

DEPOPULATION PROCESSES IN THE TOWNS OF THE BABUŠNICA MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract. *In this paper the author analyzes the historical, economic and social problems of the demographic reproduction of the municipality of Babušnica which is located in south-east Serbia. The problems which have been caused by demographic transition are complex and multidimensional, and have accumulated over a long period of time. Today, they are, due to the decline in villages, one of the negative factors of development not only of Babušnica but of all of south-east Serbia. This municipality is a typical example of all of the municipalities which, due to neglected population policies, find themselves in a very unfavorable position. The extreme depopulation of villages, mountain and border areas of Serbia today can only be stopped with great difficulty, and can be overturned with even more effort, with Babušnica given as an example of a town with a long tradition of economic migrations. This paper outlines the main characteristics of the demographic changes through the analysis of the census data gathered in the field. On the basis of the obtained demographic characteristics, the key problems and tendencies of development in this municipality have been outlined.*

Key words: *depopulation, emigration, migrant labor, underdevelopment, suburbs, municipality on the border, extensive agriculture, mahala (or hamlet).*

1. INTRODUCTION

The municipality of Babušnica is located in south-east Serbia, encompasses 53 villages and covers an overall area of 53.213 acres. It belongs to a group of underdeveloped and border municipalities (it is located 16 kilometers from the border with Bulgaria).

The relief indicates several morphological regions (the Lužnička, Zvonačka and a part of the Zaplanje valley). The Lužnička valley is surrounded by the following mountains: Suva Planina (1810 meters), Ruj planina (1706 meters) and Stol (1231 meters) which is connected to Mali (960 meters) and Veliki Korbes (976 meters) and is located along the valley of the Lužnica river (39 kilometers), the greatest right tributary of the Vlasina river. It is an example of a mountainous region. The lowest village (Veliko Bonjinje) is located

at an altitude of 365 meters, and the highest (Vuči Del) at 1000-1200 meters. The biggest part of Lužnica can be found at an altitude of 350-800 meters, and contains 44 villages (23 villages at an altitude of 350-600 meters, and 21 villages at 600-800 meters). The municipal, and at the same time, gravitational center of Lužnica, Babušnica, is located in the middle part of the valley. The main road Leskovac - Vlasotince - Babušnica – Pirot cuts through Lužnica, as do the regional roads towards Bela Palanka, Gadžin Han and the Serbian-Bulgarian border via Zvonce.

The south-west border of Lužnica towards Zaplanje is not clearly defined so that the villages of the Babušnica municipality in the lower half of the Lužnica river (the Bonjinačka valley) – Bogdanovac, Veliko Bonjince, Zavidince, Mezgraja, Malo Bonjince, Ostatovica and Štrbovac are a part of Zaplanje, (the so-called Gornje Zaplanje or Lužničko Zaplanje). This group of villages is specific in comparison to other villages, as it both spatially and economically relies on Zaplanje, Niš and Vlasotince, unlike the remaining villages which tend to gravitate towards Babušnica (they will be referred to as the villages of Zaplanje).

Apart from these villages, there are additional seven (Berin Izvor, Vuči Del, Zvonce, Jasenov Del, Našuškovića, Preseka and Rakita) which border with the Republic of Bulgaria. Based on their anthropogeographic characteristics, they also make up a distinct whole (they will be referred to as the village of Zvonce).

The remaining villages, 38 of them (Aleksandrovac, Berduj, Bratiševac, Brestov Dol, Vava, Valniš, Vojnici, Vrelo, Gornje Krnjino, Gornji Striževac, Gorčinci, Grnčar, Dol, Donje Krnjino, Donji Striževac, Draginac, Dučevac, Izvor, Kaluderevo, Kambelevac, Kijevac, Leskovica, Linovo, Ljuberađa, Masurovci, Modra Stena, Provaljenik, Radinjince, Radosinj, Radoševac, Rakov Dol, Raljin, Resnik, Stol, Strelac, Studena, Suračevo and Crvena Jabuka) make up a distinct anthropogeographic whole (they will be referred to as the villages of Lužnica).

All of the villages have formed spontaneously, and based on the number of their inhabitants, they are small villages. Most of them, 37, are dispersed settlements, which have formed on the outskirts of the mountains and which consist of a great number of smaller mahalas (hamlets). Most of these hamlets consist of one, rarely two or more extended families. The remaining villages, 14 of them, can be classified as clustered settlements (Aleksandrovac, Brestov Dol, Veliko Bonjince, Vojnici, Gornje Krnjino, Gornji Striževac, Donje Krnjino, Donji Striževac, Ljuberađa, Malo Bonjince, Radoševac, Raljin, Resnik and Suračevo). Clustered settlements are mostly to be found next to the main road Vlasotince – Babušnica - Pirot or have been formed by the relocation of villages next to the main road once the country was liberated from Turkish rule, while one village is of the semi-dispersed type (Valniš).¹

