

SETTLEMENTS OF UNDEVELOPED AREAS OF SERBIA

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Abstract: Analytical part of the paper comprises the basic demo-economic, urban-geographic and functional indicators of the state of development, as well as changes in the process of development in the settlements and their centres on undeveloped area of Serbia in the period in which they most appeared. The comparison is made on the basis of complex and modified indicators², as of undeveloped local territorial units mutually, so with the republic average. The basic aims were presented in the final part of the paper, as well as the strategic measures for the development of settlements on these areas, with a suggestion of activating and valorisation of their spatial potentials. The main directions are defined through the strategic regional documents of Serbia and through regional policy of the European Union.

Key words: population, activities, development, settlements, undeveloped areas, Serbia.

Introduction

The typology and categorisation of municipalities/territorial units with a status of the city, 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) served as the basis for analysis and estimation of the settlements in undeveloped areas on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. In that document, 37 municipalities/cities were categorized as underdeveloped (economically undeveloped or demographically endangered municipalities). The criterion for the economically-undeveloped municipalities was income which is below the half of the republic average, while for demographically endangered municipalities it was the population decrease higher than 40%, i.e. the population decrease over 20% with the rate of unemployment higher than 60% of the Republic average. Therefore, out of 37 municipalities, categorised as underdeveloped, 29 municipalities had the status of economically underdeveloped, being faced with "economic (without industrial capacities, the collapse of large systems, undeveloped entrepreneurship, slow process of privatization), structural (high

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² Comparison was carried out on the basis of indicators in the Strategy of the Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of RS, no 21/07; Strategy of the Spatial Development of the Republic of Serbia 2009–2013–2020 and in the proposal of the Law on the regional development, www.srbija.rs, 2009.

rate of unemployment), social and demographic problems”, while the rest of 8 municipalities, above these structural economic problems, mostly faced with the intensive process of demographic emptying. Except mentioned, there are other criteria for distinguishing undeveloped areas of the country. In the Strategy of the Spatial Development of the Republic of Serbia for example, the indicators singled out according to the methodology of the Republic Bureau for Development for the measuring of the degree of development of municipalities/cities (group of authors, 2008), according to which 36 undeveloped local communities were singled out, whereas 26 units kept that status in relation to the Strategy of the Regional Development. In the Proposal of the Law on the regional development, the undeveloped municipalities/cities would be those the realized gross national income of which is below 75% of the republic average (European Union uses the same criterion for defining the undeveloped areas to which it gives aid), etc.

The examined area comprises 17 444 km² (19.7% of the area of Serbia) with the population of 806 840 according to the last census (10.8% of the population of Serbia)³. The actual spatial distribution of the population in 2002 showed that undeveloped municipalities of Serbia (46 inh/km²) are rarely inhabited in relation to the average of Serbia (97 inh/km²). The spatial distribution of undeveloped municipalities points to their largest concentration in the Jablanica and the Pčinj District, to which even five municipalities belong respectively. Out of all present undeveloped municipalities, even 26 have been categorised as underdeveloped almost by the end of the 1970s (CDI, IDN, 1979).

The beginning of the period in which these parameters are going to be observed refers to the 1980s, i.e. the period when our country was still on the high level of its development, in the time of already accomplished high degree of industrialization, deagrarization and urbanization, but also polarisation, demonstrated through the dichotomy of the central urban and larger settlements, on one side, and rural periphery, on the other side. The end of the observed period refers to the 2005, in dependence on the availability of the corresponding data. That is the time which has still marked the traditional period in Serbia, with the consequences of wars, economic crisis and continuous decline of living standard. Relative unemployment is observed only for the 2000s, because it is a period of its expressive rise.

³ Municipalities in Serbia (2003). Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade. Data for Kosovo and Metohia are not given in the paper.

