



THE POST-YUGOSLAV SPACE ON A DEMOGRAPHIC CROSSWAY: 25 YEARS AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF YUGOSLAVIA

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The aim of the article is to integrally assess the demographic changes after 1990. It is presumed that considerable variations exist in terms of intensity of demographic processes. The following analyses encompassed the relevant national or regional statistics, employing methodological adjustment in order to enable data comparison. Herewith, the changing definitions of population presented a special analytical problem. The so-called principle of "permanent" residence was largely replaced with the principle of "usual" residence. By way of the usual residence it was possible to single out the present population and thus to approach the analysis. The main goal was to assess the direct and indirect demographic loss within the post-Yugoslav space.

The combined analysis showed that the whole post Yugoslav area suffered a loss of about 5 million inhabitants (including the permanent emigration of the former guest-workers). Except from Slovenia, and stagnating Montenegro and Macedonia, all other countries from the Yugoslav space have lost more or less of their population. Losing a quarter of its pre-war population, Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered the most (1.093 million), but the high loss was determined also for the neighboring Serbia and Croatia. Serbia within its pre-war territory lost almost a million or one tenth of its population, while Croatia lost more than half a million or one ninth of its population. The three core Yugoslav areas lost more than 2.5 million. The analyses confirmed the striking regional differences as well. The highest relative depopulation was recorded in Republika Srpska of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Key words: *ex-Yugoslavia, demographic change, post-socialism, emigration, depopulation*

Introduction

The post-Yugoslav space quarter of a century after the collapse of the federation is characterized by processes pertaining to the second demographic transition paradigm (Kaa, 1987; Lesthaeghe, 1983). On one hand, we deal with unevenly low fertility and low mortality rates, accompanied with the processes of sizeable migration and pronounced

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emigration with few or no potential for substitution anywhere near the population balance. Late 1980's has set Yugoslavia within the Mediterranean group of the second demographic transition's sequence (Kaa, 1987). Though, as a whole, Yugoslavia was marked by striking regional differences (Sentić 1963; Malačić 1985), as much as in a field of fertility behaviour (Rašević, 1971; Breznik, 1972; Šircelj, 1990) as in its mortality patterns (Macura, 1974; Šircelj, Ilić, 2004), or the outer migration caused by an uneven development (Vogelnic, 1965; Grečić, 1975), mostly owing to its specific historical-geographic background (Wertheimer-Baletić, 1982; Josipović, 2006a).

Regarding the total fertility rate (TFR), the post-Yugoslav space became a playground of persistently low rates throughout the region. Already in the 1980's, TFR fell below 2.1 children per woman in child-bearing age in most of the former republics and provinces (Central Serbia, Croatia, Vojvodina, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro), except in Macedonia and Kosovo (at that time one of the two autonomous provinces of Serbia). In 2015, surprisingly, Slovenia as a long-term low fertility area (below replacement level from 1981 on) scored the highest TFR (1.6) compared to the other former republics, which is still well below the replacement level. Even Kosovo, earlier renowned for its high fertility,¹ fell below the replacement level reaching historical low at 2.0 in 2015.

Twenty-five years after the collapse, the Yugoslavia's former outer and inner boundaries remained the same. With the sole exception of setting up the entities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, all former republics and regional territories have not federalized internally. Moreover, all of the republics and provinces retained their outer or inter-republic boundaries. It is henceforth relatively easy to geographically reassemble the post-Yugoslav space and render it suitable for demographic analyses, which is the pursuant aim of the article. After 1991, more problems pertain to methodological differences in census techniques and definitions of pertinent populations diachronically applied here and there.

The Yugoslav wars (1991–2001) epitomize the first decade of demographic disintegration. Horrific events from Slovenia all the way to Macedonia not only have driven hundreds of thousands out of their homes and dispossessed them, but the post-traumatic experiences caused the later evolved feelings of out-rootedness and further inclination to move, migrate, emigrate and,

¹ For decades, Kosovo had sustained very high total fertility rates. Especially after WWII it scored some of the highest total fertility rates – 7.6 in 1950 (Breznik, 1988: 205). Even in the 1970's – in 1972 – Kosovo had retained the rates around 5.6 (Breznik, 1988: 176), making the way to label such fertility behavior an “aggressive breeding” according to William Stanton (2003). In 1990 the Kosovo TFR was still twice a value needed for simple reproduction of population (3.9). After the Yugoslav wars the total fertility rates have first risen to 3.0 (in 2000) and then plummeted below 2.1 in 2015.

eventually, permanently leave (Josipovič, 2013). Wars indisputably embodied a major disruption causing the later demographic instabilities throughout the region. The aim of the article is to integrally assess the demographic changes after 1990. Once globally significant “Yugoslav demographic school” with many renowned demographers has manifestly been substituted by a new, “nation-state” oriented scholarly “traditions”. Only in recent years, especially since the last economic and financial crisis which accentuated the extant demographic problems, and somewhat reconciled the bellicose parties, more ambition is shown towards supranational joint efforts in the post-Yugoslav space.²

