure of households according to sources of income have developed in the direction of reducing the share of households that have sources of income from agriculture. Rural household suffered the crucial changes in three major segments: 1) size; 2) structure of relatives and 3) position and roles of members. The differentiation of agricultural, mixed and non-agricultural rural households, therefore, develops in direction of convergence towards urban family, basing the survival on individual work of members

⁵ Some examples of spatial expansion of towns are the joining of Vojlovica settlement to the town of Pančevo in 1964 and Mužlja settlement to the town of Zrenjanin in 1981 and losing the status of independent settlements.

who acquire income out of village (Bobić M., 1999). "Small agricultural farms were firstly turned into mixed households, while then by the time being they were turned into non-agricultural ones. Their complete separation from agriculture was almost certain if it was two-family household about in which only elderly generation was farmers"(Petrović R, 1979). Developmental impact of commuting on spheres of its influence has also been visible in other spheres of living. Commuting of rural population influenced the metamorphosis of village and changes of habits and way of living, considering that most often commuters work in larger, urban settlement and by adopting the urban norms and views of life they have been the main stakeholders of changes in the starting point settlements. Introducing in literature the concept of migrant as a "cultural broker" speaks in favour of it (Spencer R.F., 1970).

Not only that the number of rural settlements in Serbia decreases continually by emigration and insufficient reproduction of the population, since many of them are fading away definitely (spontaneous displacing), but the number of settlements of small population size increases i.e. the settlement net becomes smaller additionally. By the decrease in number and unfavourable changes in the structure (senilization and feminization) of rural population, besides the source of labour for transfer into non-agricultural activities, the migration potential and number of commuters, partly engaged in agriculture, also decreased, and agrarian landscape of settlements is gradually changed, while the economic significance of agriculture becomes smaller and smaller. It is considerably contributed by shortening of agricultural estates. In the last forty years it came to extreme decrease in the share of larger estates in Serbia in the structure of households according to the size of estate, so the largest number of households had relatively small estates that most often served only to satisfy one's own needs for agricultural products, but not as the main or additional source of income for households. Most households possess small farms of 1 to 3 ha. The processes of deagrarization, changed land functions and phenomenon of illegal construction are expressed particularly in suburban settlements which are characterized by more favourable age-sex population structure due to intensive settling in relation to rural settlements from wider sphere of urban influence. In rural settlements from wider sphere of urban influence negative demographic trends have far-reaching economic consequences, especially for the system of social and health care due to expressed ageing process of the population. The low degree of education of the rural population has been the additional social problem.

Differential demographic and socio-economic development of rural settlements, suburban settlements and urban and municipal centres is evident in Serbia, and the interdependence of the commuting flows with economic and other aspects of the local and regional development can be noticed. According to the analysis of the level of development on the territory of the Republic of Serbia (without Kosovo and Metohia), which was given in the Strategy of the Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2007 to 2012 (Official Register, no.21/07), 37 municipalities were categorized as underdeveloped (economically undeveloped or regions with special developmental problems-demographically endangered regions and border regions with structural and demographic problems). The criteria for the economically undeveloped municipalities was decline in the population number in the period from 1971 to 2002, rate of unemployment (average 2004-2005) and national income per capita (average 2002-2004). The decline of income was caused by reduced or completely absent investments, gradual economic "collapse" of enterprises and unsolved legal-property relations in the process of privatization, dilapidated equipment, etc. The centres in which industry was dominant sector (production of traffic means, textile and metal industry) were most stuck by these processes. Thus, from the previous "industrial giants", some municipalities were found to be in the category of underdeveloped or their income considerably decreased. The transitional processes in Serbia in the first decade of the 21st century influenced the phenomenon of new group of undeveloped areas (municipalities). Some of the municipalities are categorised into the so-called devastated areas⁶, as special form of undeveloped municipalities (Majdanpek, Bor, Priboj, Medveđa, Knjaževac, Prijepolje, Kragujevac, Loznica, Leskovac, Kraljevo, Šid, Raška and Dimitrovgrad, and three more municipalities since 2006: Vlasotince, Svrlijig and Kuršumljija) with the centres that used to be the stakeholders of the economic development of wider area. It is about municipalities that lost more than 2/3 of the national income in the previous period. The negative conditions of dealing reflected most the sector of light industry, so the former industrial centres were the most endangered. The number of employed in the