Dynamics, Spatial Distribution and the Components of the Population Trends in the Settlements of Undeveloped Area

In most of undeveloped municipalities of Serbia, the population number has the tendency of long-term decrease. The average annual growth rate in the period from 1981 to 2002⁴ was positive only for the municipalities of Bor–0.50%, Bujanovac, Mali Zvornik, the town of Novi Pazar, Preševo (even 40%), Tutin and Sremski Karlovci, i.e. the municipalities which are in the category of economically underdeveloped. The population development of 37 examined municipalities, from the 1980s, enabled their classification into several groups according to the population dynamics. In the period from 1981 to 2002, Babušnica, Gadžin Han, Medvedja and Crna Trava recorded the intensive decrease in the population number for more than 30%. Another group of municipalities recorded moderate decrease in the population number for 15–30% – Žabari, Žagubica, Bojnik, Nova Crnja, Kuršumlija, Dimitrovgrad, Bela Palanka, Ražanj, Rekovac, Svrlijig, Trgovište and Bosilegrad. The third group of municipalities in which the population number decreased up to 15% were the municipalities of Prijepolje, Vldičin Han, Doljevac, Priboj, Sjenica, Vlasotince, Majdanpek, Lebane, Krupanj, Varvarin, Bela Crkva, Sečanj, Brus and Malo Crniće. According to estimations for 2008, the average annual growth rate for the period from 2002 to 2008⁵ was positive only for the town of Novi Pazar and the municipalities of Preševo, Tutin and Bujanovac wherein mainly the Albanians and the Bosnians live.

As special segment for the presentation of the level of achieved development, the changes will be used which originated from the redistribution of the population by settlements, primarily by the share of the population inhabited in the municipal centers, as the indicators by which the degree of achieved concentration will be shown, i.e. urbanisation, if it is the urban settlements about, as well as the direction of the dynamics in which this process developed. The municipal centre of undeveloped municipalities has averagely 8 798 people (in 2002) and its size is very unequal–Novi Pazar is the largest (54 604 inhabitants), whereas Crna Trava is the smallest with only 563 inhabitants, (Table 1). In the last thirty years long period, the centre grew averagely for 150.8 index points (small centres grew most expressively – Babušnica, Svrlijig, Vlasotince, Krupanj, but also Novi Pazar, whereas the population number declined most in Crna Trava, Rekovac, Žabari, Gadžin Han, Žagubica, and insignificantly in Nova Crnja and Sečanj).

⁴ According to old census methodology because of comparison.

⁵ Data for 2002 are given according to new census methodology.

Table 1 Process of urbanisation in the period from 1971 to 2002 (the share of the population of municipal centre in the total population of the municipality, %) (Republic Statistical Office)

Municipality – city	1971			2002 *		
	Total population in municipality	Centre of municipality		Total population in municipality	Centre of municipality	
		Pop. Numb.	% urban.		Pop. Numb.	%
<i>Economically undeveloped municipalities</i>						
Bela Palanka	21.325	5.772	27,1	14.381	8.626	60,0
Bojnik	18.801	1.780	9,5	13.118	3.159	24,1
Bor	52.849	29.418	55,7	55.817	39.387	70,6
Bosilegrad	17.306	1.662	9,6	9.931	2.702	27,2
Brus	24.581	2.434	9,9	18.764	4.653	24,8
Bujanovac	43.522	7.524	17,3	43.302	12.011	27,7
Varvarin	26.143	1.519	5,8	20.122	2.198	10,9
Vladičin Han	25.231	3.809	15,1	23.703	8.338	35,2
Vlasotince	36.002	8.787	24,4	33.312	16.212	48,7
Dimitrovgrad	16.365	5.488	33,5	11.748	6.968	59,3
Doljevac	20.228	1.130	5,6	19.561	1.625	8,3
Žagubica	21.055	3.591	17,1	14.823	2.823	19,0
Krupanj	23.529	2.479	10,5	20.192	4.912	24,3
Kurčumlija	31.672	7.185	22,7	21.608	13.639	63,1
Lebane	28.228	5.889	20,9	24.918	10.004	40,1
Majdanpek	26.120	8.065	30,9	23.703	10.071	42,5
Mali Zvornik	12.084	2.560	21,2	14.076	4.736	33,6
Medvedja	20.792	2.621	12,6	10.760	2.810	26,1
Novi Pazar	64.326	28.950	45,0	85.996	54.604	63,5
Preševo	30.056	7.657	25,5	34.904	13.426	38,5
Priboj	32.548	13.034	40,0	30.377	19.564	64,4
Prijepolje	44.022	10.904	24,8	41.188	15.031	36,5
Ražanj	17.113	1.308	7,6	11.369	1.537	13,5
Svrljig	26.505	3.486	13,2	17.284	7.705	44,6
Sjenica	36.622	8.552	23,4	27.970	13.161	47,1
Srem. Karlovci	5.350	5.350	100,0	8.839	8.839	100,0
Trgovište	12.556	972	7,7	6.372	1.864	29,3
Tutin	29.444	3.458	11,7	30.054	9.111	30,3
Crna Trava	9.672	1.276	13,2	2.563	563	22,0
<i>Demographically endangered municipalities</i>						
Babušnica	29.033	1.668	5,7	15.734	4.575	29,1
Gadžin Han	19.974	903	4,5	10.464	1.245	11,9
Žabari	23.298	1.838	7,9	13.034	1.442	11,1
Malo Crniće	23.169	1.307	5,6	13.853	882	6,4
Rekovac	22.710	1.685	7,4	13.551	1.930	14,2
Bela Crkva	25.450	11.084	43,6	20.367	10.675	52,4
Nova Crnja	18.298	2.911	15,9	12.705	1.861	14,6
Sečanj	21.938	2.935	13,4	16.377	2.647	16,2