Natural Change in the Period 1990–2015

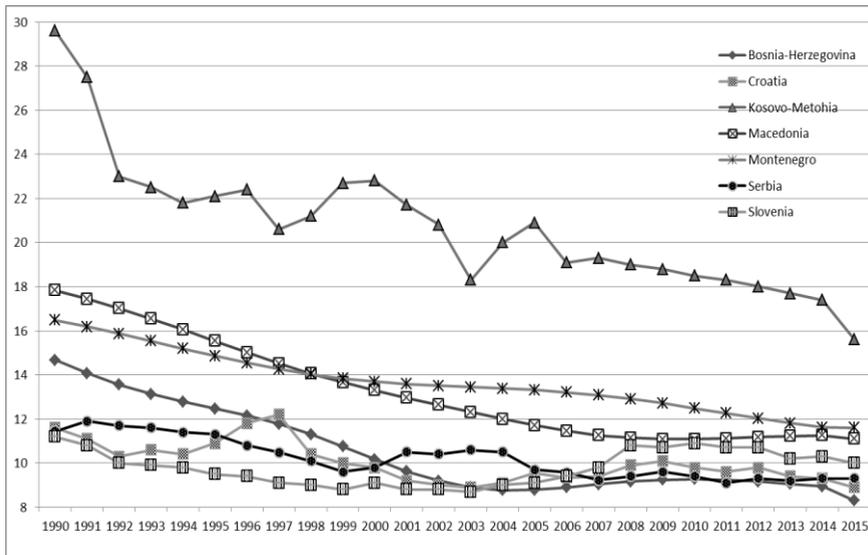
The area of former Yugoslavia reveals some striking regional differences. From 1990, when the difference between Kosovo and Slovenia amounted for almost 19 births per 1,000 inhabitants, the birth rates dramatically fell to an average of 10 births per 1000 inhabitants in 2015. Whereas Kosovo substantially reduced its birth rates from about 30 births to about 15 births per 1,000 inhabitants, other parts consolidated between 8 (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and 12 (Macedonia) births per 1,000 inhabitants. The traditional low fertility areas (Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina, and Central Serbia) became slowly accompanied by Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia; the latter three formerly used to be a part of contiguous territory of high fertility (cf. Figure 1). Though characterized with low fertility, all territories (including Kosovo-Metohia) retained regions of relatively higher fertility. Such are the northern Sanjak and Preševo valley in Serbia, the southern Sanjak and Krajina in Montenegro, Podrinje and Cazinska krajina in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Drenica in Kosovo-Metohia, Dalmatinska Zagora in Croatia, Rovtarsko and Suha krajina in Slovenia, and Polog and Reka in Macedonia (Josipovič, 2006a).

Mortality rates, as the other part in a population’s natural change binomial, show much steadier dynamics oscillating around 10 deaths per 1000 inhabitants. Here as well, the former Yugoslavia experienced quite a shift after 1990. The death rates have generally increased from 8.6 to 10.6 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2015. Compared to the birth rates, the death rates wield an inverse picture. Kosovo exercises the lowest rates below 7, while on the other extremity Serbia surpassed 14 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. Except Kosovo and Slovenia with oscillating rates between 9 and 10, the last quarter of a century marks a pronounced divergence between the countries.

² Such a welcoming event was organized by the Center for Demographic Research of the Institute of Social Sciences held symbolically in April 2016, in Belgrade, Serbia, 75 years after the bomb-shelling of the city by occupant Nazi German troops.

While Croatia (13 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants) is nearing Serbia, a new cluster comprised of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Slovenia is formed around the value of 10 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants (see Figure 2).

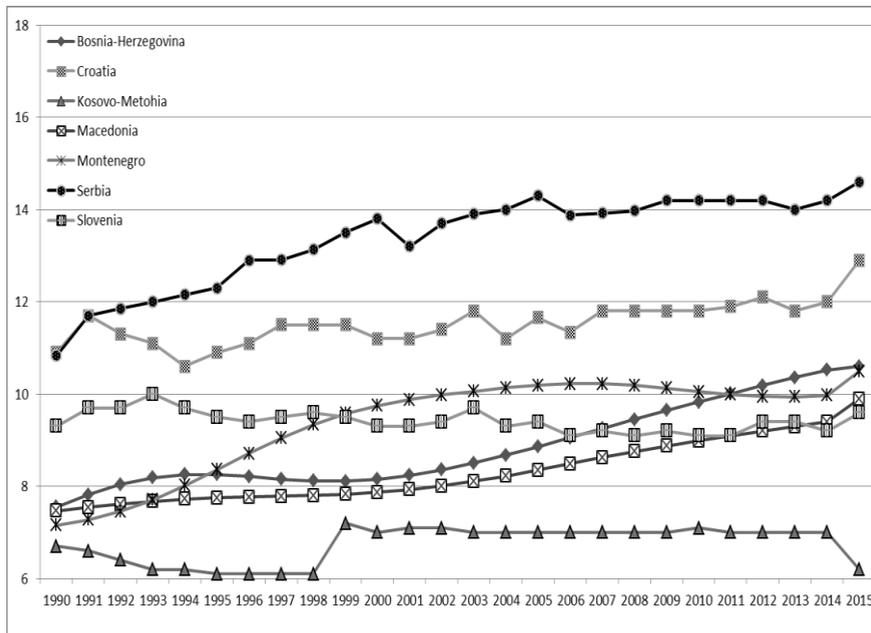
Figure 1
Crude birth-rates, per 1,000 inhabitants, Ex-Yugoslavia's successor states and territories, 1990–2015



Sources: World Bank (2016); national statistical offices (2016)

Although the birth and death rates vary significantly upon a given age structure, both represent an indicator befittingly explaining the basic demographic developments over time and are more readily available in comparison to other indicators (cf. Josipović, 2006a). Combining the two components of natural change the picture gets more apprehensible. Given the arbitrary nature of *de facto* population causing the disturbance to both, birth and death rates, the natural change is more realistic indicator of the ratio between both parameters. As almost the whole region (except Kosovo) is part of the developed phase of the second demographic transition, it is significant that the biggest underscore in the natural change is characteristic for Serbia. More than 103,000 deaths per year in 2015 are compensated only by 63 per cent, making the natural decrease rate plummeting to -5.3 per 1000 inhabitants (Figure 3).