⁶ Devastated areas are established by Regulation on the criteria and indices for establishing devastated areas of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of Republic of Serbia number 58/04 and by Decision on establishing devastated areas of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of Republic of Serbia number 63/04. The income decline, the share of industry in the total income, national income per capita and the total number of unemployed were used for defining the status of devastated areas.

light industry decreased for 76.8% in the period from 2001 to 2008. The former industrial giants suffered most, where the number of workers reduced for several thousands in this sector, i.e. it was more than three to four times lower in almost all centres of the examined area. Large number of dismissed workers considerably increased the percentage of unemployment in the 2000s, which is growing from year to year by average annual rate of 1.6%, with high share of long-term unemployed, young and unskilled persons. The population without qualifications makes the third to the half of the total unemployed. Large differences are noticed in the degree of unemployment by regions of Serbia, while low values coincide exactly with those regions in which there are municipalities which are mostly categorized as economically underdeveloped (the Jablanica and the Pčinj District) (Tošić B., V. Lukić, M. Ćirković, 2009).

The process of migration of the population from underdeveloped areas had begun long time ago which was pointed out by the average annual rates of migration balance of undeveloped municipalities for the period from 1961 to 1971. Only municipalities with large industrial complex, Bor and Majdanpek had the positive migration balance in the mentioned period (IDN-CDI, 1979). Due to massive emigration and weakened demographic potentials the population of undeveloped areas averagely decreases ten times more per year than the average of the Republic of Serbia. The traditionally emigration municipality of Crna Trava for example, which is situated on the border with Bulgaria, in 2002 had only 20% of the population that it used to have in 1971, and those were mainly aged households. The analysis of the share of higher and highly educated population in the total population older than fifteen years, showed that the share of this category of educated in underdeveloped areas is lower (5.5%) in relation to the average of the Republic (11%). Disproportions in the level of education are especially expressed when it is rural settlements about the share of 2.8% of higher and highly educated.

Reducing the differences and establishing the balance between economic, social, cultural and spatial possibilities of development has been one of the strategic orientations of the Republic of Serbia. In order that the problem of regional disproportions in degree of development and poverty is solved systematically, the Law on regional development was introduced and Agency for regional development founded in 2008. Through regional programmes employment is encouraged and investments and opening of positions are stimulated on the principle of regional differences where the effect of business program on the increase of employment in activities of strategic significance for the development of the region has been mentioned as the primary condition of financing. Many regional boosts were adopted in 2006 for attracting the investments and solving the problems of unemployed in undeveloped areas: direct fiscal encouragements, accelerated amortization, conveniences for concessionary investments, professional retraining and instruction, employment of disabled, etc. Additional exemptions are regulated for business in free zones founded on undeveloped areas: preferential customs treatment and simplified customs procedures. Within income tax of citizens, larger tax conveniences were provided for regions and activities characterized by low earnings. Some former large industrial centres are marked as the regions of special state significance and they have been the subject of special measures of the policy of employment (Official Register, no. 21/07). Beside business ambience and investments, the improvement of the quality of living and cultural contents is necessary in order to reduce further emigration from undeveloped and border areas, which would also contribute to the reduction of pressure on large towns and costs of development of infrastructure in them.

Violated economic and social relations in undeveloped areas brought to the continuation of the process of emigration from settlements that were geographically more distant and connected worse with larger centres, while in other settlements it came to the increase in the extent of commuting as a form of adapting and overcoming the problems of unemployment in the local milieu. Most municipalities in Serbia which are the starting point of larger share of commuters towards other municipalities have mainly large number of unemployed and low values of gross national income per capita. In most of undeveloped municipalities of Serbia, the share of divergent daily migrants exceeds 60% in the total daily migrants (See Map 1). For some undeveloped municipalities the small share of divergent daily migrants in the total one is the result of hidden unemployment or apparent employment. For example, the share of divergent daily migrants in municipalities of Bor and Majdanpek is less than 30% even above difficult economic situation in these municipalities: decreased production, low earnings and current realization of social programme for solving the surplus of unemployed. After two unsuccessful privatizations of the largest Serbian jewellery producer "Zlatara Majdanpek" and four unsuccessful privatizations of Copper Mining and Smelting Complex Bor in the structure of which there is a copper mine in Majdanpek, the government remained as the owner of 33% of the possessions of Copper Mining and Smelting Complex Bor and it has been searching for strategic partner. Due to the slowness