*Note: Data according to new methodology of the population census

Such structure of the centres had different developmental role in the areas of their municipalities/cities. Moreover, the population concentration in the centres was very unequal and it ranged from only 6.4% in Žabari to over 70% in Bor, i.e. over 60% in Prijepolje, Novi Pazar and Kuršumljija. The process of the concentration–urbanisation in the period from 1971 to 2002 mostly grew in Kuršumljija municipality (over 40 percent points), i.e. in the municipalities of Bela Palanka and Svrlijig (over 30 percent points), which was influenced not only by expressive growth of centres, but also by the decline of the population in rural settlements.

The changes in the scope and spatial distribution of the population of undeveloped areas are the consequence of the continuous negative demographic trends, and in the connection with natural and migration component of demographic development. Birth rates have declined in all undeveloped municipalities for almost long series of decades, whereas death rates have increased due to increase in average age of the population. Average annual birth rate decreased from 16 to 8.1‰ in the period from 1975 to 2008 (9.4‰ is the average for the Republic of Serbia), while average annual death rate increased from 9.8 to 17.3‰ (14‰ is the average for the Republic of Serbia). The characteristics of the components of the vital statistics determine larger negative values of the population growth of insufficiently developed areas of Serbia in relation to the average of the Republic. Besides Novi Sad and the Belgrade municipalities of Čukarica and Zemun, the town of Novi Pazar and the municipalities of Sjenica and Tutin are the only ones in Serbia with positive population growth rate in 2008.

The process of the population migration from insufficiently developed 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 industrially very strong municipalities of Bor and Majdanpek of that time (IDN–CDI, 1979) had the positive migration balance in the mentioned period. Due to massive emigration of the population and the prevalence of the influence of migration component on demographic development, the insufficiently developed municipality recorded the decrease in the population number even despite the positive population growth rate. In the last inter census period, the natural and migration component of demographic development with larger negative values of the migration balance (CDI–IDN, 2004), mutually influenced the average decrease of 10.30% per year in the population number of undeveloped municipalities (1‰ is the average for the Republic of Serbia). Due to small differences in the indexes of the vital statistics of undeveloped areas in relation to the average of Serbia, the large emigration of the population from

these areas, which also characterized undeveloped municipalities in the period from 1991 to 2002, decisively influenced the large decrease in the population number of this area in relation to the average of the Republic. Namely, the population number of undeveloped areas averagely decreases ten times more per year than the average of the Republic.

As the indicators of the process of demographic ageing, the average population age and coefficients of dependency among the age groups of the population are analysed (coefficient of dependency of elderly population; coefficient of dependency of young and coefficient of the total age-dependency). Undeveloped areas were almost equalled with the republic average according to average age of the population in 1981, in order that these differences increased by the time. In the period from 1981 to 2008, the average age of the population of undeveloped areas increased for seven years (from 35.1 to 42.1 years), whereas the population of Crna Trava and Priboj aged fastest (for 15, i.e. 11 years). The coefficients which reflect the relations of dependency among the age groups of the population clearly point out to the negative influence of the age structure on the degree of burdening of the working age population. The values of the given indexes, in all analysed periods, are constantly higher for undeveloped area in relation to the average of the Republic. The level of the potential support which is expected from the working contingent increased in the period from 1981 to 2008, whereas the pressure of young decreased averagely for 12%, due to decrease of their share in the total population of undeveloped areas, while the pressure of the population older than 65 years was almost doubled. In relation to the period of two decades ago, the strengthening of the influence of elderly population groups was noticeable on the coefficient values of the total age-dependency of undeveloped municipalities which would have been crucial if in the group of underdeveloped were not the municipalities with the younger population than the republic average.