Figure 2
Crude death-rates, per 1,000 inhabitants, Ex-Yugoslavia's successor states and territories, 1990–2015



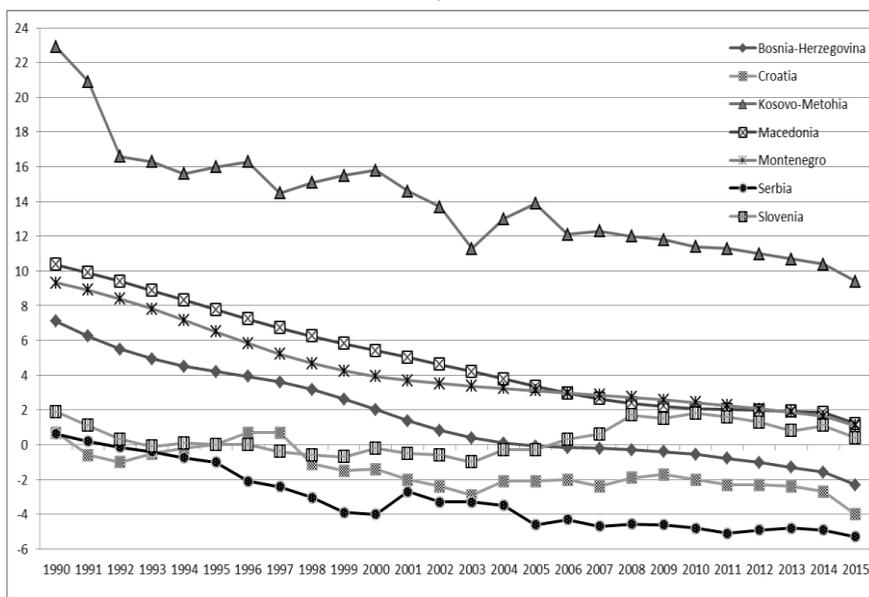
Sources: World Bank (2016); national statistical offices (2016)

On the other extremity, Kosovo birth-rates still vastly outdo the death-rates – in 2015 by almost 10 per 1,000 inhabitants. Far behind are Macedonia (1.2), Montenegro (1.1) and Slovenia (0.4); all of them experiencing slightly positive natural increase in 2015. Beside Serbia (–5.3), the negative natural increase is characterized for Croatia (–4.0) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (–2.3), making the most populated core areas of former Yugoslavia also mostly demographically destabilized and continually vulnerable.

Considering for a moment the crude numbers of births the picture gets more tangible. The most populated Serbia³ is marked by persistently high number of deaths (above 100,000 for the last 17 years) and lowering numbers of births (66,000 per year). In the period 1999–2015 Serbia had 1,748,487 deaths and only 1,205,225 births, which brings about the cumulative deficit of 539,262. Only in the last five years (2011–2015) the cumulative deficit sky-rocketed to 180,000 or 36,000 persons per year (SORS, 2016). Given the total population of 7.095 million in 2015, the yearly natural decrease is at –0.5 per cent.

³ As of 1999 the official demographic statistics of Serbia does not include data for Kosovo-Metohia. Published data refer to the sum of Central Serbia and Vojvodina.

Figure 3
Natural change, per 1,000 inhabitants, Ex-Yugoslavia's successor states and territories, 1990–2015



Sources: World Bank (2016); national statistical offices (2016)

Comparing Serbia to Croatia, with 4.204 million inhabitants the second most populated ex-Yugoslav republic, the developments are quite alike. In the 2011–2015 period, Croatia had 199,976 births (CBS, 2016a) or 40,000 per year, which is 60 per cent of those in Serbia. On the other hand, Croatia had 258,159 deaths or some 52,000 per year, which is compared to Serbia only 51 per cent. So, the total loss of 58,000 persons (12,000 or -0.3 per cent per year) is only 32 per cent of the Serbian. That posits Croatia in slightly better situation compared to Serbia, though both of them are in the process of pronounced depopulation.

Exceptionally pronounced depopulation characterizes Bosnia-Herzegovina as well. While it became an area with the lowest-low fertility (TFR 1.2 in 2010), its main demographic characteristic is enduring difference between both geo-political entities. While the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosniak-Croatian entity, FB&H) experienced a slightly positive natural change in recent years, the Republic of Srpska (Serbian entity, RS) had suffered a pronounced decrease after 2002 (cf. Pobrčić, 2015). Here, it must be stressed that the quality of data varies significantly

as both regional statistical offices reclaim the total population number.⁴ Given the apparent overestimated total population, it is plausible that Bosnia-Herzegovina is slightly better off compared to both, Croatia and Serbia.