In the remainder of the text we will outline a somewhat different classification which states that four distinct regions are given special attention, including:

1. The villages of Zvonce (seven of them), (Berin Izvor, Vuči Del, Zvonce, Jasenov Del, Našuškovića, Preseka and Rakita),
2. The villages of Zaplanje (seven of them), (Bogdanovac, Veliko Bonjince, Zavidince, Malo Bonjince, Mezgraja, Ostatovica and Štrbovac),

¹ Geografska enciklopedija naselja Srbije, knjiga I (The Geographic Encyclopedia of Serbian Towns, volume I)

3. The villages of Lužnica located along the main road (21), (Aleksandrovac, Bratiševac, Vava, Vojnici, Gornji Striževac, Gornje Krnjino, Gorčinci, Donje Krnjino, Donji Striževac, Draginac, Izvor, Kaluderevo, Kambelevac, Ljuberada, Modra Strena, Provaljenik, Radinjinci, Radoševac, Resnik, Stol and Suračevo) and
4. The remaining villages of Lužnica (17) which are located far from the main roads (Berduj, Brestov Dol, Valniš, Vrelo, Grnčar, Dol, Dučevac, Kijevac, Leskovica, Linovo, Masurovci, Radosinj, Rakov Dol, Raljin, Strelac, Studena and Crvena Jabuka).

2. AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING STATE OF THE VILLAGES

2.1. Typology based on geographic location

Ever since the 1960's, a general decrease in the population has been noted.² According to a census from 2002, the overall population numbered 15.734 inhabitants, while the rural areas were occupied by 11.159 or 70,92% of the population. According to the census from 2011, the overall population numbered 12.259 inhabitants, 7.681 or (62,66%) of whom resided in rural areas. This rate of decrease in the population in the last ten years (22,09%) classifies the municipality of Babušnica as a municipality with very pronounced demographic changes (depopulation, intense emigration of the population). All of the rural settlements note a decrease in their population, while the villages of Draginac and Suračevo, which have almost merged with Babušnica, are marked by a much smaller decrease in population in comparison to other villages. These two settlements can be considered suburban. It is noticeable that the villages from the third group, villages which are closer to Babušnica and which have a well-developed network of roads, note a slight decrease in comparison to the villages which are more remote and which are not well-connected with Babušnica. Over the last few years the decrease in the rural population has been small since in most settlements we note a great number of elderly inhabitants who can no longer reproduce or work, along with the fact that a great part of the rural area has already been depopulated. Thus, this 31,17% decrease in the rural population is usually a result of the mortality rate. This mainly refers to villages of the fourth group. Of the 52 rural settlements, 26 of them have fewer than 100 inhabitants, and two have fewer than 10 inhabitants (Leskovica seven, and Rakov Dol eight inhabitants).

Another three villages have fewer than 20 inhabitants (Masurovci 10, Brestov Dol 15 and Raljin 16 inhabitants). The data clearly indicate that almost half of the villages are on the verge of extinction, since they are bereft of any young inhabitants and the average age of their inhabitants is very high. In some villages, based on the census from 2002, the average age has exceeded 70, (Brestov Dol 70,3, Masurovci 70,0). These villages mainly belong to group four and group two. The data on the age structure based on the most recent census from 2011 have not yet been published.

² Republički zavod za statistiku (The State Statistics Bureau), Beograd, 2004. Knjiga 9. Stanovništvo, uporedni pregled broja stanovnika (Population a comparative overview of the number of inhabitants), 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1991, 2002, podaci po naseljima

Population density based on spatial planning is an indicator of the degree of the rural nature of a region. The average population density including Babušnica is 23,03 inhabitants per square kilometer. This indicates an overtly rural area. In villages which belong to the third group, the population density ranges from 11,71 (Vojnici and Gornje Krnjino cover the same area and were treated as one unit), to 210,56 in Draginac which is the most densely populated village after Babušnica, with a population density of 751,72 inhabitants per square kilometer.

In the fourth group (the remaining villages of the Lužnica region), among the villages which have fewer than 100 inhabitants, the population density is the greatest in Dučevac 13,60 inhabitants per square kilometer and only in that area does it exceed 10 inhabitants per square kilometer. We have also noted that there is a village which has fewer than one inhabitant per square kilometer, Rakov Dol with 0,46 inhabitants per square kilometer. This group consists of villages whose areas are amongst the largest (Crvena Jabuka, Strelac, Studena, Rakov Dol), which indicates that it is a greatly neglected region.

In group one (the villages of Zvonce) the population density ranges from 5,90 inhabitants per square kilometer in Berin Izvor, to 21,76 inhabitants per square kilometer in Zvonce.

In group two (the villages of Zaplanje) there are only two villages: Zavidince, with 23,65 inhabitants per square kilometer and Veliko Bonjince with 23,49 inhabitants per square kilometer, with a population density of approximately the average for each municipality, while in the remaining villages, depopulation is extremely pronounced and the population is elderly. In this group, four villages cover great areas (Bogdanovac, Štrbovac, Zavidince and Veliko Bonjince).