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. In 2002, 10% of workers worked out of the municipality of residence in most municipalities in Serbia. The municipalities which are the starting point of the large number of active daily migrants towards other municipalities mainly have large number of unemployed and low values of the gross national income per inhabitant. Besides the Belgrade municipalities out of the Belgrade settlement (Barajevo, Grocka and Sopot), the municipalities of Sremski Karlovci and Doljevac, which border on the macro regional centres (Novi Sad and Niš), had the most expressed inter municipal daily mobility of active population in the observed area in 2002. The

municipalities with high share of active population that works out of the municipality of residence are the confirmation that the flows of daily population migration show the real functional borders of the municipalities in relation to the formally–legal and administrative–territorial borders (Lukić, 2006). Undeveloped municipalities of Bela Palanka, Vladičin Han, Doljevac, Ražanj, Sremski Karlovci and Gadžin Han have more than 10% of workers who work out of their municipality. 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 is lower (5.5%) in relation to the average of the Republic (11%) for undeveloped areas, as well as for all undeveloped municipalities respectively, except Sremski Karlovci. 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 (3.6% is the average of the Republic).

Economic Processes in the Settlements of Undeveloped Area

Gross national income⁶ and employment rate, i.e. rate of unemployment⁷ to inhabitant are most often used as the basic indexes of the degree of development of some area. For Serbia, these data are available for municipalities, as the lowest territorial level. In the observed period from 1988 to 2005, the decrease of realised income was recorded in almost all observed municipalities, with higher and higher decline up to 2005, since later on, all accumulated negative effects of dealing in economy appeared in the last two decades.

Many of the observed municipalities were in the category of underdeveloped for a longer period of time with income below 50% of the average of the Republic. Thus, in 1988, there were 17 undeveloped municipalities in economically undeveloped area, in order that in 2005 that number increased on 29. Some of the municipalities which were in this category throughout the whole observed period are Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Varvarin, Vlasotince, Medvedja, Preševo, Sjenica and Tutin. The level of realised gross national income is averagely higher at municipalities which are categorised as underdeveloped according to demographic criteria (Table 2).

⁶ In EU countries, the data are used on gross domestic product, but considering that our statistics is not completely arranged with the European scale of norms and that at this moment we do not have data on GDP by municipalities for a certain period, our analysis will be limited on Gross National Income.

⁷ The datum we are going to use refers to the degree of employment/unemployment, calculated by the number of employed/unemployed per 1000 people, in order to avoid confusions on calculation of the rates, i.e. to enable the comparison.

Table 2 Gross national income, employment and unemployment per inhabitant in undeveloped municipalities of Serbia (Republic Statistical Office)

Municipalities	NI/inh. (RS=100)		Employ./1000 inh.		Unemplo./1000 inh.	
	1988.	2005.	1988.	2007.	2001.	2007.
<i>Economically undeveloped municipalities</i>						
Bela Palanka	55,5	34,0	239	194	106	208
Bojnik	34,7	40,4	128	142	77	218
Bor	103,5	45,2	409	250	84	116
Bosilegrad	24,6	21,4	150	170	55	159
Brus	5,7	42,8	18	152	124	104
Bujanovac	29,6	27,8	113	165	74	116
Varvarin	34,0	42,2	111	111	78	73
Vladičin Han	56,4	31,8	226	205	111	201
Vlasotince	39,8	24,8	204	164	123	145
Dimitrovgrad	82,0	44,1	326	182	109	208
Doljevac	27,2	31,4	70	89	158	132
Žagubica	37,9	34,5	124	116	20	22
Krupanj	55,1	37,7	163	112	101	132
Kuršumlija	62,0	43,6	233	178	76	155
Lebane	38,7	29,7	191	108	151	231
Majdanpek	12,2	27,1	390	291	65	111
Mali Zvornik	61,1	39,7	220	195	95	171
Medvedja	28,8	16,9	139	109	67	154
Novi Pazar	50,1	37,8	236	207	137	217
Preševo	20,4	14,0	98	95	83	158
Priboj	95,2	34,4	340	228	163	214
Prijepolje	54,5	39,0	252	174	120	167
Ražanj	25,7	33,7	96	95	52	75
Svrljig	71,3	31,5	220	226	136	135
Sjenica	38,3	33,2	144	116	118	186
Srem. Karlovci	–	39,5	–	90	123	107
Trgovište	42,3	26,7	207	187	109	205
Tutin	14,9	25,8	64	96	123	183
Crna Trava	28,1	53,7	152	292	14	179
<i>Demographically endangered municipalities</i>						
Babušnica	44,4	51,6	140	175	81	158
Gadžin Han	48,7	93,8	144	360	86	127
Žabari	29,7	71,7	63	87	25	39
Malo Crniće	29,0	45,6	45	83	14	30
Rekovac	55,9	45,2	96	115	67	105
Bela Crkva	64,9	78,3	196	157	123	191
Nova Crnja	167,2	84,3	197	117	165	249
Sečanj	130,5	95,7	212	166	106	124
Republic of Serbia	100	100	292	271	101	106