Macedonia is one of the few parts of ex-Yugoslavia with population growth. In the recent period of 2011–2015, Macedonia averaged at 23,200 births and 19,800 deaths and some 17,000 persons or 3,400 per year increase in the period 2011–2015 (RMSSO, 2016). This ranks Macedonia right behind Kosovo.⁵

It is nevertheless important to outline the main factors creating such a gap between the birth and the death rates – especially in the case of Serbia and Croatia. When theorizing the natural decrease one should first follow the reproduction rates. As for Serbia, we have TFR skewing from 1.8 in late 1980's to above 1.4 in late 1990's then returning to 1.6 and skewing back to 1.4 and recuperating back to 1.6 in 2015. This W curve was entirely unpredicted by the preceding population projections and thus rendered results unreliable (Nikitović, 2013; Magdalenić, Vojković, 2015). So, the unexpectedly volatile TFR indicated much lesser population drop as it is witnessed from the crude rates.

Life expectancy across countries of post-Yugoslav space reveals some striking disparities with Slovenia outliving Kosovo for almost 10 years in average. While Kosovo lingers at 71 years, Slovenia exceeds 80 years. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia follow Slovenia already by a considerable margin of three years (77 years). Further afield is Montenegro (76 years) and both Serbia and Macedonia (75 years). The main cluster form countries with values between 75 and 77 years, which means that high death rates cannot be ascribed to the specific mortality rates. It is far more probable that high death rates (especially in Serbia) may be ascribed, firstly, to high emigration among younger active population allowing for variegated effects: lowering the birth rates and augmenting the death rates; and secondly, to specific social circumstances in which many older forced migrants were caught in. The case of Serbia is striking: 617,728 refugees were registered in 1996. Some 200,000 gained the Serbian citizenship and some 40,000 returned either to Bosnia-Herzegovina or to Croatia or elsewhere (Kosovo, Slovenia), so at the 2002 census 376,583 refugees were enumerated. Their number fell drastically until 2011 (277,604) mostly due to aging and consequently dying, given their age structure, but also partly through remigration (cf. Lukić, 2015).

⁴ For the censuses 1991 and 2013 comparison for Republika Srpska see: Marinković, Vranješ (2013).

⁵ For Kosovo data, see the next chapter.

Having employed the life-expectancy into the consideration, where, however, Serbia does not represent a major deviation, it became clear that the major cause of such a demographic bust is out-migration of the fertile contingent causing the volatility in TFR. With evermore volatile migration data, preventing the coherent and reliable analyses, the urge of methodological combination on various demographic factors is apparent.

Critical Emigration – The Case of Kosovo

Not only Serbia is struck by an emigration of the capable, young and active. The same processes, including the governmental neo-liberal responses causing an extensive precariat and inequalities (cf. Knuth, 2009; Standing, 2014; Piketty, 2015), accelerated during the outbreak of the last economic crisis, are to some extent noticeable in the whole post-Yugoslav space, including Slovenia, yet there in a somewhat reduced magnitude. Hence, it is once again important to stress that the presented data suffers from ever higher population ‘volatility’ which causes disturbance in data processing and, to some extent, unreliability of data. Taking Kosovo for the example, the number of births delivered by resident women in 2015 was 31,116 births, while *de facto* number of births was only 21,753 (ASK, 2016). On the contrary, the number of deaths was more stable (8,884 of formal residents compared to 8,839 *de facto* residents). Thus, the natural growth is subject to huge discrepancy: between 12,914 and 22,232 per year, depending on the status of residency. Such instability is causally related to the aforementioned migration rates. In 2015, the number of people who have moved (including the returnees and the ‘circulators’) to Kosovo was 18,862, while the number of emigrated soared to 74,434. Given the total estimated population at the end of 2015 was 1,771,604 (present or absent) residents (ASK, 2016), the share of emigrated in 2015 represented 4.2 per cent of the entire Kosovo population. The number of the present Kosovo population is henceforth highly questionable. In such a situation one may find most of the states and territories of former Yugoslavia.

However, we presume that considerable variations exist in terms of intensity of demographic processes. We, hence, have got areas of considerable total population increase, as well as vast spaces of total population decrease or even complete depopulation, contrary to the world’s development (cf. Duncan, 2001).

Definitions of Population Across the Post-Yugoslav Space

To resolve the question of total population extents across the studied area, it is of crucial significance to mutually compare the definitions of population in order to distil the data to make it comparable. The following analyses encompassed the relevant national or regional statistics, employing methodological adjustment in order to enable data comparison. Herewith, the changing definitions of population presented a special analytical problem. The so-called principle of “permanent” residence was largely replaced with the principle of “usual” residence. By way of the usual residence it was possible to single out the present population and thus to approach the analysis. The main goal was to assess the direct and indirect demographic loss within the post-Yugoslav space.

Former Yugoslavia experienced a winding road as far as the statistical methodology is concerned. Being traditionally somewhere between the East and the West, Yugoslavia benefited from both blocs, though – as historical events have ultimately shown – not without a dear cost (Josipovič, 2016). Already in the 1960s, a period of extensive guest-worker emigration predominantly to Germany and Austria occurred. The massive “guest work” led the federal statistical office to introduce changes in the census methodology. To avoid enumerating a considerable population outflow (estimated at some 5 per cent at the time), the census of 1971 included categories of the “temporary absent guest workers” and “their family members” on the basis of one’s reported permanent residence in Yugoslavia.

The 1971 census was carried out in accordance with the Act on the Census of Population and Dwellings in 1971 (ULSRS, 1970), and it recorded a number of evolving changes (Grečić, 1975). Especially after the period of intensive industrialization and the consequent ‘battue’ of farmers to the cities in the 1960s, Slovenia became the most developed part of Yugoslavia, with strong immigration from other republics. The governmentally planned immigration, however carefully hidden from public, was directed to strategically important infrastructure sites including the military, hospitals, railways, customs, police, etc.; or towards the developed urban centers, through a policy of so-called pseudo-voluntary migration (Josipovič, 2013).