Besides unemployment as general social problem in contemporary conditions of economic transition in Serbia, the unrealistically high prices of real estates in larger urban centres also influence the commuting flows in Serbia, making the obstacle to definite migration. The researches in Serbia have shown in the example of Pančevo in Vojvodina that 93.8% of commuters live in residential structure which is under ownership of their families (Lukić V., 2008). That is the confirmation of other authors' knowledge (Hanson S., G. Pratt, 1998) that the owners of residential units/structures more often choose this form of migration in relation to definite migration, because relative invariability of residence influences the possibilities of employment which is accessible on daily distance from residence.

Taking the relative exhaustion of demographic potentials of rural settlements into consideration, in contrast to the period of agrarian overpopulation, the demographic factors as the determinant of commuting are losing on their significance when it is meant on the total population number of the starting point settlements. The influence of demographic factors reflects more the structural demand for labour of certain age, sex or qualifications. On the other hand, there are indirect demographic effects of commuting which are the result of the transition of the part of commuters into definite migrants due to frequent non viability of commuting for longer period of time owing to expenses of everyday travelling, as well as other numerous consequences of commuting both for worker and his family. Commuting thus reflects indirectly the number, distribution and structures of the population and households through the transformation of the part of commuters into definite migrants. This process has its permanent consequences both on demographic and overall socio-economic development of the starting areas and destinations of commuters. Having in mind the selectivity which characterises every migration process, the transition of the part of commuters into definite migrants brings to the loss of the working age population and the population in fertile period as well as the loss of qualified and highly qualified personnel or the lack of certain personnel in the area of the starting point settlements, which reflects negatively the overall local development. Data on the connection between commuting and definite migration have shown that the largest number of peasant-workers from the former Yugoslavia intended to keep the status of dual activity, while commuting served as transitional phase for deserting agricultural activities for 21.9% of them. These peasants mainly had better education and they were in more urbanised settlements (Roca O., 1986). The researches of the potential functional attractiveness in the examples in Serbia indicate that most frequently about one-third of the total number of commuters had the intention to replace daily migration by definite one throughout the time. The significance of the living cycle factors is noticeable for the moment of replacing of daily migration by definite one—most questioned associated the time of definite migration with significant events in the living cycle (getting married, children's schooling). Moreover, most questioned who intended to move planned to solve the housing problem in new residence by receiving an apartment or building a house, while the modality of apartment rental made the majority only in the case of those who have not been married (Stamenković S., 1989; Stamenković S. et al, 1995). For persons who are not married, fewer preconditions were necessary to be fulfilled in order to come to the replacement of daily migration by definite one

In many published scientific papers it is pointed out that the process of emigration from rural settlements continued even above the so-called counter-urbanisation phenomenon (Stockdale A., 2002). If it is conditionally assumed to be true that about one-third of the total number of commuters will move to settlement in which they work in the following period, the trend of emigration of the population will continue in the categories of rural settlements (See Table 1). The rural settlements of the first category would potentially lose around 108 000 inhabitants in the following period, while they would receive around 24 000, whereof the rural settlements of the second category would potentially lose around 30 000 inhabitants and receive around 7 000 people. On the other hand, small and medium-sized towns of Serbia would still be more absorbent than dispersive centres of the migrant population. Thus, already initiated negative processes of demographic and socio-economic polarization⁷ would continue, with poor⁸ and less qualified rural population at which the multidimensional phenomenon of social exclusion is present. The significance of small and medium-sized towns in the settlement net of Serbia is expressed fully, as well as their relation with belonging functional area and role in urban-rural interactions. For example, the paper by Satterthwaite D. and Tacoli, C., 2003 describes various

⁷ Regional differences in the level of socio-economic development brought to the extreme concentration of the population on Danube-Morava corridor as the main axis of the Republic's development which is referred by research of basic indicators of demographic change in this area (Nikitović, Lukić, 2003).