*Note: Sremski Karlovci did not have the status of the municipality in the observed year

In the first decade of the 21st century, the decline of income, besides general consequences of negative dealing in the country, was also caused by attrition of skilled personnel, 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 (Bor, Priboj, Majdanpek, Prijepolje, the town of Novi Pazar, etc.). According to the Strategy of the Spatial Development of the Republic of Serbia, some of the municipalities are categorised into the so-called devastated areas⁸, as special form of undeveloped municipalities (Majdanpek, Bor, Priboj, Prijepolje, Medvedja, Dimitrovgrad) with the centres that used to be the stakeholders of the economic development of wider area.

During the analysis of the degree of employment, the highest values are noted in 1988, whereas the process of large dismissal of workers in the last years is clearly presented in 2007, when it came to the decrease of these rates in considerable number of economically undeveloped municipalities (Table 2). According to data from 1988, only four municipalities had the number of employed above the republic average, and these were Priboj, Majdanpek, Bor and Dimitrovgrad, whereas 16 municipalities had less than 50% of the republic average of employed. According to researches that were carried out in the Republic Institute for Development, the total employment in the period from 2001 to 2008 was decreasing per average annual rate of 0.6% (www.razvoj.sr.gov.yu). Thus, in 2007, only three municipalities (Gadžin Han, Crna Trava and Majdanpek) had the number of employed above the average for Serbia.

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 light industry decreased for 76.8% in the period from 2001 to 2008. However, it is considered that the real number of employed in the light industry sector is even lower, due to existence of the category of the so-called “naturally employed” who actually are not really included in the working process (Miletić, 2003). The decrease in the number of employed in the light industry (1988–2007) in the observed municipalities, caused the decline of

⁸ Devastated areas are established by Regulation on the criteria and indices for establishing devastated areas of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of RS number 58/04 and by Decision on establishing devastated areas of the Republic of Serbia, Official Register of RS number 63/04.

wages and realized income in them. 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). The number of undeveloped municipalities with lower degree of employment than the republic average decreased to only 7 up to 2007. On the other side, extremely high degree of unemployment with a trend of the permanent increase have previously developed industrial centres such as Novi Pazar and Priboj, as well as border municipalities which have always been on the margins of economic development of the country (Trgovište, Lebane, Dimitrovgrad, etc).

Functional Processes in the Settlements of Undeveloped Area

The overall development of the area is influenced by those functions which are developed in its settlements and activities the population is dealing with mostly. On the basis of the structure of active population according to the sectors of activities, we can get the picture of the sectors which were the crucial for the development/backwardness of the municipalities, categorised as underdeveloped. However, it is needed to have in mind that not just the structure of active population influenced the functional determination of the settlements in the observed municipalities and their degree of development, but “the overall influence of geographical position and socio-economic conditions, too” (Matijević, 2009).