The censuses of 1981 and 1991 were in line with the foundations laid out in the 1971 methodology (in terms of the principle of permanent population replacing the principle of present/absent population), and considered together with the changes in the 1974 constitution, occurred against a backdrop of continued decentralization which, with the benefit of hindsight, paved the way to the independence of various Yugoslav republics and finally the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation (Josipovič, 2015). These processes have been well observable through the ethnic aspect of internal

Yugoslav migrations and the tendency of concentrating within the republic of nominal ethnic centre (migration of Slovenes to Slovenia, Croats to Croatia, Serbs to Serbia, etc.) where the censuses of population played a crucial role. The highest negative ratio of such ethno-centric migration held Bosnia-Herzegovina with Croats and Serbs pronouncedly moving towards their own republics of the “ethnic centre” (Petrović, 1987: 136–41). In this way Bosniaks (then Muslims) were gaining ground without a significantly higher completed fertility rates as witnessed in an extreme in Kosovo-Metohia (Josipović, 2006a).

After the break-up of Yugoslavia, the publication of census results somewhat deviated from the registered population or the prognosticated number of population thru republics. The Yugoslav Statistical Yearbook published the last common data in 1990. Afterwards the central statistics disintegrated and every successor state or territory slowly started to implement the international (western) recommendations and to abide to the European standards.

In this sense, due to its dual political makeup, the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina is most intriguing. The Federal Bureau of Statistics in Bosniak-Croat Federation uses the principle of permanent residence population, where a person is considered a permanent resident if it was present in a particular place more than one year in the 2000–2015 period. On the other hand, if a person was absent from this place for more than a year (e.g. living abroad), it was excluded from permanent population. In this way, the Bosniak-Croat Federation distinguishes permanent population present in Bosnia-Herzegovina (though with statistical inconsistencies between the Federation and the Serbian entity) and permanent population living abroad. Such a distinction was first employed in 2000, following the Slovenian aperture from 1995 and the Croatian in 1999. Following the EU recommendations, the same definition is now applied in Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Kosovo.

The subsequent change, i.e. the harmonization of statistics with the European 2007 directive on the “usual residence” was, not surprisingly, first applied in Slovenia in 2008. The main difference with the 1995 definition is the principle that a usual resident may become a permanent or temporary resident upon a fulfilled term of one year factual or prospect living in a certain place within Slovenia. Serbia applied this definition in the 2011 census, following the Croatian case from 2011. In Macedonia, the agreement on the publication of the last census has not been reached, so the population data there remained assessed by various former methods and instruments.

Bosnia-Herzegovina as a country, in contrast with both of its entities, applied the “usual residence” principle during the last population census

carried out between 1 and 15 October 2013. Despite the common grounds, it differs in particular details causing significant misunderstanding between the entities in what the current population actually is. Here is the population definition by BHAS (Agency for statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina):

“In the 2013 Census, the concept of “usual residents” was applied for the first time in order to determine the total number of population. Under this concept, a person shall be considered as a resident of the place at which s/he alone (in the case of a one-person household) or with members of her/his household spends most of time, that is, daily rest, irrespective of where the person’s place of residence is registered. Therefore, the total population of a certain place includes persons who lived in that place for a continuous period of at least one year prior to the Census Critical Moment, and persons who at that particular moment lived there less than 12 months but intend to stay at that place for at least one year” (BHAS, 2016: 12).

Given that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian census applied the European recommendations on the so-called usual residence, it is of critical importance to stress that the census was primarily aimed at assessing demographic effects and consequences of the war. Hence it was worthwhile to use the principle of “usual residence”. In spite of that many of the local ethnic communities, organizations, and opinion leaders called for a sheer response of permanently or temporarily absent or displaced persons to attend the census. As a consequence, some 260,000 of enumerated persons were not counted as “usual residents”. Furthermore, additional 196,000 were problematized and disputed especially in the Serbian entity after the first book of final results has already been published by the central statistical bureau (RSIS, 2016b).

The exclusion of already enumerated persons significantly contributes to the factual lowering of Bosnian population and raises an important issue on the data quality. As for the total number of enumerated persons, the first published results in 2014 stated 3,791,991 residents of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BHAS, 2014). After a harsh debate **260,832** enumerated persons were deemed not to be permanently residing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Thus, the country’s total decreased to 3,531,159. The decrease was, however, uneven – to 2,271,853 in the Bosniak-Croat Federation (–193,000 or –9.2%) and to 1,259,306 in the Serbian entity (–68,000 or –6.2%)⁶.

As for the quality of data, it was important to enumerate persons who used to live permanently in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and who during the war emigrated or fled the country, but came back in the time of the census. Though this data can later still be used for purposes of migration analysis,

⁶ The District of Brčko was split along the ethnic lines according to the last census’ final results to enable the temporal comparison.

it is highly questionable whether it be published in one form or another. In addition, the Serbian party maintains that another 196,000 enumerated persons (of which some 60,000 or 30.6% were enumerated in RS) bear strong evidence of living permanently abroad (RSIS, 2016b). Eventually, this could further lower the total population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to as low as 3,335,000 (2,136,000 in FB&H and 1,199,000 in RS). Serbian entity (RSIS) justifies the additional decrease with the findings of the so-called ‘post-census’ carried out on the statistically representative sample of census units only 17 days after the official census. The ‘post-census’ showed as high as 11% (or 145,996 persons) decrease of the enumerated population. This points to a conclusion that the total population of RS is as low as 1,181,022 (notwithstanding the Brčko District), which is 244,000 less than the official estimated number of RS population (1,425,549 in 2013). The latter estimation “refer[s] to population whose established place of residence is in Republika Srpska” (RSIS, 2016a: 70). Subtracting 68,000, as an officially accepted first phase reduction, from the 11 % missing population from the post-census, we get additional 78,000 persons likely living abroad, and lessening the total population even more – to 1,103,022.