⁸ Index of poverty of rural population in Serbia is almost twice larger than index of poverty of urban population.

categories of policies that have been implemented to promote the role of small and medium towns in rural and regional development. Small and medium-sized towns are the last barrier which keeps migrants from moving to large macro-regional centres, while “the fact that they serve as the residence of commuters enables small towns to have the inflow of income as almost small factory or a shop would bring them” (Parr J. B., 1987). The examples of Latvia and Lithuania have proved that commuting reduces the differences between earnings of rural and urban population and its effects are positive for the country even when the costs of commuting are included (Hazans M., 2004).

Conclusions

Discussing on development, existing situation, as well as perspective of commuting contribute to the cognition of the connection between the commuting process and its causative factors and effects in the area of Serbia. The scope and directions of migrations in Serbia are the result of demographic, sociological and economic factors (among which is the degree of the development of residential settlements), pointing out the interdependence of demographic and socio-economic changes. Regional differentiation is very expressed in Serbia in the level of economic development which represents the long-term problem that cannot be solved easily or rapidly. Undeveloped areas are characterised by developmental demographic (emigration, depopulation, population ageing), social and economic (unemployment, critical level of the quality of labour, poverty) and infrastructural problems (undeveloped traffic telecommunication and sewerage network, and public service underdevelopment - cultural institutions, health-care facilities, etc.). The concentration and location of economic and non economic facilities gradually caused demographic and social polarization in smaller number of urban centres, still with economic motive as the strongest stimulus for migration. The decline of industrial production has influenced the increased unemployment which is general social problem in contemporary conditions of economic transition in Serbia, as well as the continuation of negative demographic tendencies in the form of more and more disturbed spatial-demographic balance and the weakening of demographic potentials in undeveloped areas. Taking the high degree of unemployment into consideration, the active population commuting in Serbia has been one of the ways of adapting individuals and households to changed living conditions and overcoming the problems of unemployment in the local milieu, having also in mind high prices of real estates that keep them from their definite removal. This has been especially expressed when it is the population of undeveloped and devastated areas of Serbia about when the share of divergent commuters mainly exceeds 60% in the total commuting flows.

Taking the national trend of negative population growth into consideration, it can be expected that the scope of commuting declines gradually in the whole country due to decrease in the contingents of working age population and changes in age structure of the population that will negatively reflect the market of labour. Even above the eventual decline in the scope of commuting, the general tendencies of the decrease in the number of jobs in production and the increase in the number of jobs in servicing activities will make the flows of commuting to be dominant towards the centres of higher rank in the functional hierarchy of the settlements of Serbia with strong polarization influence. By current demographic processes, further decrease in the average population density is expected in rural settlements, as the indicator of changes in demographic development, with the continuation of the population concentration in urban centres and surrounding suburban settlements. In accordance with demographic and physiognomic evolution of settlements, as well as transformation of the existing ones and evolution of new functions, the spatial-functional relations and connections will also change in closer and wider surroundings of the leading centres of commuting. The significance of small and medium-sized towns in the settlement net of Serbia is expressed fully, as well as their relation with belonging functional area and role in urban-rural interactions. Small and medium-sized towns are the last barrier which keeps migrants from moving to large macro-regional centres and special attention needs to be paid to them in the strategies of the regional development. Preventing the transition of daily into definite migration is certainly positive from the aspect of the preservation of demographic vitality of the starting point settlements. Nevertheless, the developmental policies should support this form of spatial mobility of the population with the aim of acting upon the reduction of further concentration of the population in urban centres and slowing down the emigration of the population from the settlements with weak economic potentials, i.e. maintaining their demographic stability.