As the population in the rural regions is constantly decreasing, the number of households is decreasing disproportionately in relation to the age of the inhabitants which is increasing, it is clear that most villages are on the verge of extinction and that for a long time no biological reproduction has been made possible. The average number of household members, including Babušnica, is 2,37, which indicates that most households have no children, that is, that these are in fact elderly households. In group one (the villages of Zvonce) in two of the villages the number of household members is fewer than 2,0, while the greatest is 2,36, in Zvonce. In group two (the villages of Zaplanje), it ranges from 1,44 in Bogdanovac to 1,97 in Zavidince. In group three (the villages of Lužnica along the main road), the villages have the greatest number of members per household. Only six of the villages have fewer than two members per household. The fewest number of family members is found in Modra Stena 1,67, and the greatest in Suračevo 3,02. Donji Striževac and Draginac have 2,97 members per household. The villages of group four (the remaining villages of Lužnica) have the fewest number of household members per household. Only three villages have more than two members per household (Berduj 2,38, Brestov Dol 2,14 and Vrelo 2,59), while the remaining villages have fewer than two, and the village of Leskovicica has seven inhabitants in seven households. These data clearly indicate that the structure of the households has changed in relation to the beginning of the 20th century, and that in certain villages there already is no human potential for organized production.

The population growth index indicates a tendency of constant decrease in terms of the number of inhabitants. In group three, the decrease is far smaller than in the other groups. Here we have three villages in which the number of inhabitants has decreased very little over the last ten years (Draginac, Suračevo and Donji Striževac), while on the other hand all of the villages from the fourth group and five of the villages from the second group

(Bogdanovac, Malo Bonjince, Mezgraja, Ostatovica and Štrbovac) note a constant decrease over several decades. This indicates that the natural fluctuation over the decades towards certain zones, areas closer to Babušnica, as well as the duration of the emigration, resulted in the extinction of certain villages, while the number of single unmarried men is very high in all the environments.

The structure of the population in the villages of the first, second and fourth group is over the age of 50. In the third group of villages, the percentage of those inhabitants older than 50 is the smallest, and except for Draginac (38,1) the average age of the inhabitants of the other villages is over 40. The data originate from the census from 2002.

The percentage of the rural population involved in agriculture is decreasing sharply since there is a shortage of individuals who are able to work, while jobs in the industry can only be found in Babušnica. These conditions can be taken advantage of by those living in Babušnica or the surrounding villages which are connected to it via a bus route. The villages in these areas are of a mixed type. In 2011, Niš Express, as the largest transporter in the municipality, cancelled most of the departures for these areas. Some of the more remote villages can only be reached by cab, (for example from Babušnica to the village of Radosinj the cab fare is 1700 dinars one-way). Agricultural production is merely meant to satisfy the needs of the local population. For any more serious production, it is necessary for most households to set about designing a new type of farm organization. In the more remote villages, with poor road connections, the population is mostly involved in agriculture with extensive migrant labor. Migrant labor is pronounced in almost all of the villages, and traditionally, even now in the global crisis, the male population still does seasonal work. Today it is mostly construction workers who commute to Belgrade, Niš and Požarevac.

Traditional vocations have gradually become extinct with the development of industry, which had as a consequence the departure of a certain number of the working-age population, who moved on to jobs abroad at the end of the 1960's and 70's. However, most of them have not adapted to or remained in any of those countries.

Due to the strong hydrological resources in this area, there were at one time 310 mills (16 in Ljuberađa alone), seven rolling mills and wool mills each as well as five saw mills. Today these facilities can rarely be seen let alone be found working.

The service industry, including trade, is not developed in mostly rural areas. For example, supplying the village of Štrbovac takes place on Fridays when a truck brings over the necessary supplies. The stores are privately owned and the closer the villages are to the city, the more there are of them.

This area is rich in forests but the quality of the wood is not suitable for industrial use. The wood is used as fuel, so that one part of the male population can make a living in this way. Logging is not controlled, and for this reason the rural roads which were not meant for heavy traffic are being destroyed by the extraction of timber from the forests.

The development of small business was reduced to individual attempts without any organized support from municipal authorities. What is lacking is support from republic funds.

Construction is usually not planned. Residential buildings as a rule are in better shape than industrial or production facilities. To a great extent places where most of the households are elderly and where we find cowsheds and similar facilities are almost completely ruined. There are many old facilities built as half-timbered structures which are usually in very poor shape, since they have been abandoned a while back. Due to the lack of jobs in the cities, due to their need to survive, as well as care for elderly parents, a certain number

of those who have emigrated a long time ago have returned and now spend a part of the year in their place of birth. They have renovated old buildings, but have rarely built new ones. There are new housing facilities in the villages where the population is greater. Most of the buildings were built without adhering to architectural projects and a great number of them are unsuitable for the needs of the families, as there are many dysfunctional and unspecified facilities. Rarely can we find a building which has thermal insulation. Wood is the primary energy source, and electricity is used to a smaller extent. Alternative forms of energy are not available. A small part of the population in the rural areas used the services of architects and civil engineers, and there are not many people interested in getting help from professionals.