Prior to publication of the final results of 2013 census, RSIS published its definition of population, showing some discrepancy with the official definition of BHAS:

“Population (person) are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina **whose place of residence** is in Bosnia and Herzegovina, **regardless of them being present in BH or not at the moment of the Census**; foreign citizens with a permanent or temporary residence permit in BH, regardless of them being in BH or not at the moment of the Census, and persons without citizenship” (RSIS, 2016a: 71).

Though RSIS’s starting point is Census 2013 methodology as well, its definition of the population complicates the subsequent redress⁷ on the census’ final results put forward in the July 2016 Open letter, especially as it states that “Data on the total number of enumerated persons covers all persons for whom the Individual form (form P-1) was completed. The total number of enumerated persons is not equal to the total number of permanent residents in Republika Srpska. The number of permanent residents will be published in the final results of the Census” (RSIS, 2016a: 70).

Whatever the outcome, the analysis leads us to the conclusion that the official number of population in Bosnia-Herzegovina is overestimated by a

⁷ The redress is a part of the Open letter, issued on 4 July 2016, immediately after the publication of the Census 2013 Final results. The main argument concentrates on the changed position of the expert group for technical support from its first mission in February 2015. Then they allegedly claimed the opposite: the post-census is not an accurate method of establishing the present population (RSIS, 2016b).

large proportion. Given the official results and the redress of one of the two Bosnian entities, despite the problem of circular migration, which is not assessed in the redress, we may stipulate that the total resident population of Bosnia-Herzegovina does not exceed 3.34 million permanent inhabitants. The number 3.335 million will be used in the overall assessment of the population change from 1990 on. On the other hand, for the purposes of assessment of the changes in ethnic structure of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the official final results will be used. Though the ambitions of RS were primary oriented towards lowering the share of Bosniaks in BH (from 54% to 50%) and RS respectively, such a development substantially contributed to the assessment of realistic population loss as a result of war and ethnic cleansing after 1991.

A Gordian Knot of Bosnia-Herzegovina – The Unfinished Story

Ten years after the Dayton agreement was signed, in 2005, many have admitted it the benefit of ending the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, although have shown scepticism on the territorial and functional arrangement (Josipović, 2006). The international community, especially the five powers supervising the implementation of the agreement, maintained that the Dayton accord represents the legal setting for the refugee return since it disables the secession of any part of the country. Twenty-one years after, it may be for many reasons argued that the Dayton agreement did not entirely fulfil its mission. Apart of ending the war, we have witnessed a rather limited refugee return given some two million displaced during the 1992–1995 war. Between 1996 and November 2005 only some 454,000 refugees had returned (O’Tuathail, Dahlman, 2006). In addition to the impracticable dual territorial division among three warring parties (51 per cent to Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 49 per cent to Republika Srpska), another complication was represented in an uneven administrative division of both entities – overregulated autonomous cantons in FB&H versus centralistic RS only formally split into regions. The major commotion came with the creation of the neutral Brčko District in 2000. The district re-established the former Brčko municipality in a way to include parts of Posavski and Tuzlanski cantons of FB&H and in-between lying narrow strip called the “corridor” of RS. An important junction of north-south and west-east traffic corridors was established as a buffer zone in the eastern part of Posavina in order to prevent contiguity of RS territory on one hand and to connect the Posavski and Tuzlanski Cantons within FB&H. Notwithstanding its relatively small size (208 km² or 0.41 per cent of Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory), Brčko district is strategically created to prevent secession of RS. Its imposition in a very sensitive political geographic location in the former military corridor nourishes the latent conflict and dissatisfaction with the Dayton Accord (cf. Avioutsikii, 2006).

Many other arrangements⁸ render the agreement unable to foster the post-war social and economic recovery of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In these circumstances, it was of paramount importance to produce some reliable data to evaluate the population changes. Owing to the results of 2013 census, we are finally able to more accurately assess the changes in Bosnia-Herzegovina ethnic structure.

Table 1
Changes in the ethnic structure 1991–2013, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Entity	Total	Bosniaks	Serbs	Croats	Others
RS 2013	1.259.306	171.839	1.030.183	29.645	27.639
<i>RS 1991</i>	<i>1.593.322</i>	<i>480.072</i>	<i>896.939</i>	<i>175.220</i>	<i>41.091</i>
Diff 91/13	-334.016	-308.233	133.244	-145.575	-13.452
Change 91/13	-21%	-64%	15%	-83%	-33%
FB&H 2013	2.271.853	1.597.753	56.550	515.135	102.415
<i>FB&H 1991</i>	<i>2.783.711</i>	<i>1.532.646</i>	<i>547.445</i>	<i>630.672</i>	<i>72.948</i>
Diff 91/13	-511.858	65.107	-490.895	-115.537	29.467
Change 91/13	-18%	4%	-90%	-18%	40%
BIH 2013	3.531.159	1.769.592	1.086.733	544.780	130.054
<i>BIH 1991</i>	<i>4.377.033</i>	<i>2.012.718</i>	<i>1.444.384</i>	<i>805.892</i>	<i>114.039</i>
Diff 91/13	-845.874	-243.126	-357.651	-261.112	16.015
Change 91/13	-19%	-12%	-25%	-32%	14%
<i>Sources: FZS BIH (1994); BHAS (2016)⁹</i>					