In the last twenty years long census period, a very intensive process of deagrarization was developing in the settlements of undeveloped municipalities, averagely 23.6 percent points. In 1981, almost two-thirds of the population belonged to the primary sector of activity, while only around 38% in 2002. The population was mainly directed towards the servicing activities (averagely 17), and less towards the productive ones (6.6 percent points). An extreme developmental process, according to the process of deagrarization, was recorded in the municipalities of south-eastern Serbia (Vladičin Han, Gadžin Han,

Babučnica, Bosilegrad, etc.), and the changes were the least in Krupanj municipality and in the Vojvodina municipalities. In the beginning of the observed period, the largest number of municipalities belonged to agrarian and agrarian-industrial type, while in the end of the period the municipalities belonged to one of the transitional types with equal prevalence of all three sectors of activities (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Functional type of undeveloped municipalities in 1981 and 2002, according to the share of the sector of activities, in %

The structure of active population by the sectors of activities in the municipal centres of undeveloped area is not only very heterogeneous, especially at the beginning of the observed period, but the process of changes also developed in different intensity and even different direction. Namely, the process of deagrarization was very intensive in the centres which had the high share of the primary sector in 1981 (Lebane, Nova Crnja, Malo Crniće, Žabari, Žagubica, Crna Trava, Preševo, etc.). Contrary to them, certain number of centres with previously already achieved degree of the share of developmental sectors have the insignificant deagrarization, with just an illusory more expressed development of servicing activities, which appeared to be the consequence of economic crisis, deindustrialization, decline of employment in the secondary sector, etc. (Novi Pazar, Prijepolje, Bela Palanka, Brus, Dimitrovgrad, Doljevac, Krupanj, Kuršumlija, etc.). In single cases (Rekovac, Bor, Priboj), there was even different degree of increase in the primary sector.

Large number of centres of mixed type, agrarian and industrial centres grew into the centres of servicing or mixed type by deagrarization and increase in the tertiary activities in 1981 (Figure 2).

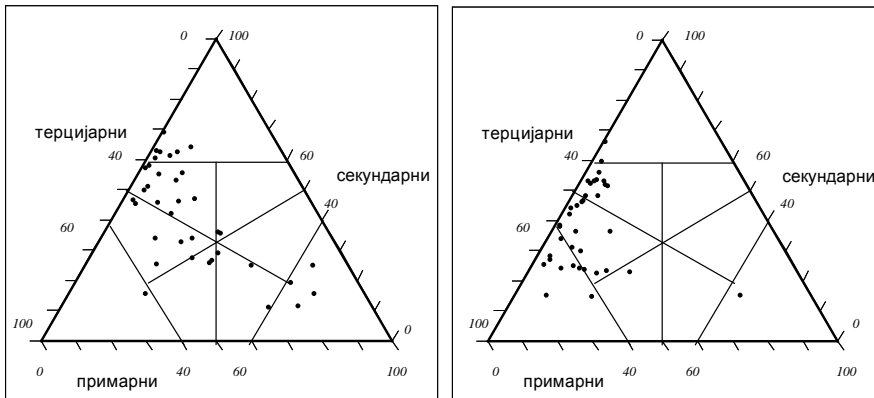


Figure 2 Functional types of undeveloped municipal centres in 1981 and 2002, according to share of the sector of activities, in %

Aims and Strategic Measures for Development of Settlements of Undeveloped Area

Regional Level of Management

Although the regional policy of Serbia, in the time when it was the integral part of wider social community, but also according to the present strategic determinations, was exclusively devoted to the development of undeveloped areas and the making of balanced regional development, not only that its measures did not give more significant results but they brought to the deepening of differences. The development of economically undeveloped areas was being realized in the conditions of general slowing down of the economic activity in the whole country, which considerably diminished the effects in the development of those areas.

One of the ways of exceeding the problems in the settlements in undeveloped area of Serbia is the identification of the potentials of the area on the regional and local level, their activating and valorisation. Since it is an area with different geographic position about (closeness of larger centres, accessibility to more important communications, morphology of the terrain, border area), it is necessary to make different programmes of development (Zarić et al, 1999) that will also have its uneven significance when it is some components of the area about (development of infrastructure, development of rural settlements,

development of hilly–mountain area, decline of unemployment, development of border areas, etc.).

The aims of the policy of the regional development according to the Law on the Regional Development (www.merr.gov.rs) refer to the following: overall socio–economic sustainable development, through the stimulating of polycentric economic development; decrease of the regional disparities with emphasis on the stimulation of the development of insufficiently developed areas; decrease of negative demographic trends; development of economy based on knowledge, innovativeness, contemporary scientific–technological accomplishments and organisation of management; development of competitiveness at all levels as well as the stimulation of inter–municipal, interregional, trans–border and international cooperation on the issues of the mutual interest.