The institutional and spatial connection is almost non-existent either in horizontal or vertical terms. In the villages of group three, infrastructural facilities can be found at a higher level: most of the villages have paved streets, waterworks, and some even have a sewer system. The number of bus departures for these villages is greater in comparison to the other villages. In the other locations, the waterworks are mostly local, built in the 1970's, and have not been maintained properly. If nothing is done, they will deteriorate in a very short period of time. Certain villages at higher altitudes do not have paved streets. The supply of electricity is usually poor. The television signal in most of the villages is poor, and a connection to the outside world has been made possible in the last few years only thanks to cell phones.

2.2. Typology based on genesis

In the rural area of the municipality of Babušnica, all of the villages belong to the group of spontaneous settlements. During the period of Turkish rule, from the 14th to the 19th century, the village of Bonince is mentioned in the chronicles from 1498 and Turkish sources mention Ljuberažda in the second half of the 15th century. According to the defter (tax register) of the Niš nahija (district) from 1516³, the following villages were noted in Lužnica: Bresatov Dol, Veliko Bonjince, Grnčar, Izvor, Malo Bonjince, Radinjince, Strelac and the hamlet of Ostatovica. The following census from 1576/77 included the following villages: Bratiševac, Valniš, Gornje Krnjino, Gorčinci, Donje Krnjino, Draginac, Zavidince, Rakita, Raljin, Resnik and Suračevo.⁴ In 1606, two more villages were mentioned: Vuči Del and Radoševac.⁵ During the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th century, the villages of Aleksandrovac, Babušnica and Kijevac were mentioned as villages of the clustered type. The remains of Turkish towers can be found in the villages of Zavidince (near the Tričkovci hamlet and at a place called Gagula) and in Radoševac. Based on these documents, generally speaking, it can be determined when the 24 of the current 53 villages were founded. Regarding the remaining settlements, there were no reliable written data until the travel logs of 1879, but it is certain that 51 villages could be found during the period of Turkish rule.

During the great migration of the Serbs under the patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević in 1690, new population immigrated into the area from Kosovo, from the South of Serbia

³ Dr. Ema Miljković, Istorijski arhiv Niš, Detaljni popis nahije Niš iz 1516. Godine (A detailed population census from 1516)

⁴ Dr. Ema Miljković, Istorijski arhiv Niš, Detaljni popis nahije Niš iz 1576/77. Godine (A detailed population census from 1576/77)

⁵ Geografska enciklopedija, knjiga I (The Geographic Encyclopedia)

and Macedonia, but the remaining villages were certainly founded at the latest during the time of the migration under patriarch Šakabent in 1739. There is not much evidence of this, but folklore and national costumes reflect the similarities. Lužnica is located in the middle of the Šop-Torlak zone of south-east Serbia, including the meeting points between smaller oasis of the south-Morava and Vardar emigration currents and rare Kosovo-Metohia immigrants.⁶ The inhabitants of Lužnica, based on their speech, belong to the Prizren-Timok dialect, which is a special sub-dialect of Lužnica.⁷

During 1834/35, due to the plague epidemic, the following villages were relocated: Babušnica, Veliko Bonjince and Dučevac.

Changes in the location of certain villages of Lužnica occurred as a result of the Turkish invasion, especially after the uprising of Srndak in 1841 when the Turks, in retaliation, burned many villages in the Niš district and killed over 10000 people. In this period the villages relocated to places where most of the inhabitants had their cattle sheds and huts, deeper into the forests, far from the roads and at greater altitudes (Bogdanovac, Gorčinci, Draginac, Dučevac, Zavidince, Kijevac, Rakita, Kambelevac). As in the remaining parts of Serbia, what is characteristic of this period are objects of small value, since due to the Turkish rule, the population was constantly forced to flee.

Due to the historic conditions, as well as the configuration of the terrain which had an additional effect on the formation of villages, all of the villages consist of a great number of mahalas or hamlets. For these reasons, the villages with the greatest areas had the greatest number of mahalas, and can be found at greater altitudes and on terrains more difficult to access. Even in the later phases of village development there were no documents indicating any planned division of households and the formation of new ones, and instead it seems that the process took place rather randomly. The plots of land were usually not divided, and instead one family member moved to the cattle hut or shed in the forest and formed a new household there.

