



Book Review

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF SERBIA—NATURE, PEOPLE, ECONOMY

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Abstract: The paper represents a review of the monograph entitled "The Geography of Serbia—Nature, People, Economy", published in the scope of "World Regional Geography Book Series" by the Springer Nature Switzerland AG. The aim of the review is to present a prominent monograph of international significance to the scientific community and broader readership. The monograph contains all aspects of physical geography, demography, and regional development as well as related disciplines including historical and geopolitical context, and economy.

Keywords: book review; prominent monograph; national geography; international significance

Introduction

The monograph entitled *Geography of Serbia—Nature, People, Economy* provides a holistic approach in all the segments of geography (physical, social, regional) and also various aspects of other related sciences including ecology, economy, and history. This prominent monograph of international significance is the result of the joint work of scientists from various scientific institutions.

The monograph consists of 317 pages, 35 tables, 143 figures including 61 maps, 47 photographs, 33 charts, and 2 schemes. The monograph is divided into five parts including 23 chapters and 84 sub-chapters. Besides this main content, monograph also contains Preface, Acknowledgements, Contents, About the Editors at the beginning, and Index at the end of the monograph.

The Preface provides an overview of previous studies of the geography of Serbia. The Editors (Emilija Manić, Vladimir Nikitović, and Predrag Đurović) highlighted that the monograph integrates the results of the scientific research of 44 authors from the following scientific institutions: Faculty of Geography, University of Belgrade; Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade; Institute of Social Sciences, Demographic Research Centre, Belgrade; Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade; Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade; Institute for Balkan Studies Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade; Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade; Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade; Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts; Faculty of Sciences, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, University of Novi Sad; Institute of Architecture and Urban & Spatial Planning of Serbia, Belgrade; Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade; and Faculty of Tourism, University of Malaga.

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Historical and Geopolitical Context

This part consists of four chapters including: *Geographical Position of Serbia*; *Prehistory of Serbia: Brief Overview*; *Serbia: A Historical Survey*; and *Political Geography of Serbia: Territorial Organization and Government*.

The chapter *Geographical Position of Serbia* is written by Milutin Tadić and Emilija Manić (pp. 3–6). The authors defined Serbia as a continental medium-size country in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula and the southern rim of the Pannonian Basin at the Southeast Europe. They emphasized the importance of two Pan-European corridors: Corridor 7 and Corridor 10, which run through Serbia. According to the economic–political position, Serbia is categorized as developing country. The chapter also contains two maps. The first map presents geographic network field of Serbia with the geographical midpoint in Kragujevac, while the second one presents location and borders of Serbia.

The chapter *Prehistory of Serbia: Brief Overview* is written by Dušan Mihailović, Dragana Antonović, and Aleksandar Kapuran (pp. 7–20). The authors present Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Eneolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age at the territory of present-day Serbia. The authors emphasized the significance of Lepenski Vir culture with authentic cultural events. The chapter is enriched by two maps and nine photographs. The first map presents Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites, while the second one presents Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age sites at the territory of present-day Serbia. The photographs present artefacts from the prehistoric sites including Mala Balanica (Palaeolithic), Lepenski Vir (Mesolithic), Vinča (Neolithic and Early Eneolithic), and Dupljaja (Bronze Age).