The table compares data from both 1991 and 2013 censuses. In order to render the numbers comparable, we split the Brčko district along the ethnic lines of both censuses and allocated Serbs to RS while Bosniaks and Croats were allotted to FB&H. Otherwise the comparison of the entities according to the pre-war territory would be impossible due to splitting of a whole range of settlements along the inter-entity boundary line (cf. Marinković, Vranješ, 2013). The 1991 data on ethnicity was reduced to the three constitutional ethnic affiliations. The so-called Yugoslavs (242,682 in 1991) were proportionally split across the categories. Accordingly, we get somewhat higher numbers for 1991 but the ratio between the three remains

⁸ E.g. Inter-entity boundary line cuts through the formerly established nodal and functional regions, which is in strong in compliance with the established historical and socio-economic relations and is henceforth weakening the resilience of such an established region (cf. Paasi, 1986).

⁹ Recalculations were done by the author. Speaking of former assessments, some of them were remarkably accurate (cf. the assessment in Josipović 2006, applied in e.g. O’Tuathail, Dahlman, 2006; Jordan, 2015) in general.

the same. All other affiliations (e.g. unaffiliated, undeclared, regionally declared, non-response etc.) were compiled into the group “others”. The main finding is the huge overall population drop including the drop of all three constitutional ethnicities. The only group experiencing considerable growth are “others” partly due to statistical disappearance of the Yugoslavs. It is significant that “others” as well as the main three groups tended to concentrate within a specific entity. While Serbs concentrated in the Serbian entity, Bosniaks and “others” did so in FB&H. Lacking its own entity, Croats significantly decreased in numbers throughout the country. Relatively speaking, Croats shrank the most – for a third (–32 per cent), followed by Serbs (–25 per cent), while Bosniaks shrank for an eighth (–12 per cent). The biggest resettlement and concentration within its nominal entity was carried out by the Serb group (133,000 or 15 per cent in RS) which accrued in both numbers and percentage – from 56.3 per cent in 1991 to 81.8 per cent in 2013. The number of Croats plummeted for 83 per cent to a mere 30,000¹⁰ or 2.4 per cent in RS, while Bosniaks retained a self-sustainable number of 172,000. The ethnic structure in FB&H was not changed this drastically. Despite the Serb exodus (–491,000) to resettle in RS or eventually to move to Serbia and other European countries, some 57,000 remain in the Federation and even regained their pre-war majority in karst plateau of Western Bosnia. Bosniaks in the Federation, who represented 55.1 per cent in 1991, add up to 70.3, while Croats retained 22.7 per cent but have considerably diminished in numbers (–116,000 or –18 per cent). However, a massive population shift came about as well. While Bosniaks fled the Serb controlled territories, and settled mostly in parts to outnumber the local Croats (Tuzla, Zenica, Kakanj etc.), the latter emigrated to Croatia and EU countries or internally moved to the Croat controlled municipalities and cantons. Thus, another step against ethnic plurality was accomplished, though the ethnic cleansing for its part has not succeeded.

In order to fully understand the scope of the hidden resettlement plan, one must not exclude the bordering Croatia and Serbia from the consideration. Although atrocities and persecutions in Bosnia-Herzegovina have already started in 1992, the main trigger for a vast and definitive resettlement of population was the course of events from spring to autumn of 1995. Beginning with the Croatian military operation “Lightning” in May 1995 and breaking the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska Krajina in Western Slavonia around Pakrac, Okučani and Daruvar in Croatia, several thousands of Serbian refugees were flooding Banja Luka and pressing the local Croats to trade houses and to leave for Croatia (Nedić, 2007). In June, new Serbian

¹⁰ This number excludes Croats in Brčko District where majority of them are within the former part of FB&H.

refugees arrived from Glamoč and Grahovo, causing the final act of Croatian and Bosniak exodus from RS. Some 180,000 people from RS settled in Croatia (cf. Table 2). Massive forced emigration, topped by the massacre of Srebrenica allowed for the American support of the Croatian military operation “Storm” and the fall of Serbian Krajina (Galbraith, 2015). Thus, a new forced migration flow, this time Serbs from formerly besieged parts of Croatia, streamed to Banja Luka, and further to Belgrade and Serbia. Some 250,000 refugees thus acted as a demographical compensation for the population loss in RS.

Table 2

Immigration from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Croatia: census 2001, 2011 (000)

	2001	2011	Diff. 01/11
moved from Bosnia-Herzegovina	382	271	-111
to Croatia in 1991-2000	188	...	...
Croats	171	...	...
Bosniaks (including Muslims)	9	...	...
Other and undeclared	8	...	...
born in Bosnia-Herzegovina	457	409	-48
present in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991	202	...	...
Croats	189	...	...
Bosniaks (including Muslims)	7	...	...
Serbs	1.4	...	...
Other and undeclared	5.6	...	...
<i>Source: CBS (2016b)</i>			

According to the Serbian census data, some 129,000 moved from Croatia to Serbia. Strong immigration was reported from Bosnia-Herzegovina (70,000) as well (Table 3). While Bosnia-Herzegovina continued to demographically supply Serbia, immigration after 1998 and the peaceful reintegration of Vukovar area diminished. According to these statistics some 164,000 thousand immigrants, prevalently refugees, left Croatia for Serbia. Given the number of Serbs in Croatia (187,000) there still is a gap of 230,000 persons of the pre-war number (about 580,000). On one hand the difference may be ascribed to resettlement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to important extent, ethnic assimilation (non-response or response according to the dominant ethnicity), or emigration to the EU countries (especially Austria, Germany). Bosnia-Herzegovina contributed 118,000 emigrants to Serbia.