References:

1. Hazans M., (2004): Does Commuting Reduce Wage Disparities? *Growth and Change*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 360-390.
2. Hanson S., G. Pratt, (1988): Reconceptualizing the Links between Home and Work in Urban Geography, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 64, No. 4, pp. 299-321.
3. IDN - CDI, (2004): Statistički prilozi, str. 160-187.
4. Ilić J., (1970): Karakteristike funkcionalnih odnosa između grada i okoline sa posebnim osvrtom na SR Srbiju, *Stanovništvo*, 3-4, str. 167-189, IDN-CDI, Beograd.
5. Lađević P., V. Stanković, (2004): *Izbeglički korpus u Srbiji, prema podacima popisa stanovnika 2002*, Beograd, Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava Srbije i Crne Gore.
6. Lukić V., (2005): *Izbegličke migracije iz Bosne i Hercegovine u Beograd*, Posebna izdanja Knj. 66., Beograd, Geografski institut "Jovan Cvijić" SANU, str. 1-130.
7. Lukić V., (2008): Konvergentne i divergentne dnevne migracije stanovništva Pančeva, doktorska disertacija u rukopisu, Geografski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu.
8. Marković S., I. Popović, M. Ostojić, (2005): Smer dnevnih migracija kao posledica privrednog razvoja ivanjičke opštine, *Traktori i pogonske mašine*, Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp. 309-314.
9. Nikitović V., V. Lukić, (2003): Comparative analysis of basic aggregate indicators of Danube-Morava corridor municipalities' demographic change, *Zbornik radova Geografskog instituta "Jovan Cvijić"*, SANU, iss. 52, pp. 35-50.
10. Parr J. B., (1987): Interaction in an urban system: aspects of trade and commuting, *Economic Geography*, Vol. 63, No 3., 223-240.
11. Pooley C., J. Turnbull, M. Adams, (2005): Changes in Everyday Mobility in England Since the 1940s: A case study, *Human Mobility in a Globalizing World*, Belgeo, 1-2, pp.69-83.
12. Stockdale A., (2002): Towards Typology of Out-Migration from Peripheral Areas: A Scottish Case Study, *International Journal of Population Geography*, Vol. 8, N 5, pp. 345-364.
13. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, (2002): Population Census 2002., Book 13: "Daily Migrants – Data by Municipalities", Belgrade.
14. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, (2004a): Population Census 2002, Book 8: "Population According to Migrational Characteristics – Data by Municipalities", Belgrade.
15. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, (2004b): Population Census 2002, Book 9: "Comparative Review of Number of Inhabitants in 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2002 – Data by Municipalities, Belgrade.
16. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, (2005): Vital Statistics, Belgrade.
17. Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, (2007): Population Census 2002, Specially Processed Data, Belgrade.
18. Roca O., (1986): Migracija radnika u Zagreb: Geografski aspekt prostorne pokretljivosti i problematike, doktorska disertacija u rukopisu, Zagreb.
19. Satterthwaite D., C. Tacoli, (2003): The urban part of rural development: the role of small and intermediate urban centres in rural and regional development and poverty reduction, Working Paper 9, London, International Institute for Environment and Development.
20. Spencer R. F., (1970): Spencer R. F., (Ed.), Migration and Anthropology, Section two Proceedings of the 1970 Spring meeting of the American Ethnological Society.
21. Stamenković S., (1989): *Dnevne migracije stanovništva (radne snage i školske omladine) prema centralnim naseljima u vranjskom kraju*, SGD – Posebna izdanja Knj. 68., Beograd.
22. Stamenković S., M. Pavlović, D. Tošić, M. Milinčić (1995): *Dnevne migracije stanovništva (radne snage i učenika) prema Aleksandrovcu i Brusu*, Geografski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Posebna izdanja Knj. 4., Beograd.
23. Tošić B., V. Lukić, M. Ćirković, (2009): Naselja nerazvijenih područja Srbije, *Zbornik radova Geografskog instituta "Jovan Cvijić" SANU*, Knj. 59., Br.2, str. 59-77.
24. *** (2004). Regulation on the criteria and indices for establishing devastated areas of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of Republic of Serbia number 58/04.
25. *** (2004). Decision on establishing devastated areas of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of Republic of Serbia number 63/04.
26. *** (2007). Strategy of the Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of Republic of Serbia number 21/07.