The chapter *Serbia: Historical Survey* is written by Radmila Pejić, Sofija Petković, and Dejan Radičević (pp. 21–40). The authors divided history of Serbia into four main periods: The Roman Empire in the Present-Day Serbia; the Middle Ages: The Rise of Serbian States; Ottoman Empire; and From the Serbian Revolution (The First and Second Serbian Uprising) to Yugoslavia. The authors highlighted that the Serbs settled the present-day Serbia in the 7th century and that they were first mentioned in the western sources in 882 in the Royal Frankish Annals where they were called Sorabi. They also emphasized the prosperity of Serbia under the rule of the Nemanjić dynasty from the 12th to 15th century, as well as the important role of Serbian Orthodox Church in the same period. The chapter is accompanied with six maps and six photographs. The maps present the Roman province of Upper Moesia which included parts of present-day Serbia; Serbian lands in the mid-tenth century; Serbia in the 14th century; the territories under the rule of the Despotate of Serbia; territory of Serbia as a sovereign and internationally recognized country (after the Berlin Congress 1878); and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, which preceded Yugoslavia. The pictures and photographs show important persons and sights from the Serbian history including: imperial residence of the Roman tetrarch Galerius; Saint Sava (Sava Nemanjić, the first Serbian archbishop) from Mileševa monastery; the medieval fortress of Novo Brdo; the fortress of Smederevo with the remnants of Despot Djurdj Branković's palace built in 1428–1430; the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery and Makarije Sokolović (Patriarch Makarije I).

The chapter *Political Geography of Serbia: Territorial Organization and Government* is written by Nebojša Vuković (pp. 41–53). The author discussed this topic throughout the following content: Modern Serbian Borders – Territorial Change; Administrative Territorial Structure – Historical Overview; The Kosovo and Metohija Issue; The Constitution – Basic Principles and Concepts; The Political System; and Political-Geographical Position. The author analysed Serbian geo-political status during the existence of “three Yugoslavias”: the first 1918–1941 (namely the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians 1918–1929); the second Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, later the Socialist

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1992); and the third Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003), the State Union Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006), and since 2006 as the Republic of Serbia. According to the territorial organization and government, Serbia is defined as parliamentary republic with the capital city of Belgrade consisting of Central Serbia and two autonomous provinces: Vojvodina, and Kosovo and Metohija. The chapter also includes five maps presenting: the territorial organization of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929), the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003) and the State Union Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006), territorial organizations of the Republic of Serbia, and geopolitical position of Serbia with the most important geostrategic objects.

Physical Geography

This part consists of five chapters including Climate of Serbia; Hydrological Characteristics of Serbia; Geomorphological Characteristics of Serbia; Biogeographical Characteristics of Serbia: Richness and Spatial Distribution of Biodiversity, Endemism and Biogeographical Regionalization; Geohazard and Geoheritage.

The chapter *Climate of Serbia* is written by Boško Milovanović, Gorica Stanojević, and Milan Radovanović (pp. 57–68). According to the Köppen climate classification, depending on altitudes, the authors defined three types: moderately warm and humid climate (prevailing), moderately cold and humid climate, and cold and humid climate. The authors highlighted that the factors which dominantly determine climate are mathematical-geographical position of the Serbia and atmospheric circulation. Climatic elements including air temperature, precipitation, snowfalls, insolation, cloudiness, humidity, and wind, as well as their spatial distribution are analysed. Based on analyses of changes of air temperature and precipitation, the authors concluded that the largest part of Serbia became warmer in the period 1961–2010, but without statistical changes in precipitation. The chapter is accompanied by the five maps presenting the mean annual air temperature, the mean annual precipitation, the trend of the mean annual temperature, trend of the mean annual precipitation (1961–2010) and climatic regionalization of Serbia according to Köppen.

The chapter *Hydrological characteristics of Serbia* is written by Marko Urošev, Ana Milanović Pešić, Jelena Kovačević-Majkić, and Dragoljub Štrbac (pp. 69–84). The authors presented the analysis of groundwater, rivers, canals, lakes, and reservoirs. The analyses include river regimes (water discharges and the average specific runoff), floods in large river valleys, torrential floods in small drainage basins, and hydrological droughts. The chapter is accompanied by the five maps, two photographs, and one chart. The maps present sea and river drainage basins, the mean annual specific runoff in Serbia for the period 1961–2010, the trend of annual discharges for the same period, the return periods of the greatest floods for the period 1961–2014, and the return periods of the maximum recorded deficits and duration of hydrological droughts in the drainage basin of the river Velika Morava for the period 1961–2014. The photographs illustrate floods, as well as natural and artificial lakes in Serbia, while the chart shows the comparative overview of the mean monthly discharges on the selected profiles for the period 1961–2010.