During this phase of development, the population of Lužnica primarily took part in extensive cattle herding, far from the roads, in the densely forested mountains, which the Turks avoided. This was also one of the reasons why after the liberation from the Turks the economically strongest villages and the ones with the greatest population were precisely those located in more secluded areas, far from the main roads: Crvena Jabuka (1080), Strelac (1018), Studena (859), Veliko Bonjince (799), Bogdanovac (725) and Gorčinci (502), where immediately following the liberation (1879) approximately 30% of the population of Lužnica actually lived.

After Serbia was liberated from Turkish rule, Crvena Jabuka was population-wise the greatest village with 1080 inhabitants spread out over 29 mahalas, with an area of 3275 acres, and at an altitude of 700-1000 meters. This village even had a school which began work approximately 10 years before the liberation from the Turks.⁸ Due to the erosive effects of the river Tegošnica and the human casualties, the population withdrew from its

⁶ Jovan Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo i južnoslovenske zemlje* (The Balkan peninsula and the south-Slavic countries), knj. I, Beograd, 1922, pg. 228-229 (map)

⁷ A. Belić, *Srpski dijalektološki zbornik* (A collection of Serbian dialects), knj. I, Dijalekti istočne i južne Srbije, Beograd, 1905, strana 40-43, 50-51.

⁸ Feliks Kanic, *Srbija, zemlja i stanovništvo* (Serbia, the land and its population), knjiga II, str. 278-279.

homesteads, and from a clustered settlement it became a dispersed one. Immediately upon liberation, 150 households moved to Jovanovac near Vidin.⁹

Under these circumstances, most of the villages were of a scattered type, but the homesteads of certain families were to a great extent near the mahalas (or hamlets) which were occupied by the owners.

Based on the census from 1879, there were only two villages (Donji Striževac, founded in 1937 on a location which previously consisted of shearing huts and mills, and the village Vojnici which was founded after World War II on a location previously covered in huts in the area of the village Gornje Krnjino). According on this census, the Lužnica district had 18.556 inhabitants. This period of development is not characterized by enormous extended families such as those in western Serbia. The greatest average number of household members was noted in the village Masurovci with 12,79 family members, and the smallest in Babušnica with 4,76 family members. More than 10 family members were noted in only nine of the villages, and fewer than seven in two of the villages. The average number of family members at the district level was 8,63. In 1890, there were 46 family units with 20-30 members (2,1%) and three joint family ventures with over 30 members (0,1%). The greatest majority or 49,0% was made by groups of 6 to 10 members. Literate inhabitants numbered only 710 or 4% in this census. In addition to the school in Crvena Jabuka, in 1879 four more schools opened up in the following villages: Veliko Bonjince, Striževac, Strelac and Studena. By 1900, five more schools opened up. From 1900 to 1910 nine more opened up, and between 1910 and 1930 eight more.¹⁰ Before some of the schools began work, there were cases of children of the more wealthy inhabitants being educated at churches.

During the reign of the Turks, a church could be found in 12 of the villages (Babušnica, Brestov Dol, Veliko Bonjince, G. Krnjino, G. Striževac, Draginac, Zvonce, Ljuberada, Stol, Strelac, Studena, Crvena Jabuka), and monasteries near 14 of them (Bogdanovac, Bratiševac, Vava, Gorčince, Grnčar, Dučevac, Zavidince, Linovo, Modra Stena, Ostatovica, Radinjinci, Radoševac, Rakov Dol and Stol).

The middle phase of development lasted from the liberation from the Turks until World War II. With the territorial expansion of Serbia, the settlements in Lužnica became part of the Velikobonjinačka, Zvonačka, Krnjinska, Kukavička (Bogdanovac), Stolska, Strelačka, Striževačka, Studenačka, Suračevska, Radinjinska, Resnička and Šuškovcička municipality (The Serbian State, 1882). During this phase of development, no further villages were founded in these areas. The villages of Lužnica were characterized by a dynamic increase in population, thanks to natural fluctuation. The birth rate during this period was above average for Serbia. From 1878 to 1921, all of the villages except for Crvena Jabuka noted a positive demographic development, while the rural population doubled by 1948. In 1878, 88,5% of the villages were small settlements (numbering up to 500 inhabitants), while in 1948, 71,2% of the villages had an average population size ranging from 500 to 2000 inhabitants. The villages of Berin Izvor, Vuči Del, Zvonce, Jasenov Del, Našuškovića, Rakita and Preseka (the boundary ran straight across the area of the village), following the Berlin Congress, became a part of Bulgaria up until 1918.

⁹ Dr. Jovan Cvijić, *Naselja srpskih zemalja* (Settlements on Serbian territory), pg. 370

¹⁰ Đura Zlatković-Milić, *Zla vremena* (Hard times), Babušnica, 1967, pg. 86.

Crvena Jabuka, which is located at a very high altitude, on a terrain of poor configuration, became the first village from which massive exodus began, immediately following the liberation from the Turks. The consensus from 1921 indicated a population of only 918 inhabitants living there in 151 households.