The aims and strategic directions for the making of balanced regional development according to the Strategy of the Spatial Development of the Republic of Serbia (2009) refer to the following: sustainable development, raising the regional competitiveness, reducing the regional unevenness and poverty, ceasing the negative demographic flows and continuing the process of deagrarization. According to the same document, the basic strategic measures by which the mentioned problems of unequal regional development are exceeded are reduced to the following:

- decentralization of institutions with the formation of the regional developmental agencies, as well as their systematic connecting which would contribute to better financial coordination of the national and European access funds to the needs of developing regions,
- introducing fiscal decentralization, by putting into balance the authorities and finances of the local autonomy,
- urgent carrying out of demographic policy of the state by which the depopulation trend would be prevented,
- decentralization of the development, over demetropolization of Belgrade and the strengthening of the regional centres of Serbia,
- institutional connecting of the territorial levels (national, regional and local) on the principle of coordination and agreement that correspond more to our administration, instead of the principle of subsidiary which is applied in European regional states,
- long–term carrying out of economic development on the principles of the sustainable development, i.e. complex explanation of social and ecological possibilities and available natural resources,

- use of standardized (NUTS) system of territorial division of the European Union, since it has already been proved they articulate easier the problems and have capacities (human, institutional, material) for the realization of the European projects,
- long-term defining of the regional development while creating the budget.

As administratively–political usual “object” for regional interventions, the municipalities/cities are suggested, since it is easiest to make “external regional interventions” on the level of the local autonomy, with the aim of the reduction of underdevelopment. Another group of experts, denying the previous opinion by explaining that those territorial units were too small, support administrative districts or regions. In any case, the solution would be an opinion that it should influence on such territorial segments that will possess certain number of people, the natural and economic potential that would enable their development (Veselinović, 1999). The strategy and corresponding policy of the regional development of the European Union is also based on the fact that national countries and local authorities are not capable to solve complex economic and social problems. The regional level is considered to be developmentally optimal, giving possibilities for the coordination of interests of public and private sector and the realization of the maximum developmental effects within European economy of the space (<http://europa.eu>).

Supporting the regional level of managing in the strategy of the development of undeveloped areas, the group of authors from the Centre for Liberal–Democratic Studies (CLDS) considers that Serbia should also define the following questions in the process of planning the balanced regional development: “who has the right on the regional self organizing; the procedure of the realization of rights; competence and authority of the region; which legal acts can be brought by organs of regional autonomy; what are the relations of the region with central authority and local autonomy; and how the regions are financed.” The same authors suggested that “the stakeholders of the right on self–organizing should be those municipalities which consider they will better solve certain issues mutually.” Regions would have competences in the following fields: “spatial planning, urbanism and housing; construction and maintaining of infrastructure of the regional significance and coordination of development (communal) of infrastructure in municipalities and cities; agriculture, tourism; forestry; hunting and fishing; retraining, qualification and employment; ecology; and public works. Two most significant functions of the region would be health care and education (Vacić et al, 2003).

Except the mentioned, the regional level enables the obtaining of means of EU for trans-border cooperation. The largest number of investigated municipalities of undeveloped area of Serbia has the possibility of cooperation in accordance with the principles of IPA⁹, since the aid is enabled to all districts of Serbia except the central part of the country—the City of Belgrade, the Podunavlje, the Šumadija, the Morava, the Pomoravlje, the Rasina and the Toplica districts. Thus, only four municipalities of undeveloped area of Serbia (Rekovac, Varvarin, Brus and Kuršumljija) are not included into this programme. Other undeveloped municipalities can get support if the mutually defined projects are accepted with local or surrounding partners from adjoining countries.

Organisation of Settlements and Development of Rural Area

Except decentralization and territorial organisation of the state, with giving special authorities to regions, the question of exceeding the problems in the development of the settlements on undeveloped area of Serbia is also reduced to the solving of the rural space, organisation of the network of settlements, as well as the exceeding of traditional relation between village and town.