The chapter *Geomorphological Characteristics of Serbia* is written by Predrag Djurović. (pp. 85–98). The author emphasized the gradual rise from the Pannonian Plain in the north to the highest parts of Šara and Prokletije Mountains in the south and southeast as the main morphological feature in the relief of Serbia. The author pointed out that the geological background and climate are the two main factors dictating the emergence of recent geomorphological processes. Genetic types of

the relief are presented included morphostructural relief, recent exogenic geomorphological processes, and relief forms (fluvial-denudation, karst, aeolian, colluvial, cryo-nivation and anthropogenic), as well as palaeorelief forms (palaeoabrasion, palaeokarst, palaeoglacial and palaeo cryo-nivation, and palaeoaeolian). The chapter also contains geomorphological map and two photographs presenting various relief types.

The chapter *Biogeographical Characteristics of Serbia: Richness and Spatial Distribution of Biodiversity, Endemism and Biogeographical Regionalization* is written by Vladimir B. Stevanović (pp. 99–117). The author pointed out that due to specific climatic, orographic, petrographic, and pedological features, the territory of Serbia is rich in different geo and migrant elements of flora, fauna, and fungi. Assessment of biodiversity is presented by the richness and distribution of the vascular flora and vertebrate fauna. The author emphasized that Serbia's territory in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula is notable for richness in Balkan endemic species including endemic flora and endemic cave fauna (Troglifauna). According to the horizontal biogeographical zonation, Serbia is characterized by three biogeographical regions: Mediterranean-sub-Mediterranean, Central-European, and Pontic-South Siberian regions, while the altitudinal zonation shows two biogeographical regions: South European montane-subalpine region and Central-South European subalpine-Alpine region. The chapter is accompanied by the five maps presenting estimation of the richness and spatial distribution of the vascular flora, batracho- and herpetofauna, nesting birds and mammals, and Balkan endemic flora in Serbia.

The chapter *Geohazards and Geoheritage* is written by Ivan Novković, Slavoljub Dragičević, and Mirela Djurović (pp. 119–131). The authors emphasized that different physical-geographical processes had effects on human civilization with destructive consequences (geohazards) and positive values (geoheritage). The authors present the dominant geohazards in Serbia including earthquakes, landslides, floods, torrential floods, atmospheric disasters (hail, drought, strong winds, and intensive precipitation), and forest fires. Geoheritage is presented by the distinguished objects of historical-geological and stratigraphic heritage, objects of petrological heritage, structural sites, geomorphological forms, neotectonic activity phenomena, geophysical occurrences, speleological sites, and objects of hydrogeological, pedological, and hydrological geoheritage. The chapter is accompanied by four maps and two photographs. The following maps are presented: seismic hazard map of Serbia for the 475-year return period, landslide susceptibility map of Serbia, flash flood potential map of Serbia, and the map of geoheritage sites. The photographs illustrate floods in Serbia in 2014, and geoheritage sites.

Demography

This part consists of four chapters including Demographic Profile of Serbia at the Turn of the Millennium; Demographic Challenges in Serbia; Migration and Mobility Patterns in Serbia; and Approaching Regional Depopulation in Serbia.

The chapter *Demographic Profile of Serbia at the Turn of the Millennium* is written by Daniela Arsenović and Vladimir Nikitović (pp. 135–141). The authors pointed out that Serbia belongs to the countries with the highest population decline. According to the authors, this population change is caused by natural change and migration. The authors highlighted that the population density is almost double than the world average, but in line with the countries of South and East Europe. The authors analysed population ageing, ethnic profile, and education structure. According to the ethnic profile, Serbs are dominant majority, but ethnic heterogeneity is expressed, especially in Vojvodina

region. The chapter is accompanied by three maps and two charts. The maps present population density in 2011, three-year average rate of natural change across local administrative units in Serbia in 1991 and 2011, and spatially most homogenous ethnic groups in Serbia according to the 2011 census. The charts illustrate population change in Serbia according to the censuses between 1961 and 2011, and annual crude rates of natural change in Serbia 1960–2018.