Even after the liberation, cattle herding was one of the most important branches of the economy, and herding that involved seasonal sheds and huts to be built in the mountains was extremely important. These seasonal cattle herding settlements - huts could be found on most village areas. Certain villages during this period changed their location by moving to where their huts were (Vrelo, Zavidince, Radosinj, Radoševac, Rakov Dol and Strelac), while some of the villages relocated to areas closer to the main roads (Vava, Valniš, Izvor, Ljuberađa, Našuškovica, Preseka).¹¹ However, extensive cattle herding and agriculture, reflected in the production of various goods, often did not meet the basic needs of rural households, so that the male working population left to do migrant labor, worked primarily as brick layers, tile layers and construction workers. By 1912, the migration patterns were mostly directed towards Bulgaria and Vlačka. In addition to traditional, agricultural functions, others also gained in significance – trade, vocational work, industry, cultural-educational work and the like. Brick and tile producing skills were especially important for the economy, so that from the beginning of the 20th century the owners of various tile and brick factories in Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria became inhabitants of Lužnica (they were primarily the inhabitants of the villages of Zaplanje).

Not much can be said about the development of industry in Lužnica at this time, but many vocational centers were formed (Ljuberađa, Babušnica, Veliko Bonjince, Zvonce, Strelac).

The most dynamic development during this time was noted in Ljuberađa which became the center of the Lužnica municipality in 1890, and was declared a township in 1927. The position of Ljuberađa was at the time central since in the background of Ljuberađa there were mountainous, densely populated villages (Štrbovac, Bogdanovac, Gorčince, Berduj, Strelac, Studena), and the roads mainly went over the mountains. Thanks to its location and the great and strong hydrological capacities (many springs, the Lužnica river and its tributary Murgovica), its rate of development increased. In 1932 the first hydro-electric plant was built. Street lighting was introduced in 1937. It had 16 mills with 49 winch-production facilities, and 4 rolling mills and wool mills each, as well as two saw-mills. A tile factory was built in 1910 and a mill in 1930. The first x-ray machine was installed in Ljuberađa in 1934, and was operational until war erupted in April, 1941. As the center of the municipality, Ljuberađa also developed some additional functions: vocation, trade and the like. In 1941 it had 12 trade shops with colonial goods, a great number of vocational workshops (four blacksmiths, horse shoeing works, tailor shops, two furriers, shoe-makers and potters, a knitter shop, a dye-worker, a weaver, baker, soda water shop, barrel-worker, stone mason and copper-smith) and several taverns. The configuration of the terrain was not conducive to the further development of Ljuberađa.

After World War II, the center of the municipality was relocated to Babušnica. From 1948, the number of inhabitants in Ljuberađa, but also in the villages that gravitate toward it (Berduj, Bogdanovac, Brestov Dol, Vrelo, Grnčar, Dol, Leskovica, Linovo, Masurovci, Modra Stena, Radosinj, Rakov Dol, Crvena Jabuka), was constantly decreasing. These

¹¹ Geografska enciklopedija (Geographic encyclopedia), knjiga I

villages were well-connected with Ljuberađa, and it was their connection to Babušnica. What contributed to this relocation of the administrative center was also the industrialization and slow dying out of trade, which led to a surplus of work force in the country.

Up until World War II, Babušnica had started the development of vocational skills, but to a smaller extent than in Ljuberađa. The first doctor set up office in 1908 and the first pharmacy was opened on 27. 9. 1938.

In the villages of the Zvonce region, the beginning of the industrial development dates from 1926, when the coal mine Jerma in Rakita began working. An electrical power plant was built to meet the needs of the mine in 1925, as well as a narrow train track which connected the mines and Pirot. Considering how this area is close to the Lužnica municipality, it was only in 1918 that the inhabitants of this region became homogenous. In addition to agriculture, a certain number of the male population began working in the mine where they eventually got their pension. In addition, Zvonačka Banja also began working and hired a certain number of inhabitants from the local area so that there were no massive relocations of the population in that area. Due to the possibility of full-time employment, migrant labor was no longer that popular. A decrease in population according to the census occurred only in 1981.

In the Zaplanje part of the municipality, industrial development began in Veliko Bonjince with the opening of a new mechanical works shop owned by the Stanković brothers (which later became the Balkan Metal Works facility). The Lozanović electrical plant in Modra Stena dating from 1928, brought electricity in part to Modra Stena, Malo and Veliko Bonjince. A certain part of the population found work in the factory. This region was mostly populated by migrant workers, so a majority of the male population to this day does migrant labor. Villages which are pronouncedly mountainous (Bogdanovac, Ostatovica and Štrbovac) are almost extinct. The reason for this is that they have no access to means of communication, infrastructure lines, asphalt and bus routes to this very day. The roads that link them to the nearest villages and bus lines are very poor, so that only rough terrain vehicles can be driven on them, or they can be used by hikers and horses. The villages of Malo Bonjince and Mezgraja, which were in terms of population always small, are now also close to extinction. The most frequent seasonal work in this area is the following: construction, tile work, brick work, wax-works. In addition there were also wool mills and soda water production facilities. After several years spent doing migrant labor, the population more and more frequently decided on permanent relocation into areas where there was work.