Basic condition of the development of rural settlements is the acquaintance with the regional characteristics and local potentials of the area. Under the planning of the rural areas The principles referring not only to the keeping of the population in village, modernisation of agriculture and development of other compatible activities, but better economic facilities in settlements (in accordance with economy in urban centre), infrastructure and public services must be taken into consideration when planning the rural area. In order to achieve that, the local possibilities of some territories must be maximally adequately used, and—with the preservation of ambient and cultural values, as well as natural values and environmental protection—the sustainable development provided (Ribar, 1996). Hilly and mountain area of the Central Serbia impose tourism as alternative activity in rural settlements with unfavourable conditions for dealing with agriculture or in de-industrialized urban settlements with difficult conditions for starting the development of other economic activities. The prerequisite for the development of rural settlements is better traffic connection between rural and urban areas.

⁹ The legal base for establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is determined by the Regulation of the EU Council and it stands for the period from 2007 to 2013. Within the component 2 of that Instrument, the programs of trans-border cooperation with member countries, candidates and potential candidates are approved for Serbia.

One of the principles of the European Union, adopted at the 12th session of the Conference of European Ministers of Spatial Planning in Hanover in 2000, for all member states of the European Council, the member of which is also Serbia, refer to the improvement of connections between town and rural area. In order to achieve the polycentric development of the network of settlements, the further measures of the EU were defined for the development of urban settlements, as the supplement to the strengthening of the economic potential, so that the sustainable development would be accomplished in smaller and larger cities. That means the following: control of expansion of urban areas (urban growth), restoration of endangered parts of the city and making different urban structures and activities, particularly in cities in which the areas of the social segregation are created, careful managing the urban ecosystems, the making of the planning institutions that would coordinate planning and implementation of regulated measures between cities and municipalities; preservation and enlargement of cultural inheritance. With the aim of independent development of village as the area for living, recreation and economic activities, the following measures are adopted: strengthening the policy of spatial planning directed towards the opening of different possibilities for development; stimulating small and medium cities, as well as large villages to become the providers of services, mainly through the opening of small and medium enterprises; giving priority to the necessity of the protection of nature and preservation of areas upon the needs of agriculture and forestry; development and use of information and communication technologies and making the new highly qualified jobs, out of agriculture.

The realization of such aims is based on the connection of villages into the system of settlements and communication with centres of higher rank. The connection of rural settlements with the system means the formation of the secondary centres on the level of municipalities/cities and centres of the community of settlements. By such organisation of the settlements, the public services are organised and managed more rationally and the activities of the local communities are more efficient coordinated (Tošić, 2001).

Conclusion

The rapid industrialization after the World War II had the crucial influence on the regional and urban development of Serbia. Large population difference between cities–municipal centres and rural settlements, as well as strong migration flows towards larger and more developed industrial centres brought to lagging behind in the development of rural, hilly–mountain and border areas, which cumulatively brought to larger and larger gap and the making of

developed and undeveloped areas of Serbia, in economic and demographic sense. The regional polarisation of Serbia on developed Belgrade area and the area north of the Sava and the Danube, from one side, and the south, undeveloped area, from the other side, did not significantly change throughout the decades. Undeveloped municipalities in Serbia have almost been in constant uneven economic position in relation to the rest part of the area of Serbia since 1960s. They are characterised by poor economic, infrastructural and personnel resources, non existence of the whole regional policy, demographic emptying and low living standards of the population.

Undeveloped area, presented with 37 municipalities/cities according to defined criteria, according to all analysed indicators in this paper—demographic (degree of concentration, depopulation, age and educational population structure, natural and migration trends), economic (gross national income per inhabitant, decline of employment, i.e. increase in unemployment) and functional (share of developmental sectors of activities and degree of deagrarization) confirms the presented facts, because it shows more unfavourable values than the average values for the Republic of Serbia.

The suggested measures for the development of the settlements in undeveloped area are connected with the defined aims and strategic documents of Serbia and regional policy of the European Union. Their basis includes decentralisation with territorial organisation of the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the European principles, as well as giving a special significance to the regions and their authorities. From demographic aspect, further planning measures refer to stopping the depopulation, especially in the rural area. The possibilities for the development of the rural settlements, organisation of the system of settlements on the principle of communities of settlements on the level of the local autonomy, as well as solving the village—city relation, are considered to be one of the primary tasks in establishing the balanced regional development of the Republic of Serbia.

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