The chapter *Demographic challenges in Serbia* is written by Mirjana Rašević and Marko Galjak (pp. 143–155). The authors present two main demographic challenges: fertility and mortality problems with the focus on childbearing crisis and premature mortality. According to the authors, childbearing crisis is caused by below-replacement fertility, postponement of parenthood, conservative birth control, and contributed by emigration from Serbia. Premature mortality is analysed from the following aspects: mortality circumstances, gauging premature mortality, sex and age differences, geographical distribution, and trends in avoidable mortality. The authors pointed out that premature mortality of middle-aged people, younger elderly, have effects on the economy, childbearing and depopulation, and also much of these deaths could be avoided by either prevention or adequate and timely healthcare. The chapter also contains two maps, five graphs and one scheme. The first map presents the percentage of childless women aged 30–34 according to the 2011 Census, and the second one presents the geographical distribution of preventable and amenable mortality in Serbia in 2017. The charts illustrate cohort total fertility rate, cohort mean age of women at birth in Serbia (both birth cohorts for the period 1930–1975), contraceptive method, mortality pyramid of Serbia in 2015, and trend of preventable and amenable mortality in Serbia between 2005 and 2015. The scheme illustrates causes of avoidable deaths in Serbia in 2015.

The chapter *Migration and Mobility Patterns in Serbia* is written by Vesna Lukić (pp. 157–167). The chapter is focused on international migration, internal migration, and daily commuting. In the scope of international migration, the author analysed emigration (especially brain drain phenomenon), asylum seekers in EU countries, and immigration. The chapter is accompanied by two maps and one chart. The maps present Serbian citizens working/residing abroad – the share of the total population by municipalities according to 2011 Census, and the average annual migration rate by municipalities in Serbia in the period 2002–2011, while the chart illustrates Serbian citizens working or residing abroad – the share of the main categories according to 2011 Census.

The chapter *Approaching Regional Depopulation in Serbia* is written by Vladimir Nikitović (pp. 169–181). The author discussed future demographic projection if the pronatalist policy would be successfully implemented, and the change in migration patterns related to the expected EU accession. The author analysed expected and optimistic change in fertility, expected mortality reduction, expected change in migration patterns including international and internal flows, and provided recommendations for policy makers. The chapter also contains four maps presenting net migration rate, (estimated 2016–2018 and expected 2050), percentage change in the working age (20–64) population 2050/2018, percentage change in the number of elderly (65+), and percentage change in the number of live births 2050/2018 across districts of Serbia.

Economy

This part consists of six chapters including Serbian Economy—History, Transition and Present; Agriculture in Serbia; Natural Resources and Manufacturing Sector; Transport Sector in Serbia; Services: Finance, Trade and Tourism; and Serbia Internationally: International Trade and Integrations.

The chapter *Serbian Economy – History, Transition and Present* is written by Đorđe Mitrović (pp. 185–197). The author divided history of economic development into five periods: economic development until the Second World War; “Silver Age” – until the beginning of 1970, marked as a period of rapid development of Serbian economy due to accelerated industrialization of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY); slowdown period – Serbian economy in the last Yugoslav decade, which finished with the collapse at the end of 1980s; the period of transition to market economy (1991–2000), characterized as initial, unsuccessful transition; and the accelerated transition to market economy at the beginning of the 21st century. The chapter is accompanied by six charts presenting shares of individual republics in total Yugoslav GDP levels of per capita GDP achieved in individual republics in comparison to Yugoslav average (1957–1988); fluctuation of the net foreign debt of SFRY (1965–1980); main economic indicators of the republics in SFRY (1991); real GDP growth and inflation in Serbia (2001–2017), and foreign direct investments (FDIs) in Serbia (2010–2018).