After World War II, the center of the municipality was relocated to Babušnica which led to the dying out of villages with even an extensive population. With the development of industry in Babušnica, after 1948, the villages which gravitated towards Babušnica (group three, the villages of Lužnica near the main roads), in which asphalt had been introduced a long time ago, which have their own waterworks and are better equipped in terms of infrastructure, and also have better bus lines, show a slower decrease in population. In Babušnica, new facilities of the companies Lisca, and Tigar were founded, as well as for the chemical factory Lužnica, and the Jupiter brick factory. Since the 1990's, with the change in the ownership rights in economy, following the privatization, the economy has been in decline. In addition to the aforementioned ones, there are now several smaller private companies which hire a small number of the working-age population. The unemployment rate is great and most of the unemployed are over the age of 40.

Based on the size of the village area defined by the spatial plan of Serbia, three categories of village areas can be defined in this location: small, up to 500 acres, medium, from 500 to 1000 acres and large, exceeding 1000 acres. Based on this categorization, if we were to exclude the urban areas, in the rural areas of the municipality there are four villages with a small, 99 villages with a mid and 17 villages with a large area (the villages of Gornji and Donji Striževac, as well as Gornje Krnjino and Vojnici are found on the same area).

2.3. Typology based on the urban-morphological structure

On the basis of the urban-morphological structure, the typology of the villages in the rural area is based on the following parameters: gross population density, the position and interrelations between the farmyards, and the definition and size of the settlement construction zone.

Babušnica belongs to one of the sparsely populated areas with 12.259 inhabitants (according to the census from 2011). Babušnica itself has 4.578 (37,34%) inhabitants. Draginac which is now growing into a suburban area has 857 (6,99%) inhabitants, while in the other villages there are 6.824 (55,67%) inhabitants. According to the census from 2002, the number of inhabitants was 15.734, which indicates that the number decreased by 3.475 (22,09%), that is, it reduced by half in the rural areas. Historically speaking, right after World War II, according to the census from 1948, of the overall number of inhabitants, 37.532, the rural population was 36.929 (98,39%) while in Babušnica there were only 603 (1,61%) inhabitants. From this we can clearly see that from World War II to this day, the number of inhabitants has decreased enormously and that only Babušnica of the rural villages dating prior to World War II, by becoming the center of the municipality, actually underwent an expansion in its number of inhabitants and has multiplied many times over, 7,59 times in fact. In addition to Babušnica, an increase in the population was noted in Draginac (which is now a suburban area). With 209 inhabitants in 1948, it has increased in size to 857 inhabitants in 2011 (increased 4,1 times).

A disproportion in the number and density of the population in four of the municipalities is evident: in group one (the villages of Zvonice), which belongs to the border areas, a decrease in the population was noted, but based on its own laws which are not related to other areas. These villages were, in addition to agriculture, tied to the work in the Jerma mine and in the Zvonačka banja spa. The work of these industries kept most of the population in that area. The population reached the age of retirement in the mine and had no need for any pronounced migration. The decrease in the population came later and in other areas, only after 1981.

In the group of villages of Zaplanje, the decrease in the population began even earlier, in the 1960s. After the liberation from the Turks, and even after World War II, five of seven villages were peaking in terms of population (Bogdanovac, Veliko Bonjince, Zavidince, Ostatovica and Štrbovac). From these villages, people started moving out much sooner than from the others, and the cause of that predated World War II. This was an area that had many migrant workers, who in the later phases of development usually moved to areas in which there was a need for an unqualified workforce, where their relatives had already gone, primarily to Belgrade, Niš and Požarevac. In addition, the greatest number of workers who left to work abroad were mainly from the villages of Zaplanje.

In the villages in which schools have been closed, the buildings are ruined and some have even been torn down. The greatest number of schools still use antiquated toilets and are not nearly as equipped as schools in the cities. The village halls are in poor shape, and

almost all of them are not even in use, and in some places they are covered in weeds and are completely inaccessible. In the villages which are dying out, commemorative stones and fountains are covered in growth of various kinds, while those in the remaining ones are not being maintained. The cemeteries seem to reflect the relationship of the nation to its past. Sometimes someone will mow the grass on the eve of certain religious holidays.

The villages are ill-equipped in terms of utilities. There are illegal dump sites of plastic waste and every smaller hamlet has its own "valley" where it dumps its waste. Even the rivers are used as dump sites. Dumps can be seen along the road or in forests, but there is also metal waste strewn across the hills and valleys.

Except for Babušnica, health centers and infirmaries have been out of service in many places for a number of years now, and where they are still in function, the doctor visits once a week. A dentist's office can now be found only in Babušnica.