The chapter *Agriculture in Serbia* is written by Žaklina Stojanović (pp. 199–206). According to the author, agriculture is an important sector in the Serbian economy, in which the most of rural residents in Serbia are engaged. The author discussed land cover and land use, soil quality and parcelization, structure of farms and regional differences, agricultural production and typology of regions based on “around agriculture” activities. The author identified fragmented land parcels with small average parcel size as important problem and the domination of plant production in total agriculture production as an indicator of a less developed sector. The chapter also contains one map, two charts, and one scheme. The first chart illustrates agriculture, forestry and fishing share in the total gross value added (GVA) and employment, while the second one presents agricultural and food products share in the total export and import, both for the period 2008–2018. The map presents land cover and land use in 2015, while the scheme illustrates the size of plots in Bečej municipality.

The chapter *Natural Resources and Manufacturing Sector* is written by Emilija Manić and Milena Lutovac (pp. 207–220). The authors analysed mineral resources (metallic mineral resources and metal industries and non-metallic mineral resources and industry), energy resources and production including renewable energy and industry in the first decades of the 21st century as well as deindustrialization and new industrial geography. The authors pointed out that the base of contemporary Serbian industry is the labour-intensive industry and industry relied on cheap but qualified labour, but also potential in new industries such as software and ITC sector. The chapter is accompanied by two maps and two charts. The maps present the overview of deposits of metallic mineral resources and energy resources in Serbia: fossil fuel deposits. The charts illustrate industry and GDP growth rates in Serbia in the period 2001–2018 and the structure of processing industry by individual activities in 2018.

The chapter *The Transport Sector in Serbia* is written by Ivan Ratkaj (pp. 221–230). The author analysed road transport, rail transport, inland waterway transport, air transport, intermodality, and telecommunications. The author emphasized the importance of transport corridors as integral parts of trans-European transport network, which have highly influenced Serbian transport policy. The aim of the transport policy is to upgrade the national transport system according to the EU standards and to achieve complete integration into the single European market. The chapter also contains two maps. The first map presents trans-European transport network (TEN-T) core and comprehensive network extension in Serbia including road and airport networks as well as rail and waterway networks. The second map presents average annual daily traffic (AADT) on the TEN-T indicative extension (road map) in 2017.

The chapter *Finance, Trade and Tourism* is written by Svetlana Popović, Dragan Stojković, and Radmila Jovanović (pp. 231–250). The authors analysed the financial sector (with the most developed banking sector), characteristics and structure of trade (including retail, wholesale and e-commerce), tourism (including tourism industry and tourist destinations), and cultural heritage as a potential of Serbian tourism. The chapter is accompanied by five charts and 21 photographs. The charts illustrate the structure of the financial sector in Serbia in 2018, currency structure of bank credits and deposits, maturity structure of bank credits and deposits, number of retail stores in Serbia, and tourist arrivals 2009–2019. The photographs present the most famous tourist destinations and cultural heritage.

The chapter *Serbia Internationally: International Trade and Integrations* is written by Predrag Bjelić and Ivana Popović Petrović (pp. 251–259). The author analysed Serbia's foreign trade (including merchandise trade and commercial services), foreign direct investments, accession process of Serbia to European Union and economic integrations. The authors pointed out that Serbia is a member of Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA 2006), but not yet a member of the World Trade Organization. The chapter also contains one map, presenting CEFTA contracting parties, and five charts. Charts illustrate Serbian merchandise trade (2008–2017), trade in goods between Serbia and EU (2011–2017), Serbian trade in goods with CEFTA 2006 (2005–2016), exports and import goods Serbia–CEFTA 2006 by sections of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), and Serbia's trade in goods with EU (2000–2017).

Regional Development and Specificities

This part consists of four chapters including Environmental Issues in Serbia: Pollution and Nature Conservation; Development Challenges Faced by Cities in Serbia; Rural Areas and Rural Economy in Serbia; and Regional Disparities in Serbia.