Veterinary services are well-organized in places which are more accessible by road, but the problem is the number of cattle which is decreasing every year. In the more remote villages, people have to wait for a long time for the vet, so the population in cases of emergency calls veterinarians from other municipalities, who charge for their services.

2.4. Typology based on size

On the territory of the municipality of Babušnica, only Babušnica is considered an urban settlement and has a somewhat greater density of population (it covers an area of 609 acres, with a population of 4.578). The village Draginac which borders on Babušnica and which is slowly growing into a suburb, also has a high population density (it covers a surface of 407 acres, and has a population of 857). These two towns belong territorially to smaller settlements.

Considering that the country has for a long period of time experienced a constant decrease in population and the number of households, that is, that the growth index has been negative dating as far back as the 1950's. According to the census from 2011, as many as 26 villages have fewer than 100 inhabitants, three of which have fewer than 10 inhabitants (Leskovica seven, Rakov Dol eight, Masurovci 10), and two have up to 20 inhabitants (Brestov Dol 15 and Rajin 16). A survey of the population according to the census is shown in the graphs. Most of these villages belong to group four (the remaining villages of Lužnica). These villages are not close to roads, have underdeveloped infrastructure so that emigration is more massive from most of these villages following the removal of any administrative, cultural and educational centers from Ljuberađa to Babušnica.

By definition, the villages from the spatial plan of Serbia, 51 villages belong to the group of small settlements, (0-100 26 villages, 100-200 13 villages, 200-300 8 villages, 300-400 3 villages and 400-500 1 village), and only one, Draginac with 857 inhabitants belongs to mid to large villages.

Half of the villages belong to the group of settlements numbering fewer than 100 inhabitants. These villages as a rule are located far from any major roads, and are almost always at a high altitude, mostly without any paved roads, located on inhospitable terrain. The population of these villages is elderly and in almost all of the villages from this group, schools have been closed due to a lack of children. The households have reduced to fewer than 1,50 inhabitants, which is a clear sign that they are slowly dying out. What belongs to this group of villages are also villages with both a large and small area, which is a clear indication that the basic reason for the depopulation from these regions (and this

is true for most villages), is the lack of infrastructure, land that is not conducive to agricultural work, very small plots of land which do not allow more intense production, as well as the lack of any organized purchase of any market surplus.

CONCLUSION

The municipality of Babušnica is located in the Pirot district which consists of under-developed municipalities. In this municipality, almost half of the villages have no future. To prevent these villages from disappearing completely, we must approach the problem with planned infrastructure, economic and functional equipment of villages, the preservation of the cultural and material tradition of the region and respect of the cultural differences which can be found on the area of the municipality.

In villages which have an able workforce it is currently necessary, with the use of data obtained from the field, to form conditions for a planned approach to the revival of production. It is also important to provide a higher quality lifestyle in old households and the preservation of material values, so that the number of new producers could increase.

In villages which are dying out, it is necessary to provide a higher quality of life in old households so that a complete demographic demise would not occur, and to preserve the material values for the instigation of organized village tourism within the municipality.

If no high quality and well-organized solution is offered soon, in approximately ten years the municipality will lose half of its villages.

The population policy with the provision of a long-term stable economic-social development of the villages over a longer period of time should be organized, as a part of the municipality, with the involvement of interested professionals from the field of economy, sociology, urbanism and rurism, architecture, construction and geography. The applied solutions have to be based on existing resources and the obtained data collected in the field, and as part of viable solutions, with the activation of spatial potential in collaboration with the capacity of the local authorities.

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DEPOPULACIONI PROCESI U NASELJIMA OPŠTINE BABUŠNICA

Vesna Savić

U ovom radu autor analizira istorijske, privredne i socijalne probleme demografske reprodukcije opštine Babušnica koja pripada jugoistočnoj Srbiji. Problemi proistekli iz demografske tranzicije su kompleksni i višedimenzionalni, dugoročno akumulirani i danas su, zbog pražnjenja sela, jedan od negativnih faktora razvoja ne samo Babušnice već i cele jugoistočne Srbije. Ova opština je tipičan primer za sve opštine koje su, zbog potpuno zanemarene populacione politike, danas u krajnje nezavidnom položaju. Izrazita depopulacija seoskih, brdsko-planinskih i pograničnih područja Srbije danas se veoma teško može da zaustavi, a još teže da preokrene, a Babušnica je i primer tradicije dugih spoljnih ekonomskih migracija. U ovom radu su prikazane glavne karakteristike demografskih tokova, kroz analizu popisnih podataka na opštinskom nivou i prikupljenih podataka na terenu. Na osnovu datih demografskih karakteristika ukazano je na ključne probleme i tendencije razvoja na prostoru ove opštine.

Ključne reči: *depopulacija, emigracija, pečalbarstvo, nerazvijenost, periferija, pogranična opština, ekstenzivna poljoprivreda, mahala*