The chapter *Environmental Issues in Serbia: Pollution and Nature Conservation* is written by Vladimir Stojanović, Milana Pantelić, and Stevan Savić (pp. 263–277). The authors analysed main ecological issues (including air quality conditions, water quality conditions, soil pollution, and waste management) and nature conservation presenting nature protected areas. The authors highlighted that the main environmental issues include high level of air pollution in major cities, poor drinking water quality, low level of wastewater treatment, an inadequate waste management with a small percentage of recycling, as well as degradation and pollution of soil. The chapter is accompanied by three maps and seven photographs. The maps present the population connected to a public water supply, untreated wastewater by areas and population connected to a public sewage system. The photographs illustrate protected areas including Djerdap National Park, Tara National Park, Kopaonik National Park, Šar Mountains National Park, Bačko Podunavlje Biosphere Reserve, and Koviljsko-Petrovaradinski Rit.

The chapter *Development Challenges Faced by Cities in Serbia* is written by Nikola Krunić, Aleksandra Gajić, and Dragutin Tošić (pp. 279–287). The authors analysed the development of urban systems, contemporary processes in urban systems, prospects for the development of cities, and future development of cities. The cities are considered as urban centers which are hubs of their local government units that have central functions in their sphere of influence. The chapter also contains a map presenting urban systems in Serbia – Hot spot analysis of the 1981–2011 population change.

The chapter *Rural Areas and Rural Economy in Serbia* is written by Marija Drobnjaković, Žaklina Stojanović, and Sonja Josipović (pp. 289–303). The authors analysed rurality and rural areas, polarized rural reality including polarization of the spatial and demographic elements, spreading of

depopulation, and the rapid deagrarization as a cause and effect of the polarized rural area, outdoor amenities as well as current state and perspectives of the rural economy. The rural areas are presented as a network of non-urban settlements. The authors pointed out that the expressed polarization in many rural attributes is the consequence of the different pace of development, variety of potentials, and spatial dispersion of socio-economic processes. The chapter is accompanied by four maps and four charts. The maps present the indicators of the spatial development of the rural settlements' network by regions in 2011, changes in the population density and the shrinkage of rural settlements according to three Censuses (1961, 1991, and 2011), vitality index (Census 2011), and rural areas in Serbia according to the outdoor amenities. The charts illustrate the average size of settlements in Serbia by regions (1953–2011), decrease in agricultural population, rural households in Serbia according to source of income and outdoor amenity index.

The chapter *Regional Disparities in Serbia* is written by Dejan Molnar (pp. 305–312). The author presents the current institutional framework for regional development, inter- and intra-regional disparities and the ways for improving regional policy. According to the author, although territorial differences in Serbia are among the largest in Europe, regionalization and regional policy issues do not have appropriate place in domestic public policies. The author points out that the focus should be on EU's Cohesion policy in order to improve regional policy in Serbia. The chapter also contains the map presenting Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) classification of the Republic of Serbia (NUTS1 and NUTS2).

Conclusion

This prominent monograph of international significance contains scientific results from all geographical disciplines, and related sciences as well. The monograph *Geography of Serbia—Nature, People, Economy* provides an overview of Serbian history, geographical position of Serbia from various aspects, political geography, physical geography (including climate, hydrology, geomorphology, and biogeography), demography (including population ageing, ethnic profile, education structure, migration and mobility patterns, and also demographic challenges such as fertility and mortality problems, and regional depopulation). The monograph also presents economy (including history of economy, agriculture, industry, transport, finance trade and tourism, international trade, and integrations) and regional development including environmental issues, urban and rural challenges, and regional disparities. The authors emphasized the most important issues in their research areas, which is the added value of this comprehensive monograph. The monograph is written in English, which will provide its availability to scientific community and broader readership around the world. Due to the holistic approach, the monograph could be useful for scientific community, students, and policy and decision makers.