Table 3
Immigration to Serbia from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, census 2011

Period of immigration	Bosnia-Herzegovina (000)	Croatia (000)
1991 - 1995	71	129
1996 - 2000	19	27
2001 - 2005	15	4.7
2006 - 2010	13	3.6
<i>Source: SORS (2013)</i>		

Since the data on migration in the BH census of 2013 is not made available yet, it is very hard to assess to which degree this number attributes to former refugees from Croatian Krajina. But one is clear – a pattern of resettlement in order to further ethnically consolidate the pertinent regions. Henceforth, as a direct consequence of the war, the net “ethnic” immigration according to the standings at 2011 censuses showed some 200,000 predominantly Croats have moved to Croatia from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia (Vojvodina), and some 200,000 predominantly Serbs left Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to move to Serbia. Data also show that, along with the massive guest-work and continuing emigration, these populations are more inclined to move again, next time perhaps permanently to some of the EU countries.

The analysis of ethnic structure changes shows that Bosnia-Herzegovina had indeed suffered an ethnic cleansing which has resulted in long-term inability of reconciliation. As an unfinished story, it entreaties further activities towards a more integrative approach in order to make Bosnia-Herzegovina more functional. Though motivated and mobilized by their ethnic centers, both Serbs and Croats have massively left Bosnia-Herzegovina, making Croatia and Serbia receive additional population to their ethnic core. But once on the move, always on the move – after two decades, both Serbia and Croatia are massively losing their population. The situation is turning against the wishes of the hidden resettlement plan creators.

Towards the Synthesis

The overall demographic balance after the breakup of Yugoslavia is devastating. Table 4 (a-b) brings about the comparison between 1989–1991 period and 2015 respectively. To attune the different data across the Yugoslav republics and provinces it was necessary to employ the modal value from the period between 1989 when federal institutions had still solidly been functioning, and 1991 when disintegration stepped afore. Data for 1989 is more reliable, while the 1991 census results were produced

partly via post-census estimation of large, mainly Albanian population, who boycotted the census in Kosovo-Metohia, Preševo Valley (Central Serbia), and Macedonia (SZS, 1992).

Table 4a
Total population in the Ex-Yugoslavia space, 1989–1991

Territory	Official estimate 1989			WDI 1990	1990 - 1989	Census 1991		
	Total	present citizens	guest workers	Total	Difference in total	Total	present citizens	guest workers
Serbia	9,830,000	9,487,000	343,000	9,448,000	-382,000	9,778,991	...	...
Central Serbia	5,840,000	5,624,000	216,000	5,608,000	-232,000	5,808,906	5,606,642	202,264
Vojvodina	2,051,000	1,984,000	67,000	1,978,000	-73,000	2,013,889	1,970,195	61,797
Kosovo-Metohia	1,939,000	1,879,000	60,000	1,862,000	-77,000	1,956,196	...	...
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4,479,000	4,278,000	201,000	4,527,000	48,000	4,377,033	...	...
Montenegro	639,000	616,000	23,000	608,000	-31,000	615,035	...	...
Croatia	4,683,000	4,467,000	216,000	4,780,000	97,000	4,784,265	...	...
Macedonia	2,111,000	1,997,000	114,000	2,010,000	-101,000	2,033,964	1,936,877	97,087
Slovenia	1,948,000	1,890,000	58,000	1,998,000	50,000	1,965,986	1,913,355	52,631
EX-YUGOSLAVIA	23,690,000	22,735,000	955,000	23,371,000	-319,000	23,555,274	...	...

Sources: SZS (1990; 1991; 1992); World Bank (2016). Note: WDI - World Development Indicators.

The results of the analysis show that the direct demographic loss within the post-Yugoslav space amounted to 2.461 million inhabitants in the 1990–2015 period. The biggest loss of the total population occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina (–1.093 million or –24.7 per cent), followed by Serbia including Kosovo-Metohia (–0.938 or –9.6 per cent) – out of which Central Serbia (–0.621 or 10.7 per cent), Vojvodina (–0.141 or 6.9 per cent), and Kosovo-Metohia (–0.176 or 9.0 per cent). Similar to the absolute population loss of Central Serbia but resulting in a higher share were losses in Croatia (–0.530 million or 11.2 per cent). The total population of Montenegro (–0.005) and Macedonia (–0.002) have slightly diminished, while only in Slovenia the total population significantly accrued (0.106 or 5.4 per cent) (see Table 4b).

Slovenia, however, is also witnessing accelerating emigration of its citizens¹¹, especially from 2005 on, but the process was at first blurred by the continuing immigration of foreign citizens, with 87 per cent from the post-Yugoslav space, in the last decade especially from Bosnia (Republika Srpska) and Serbia (Josipović, 2015). The trend of emigration has

¹¹ The number of Slovenian citizens had been rising all the way from 1992, after the e-genocide of the so-called “izbrisani” (i.e. “erased”). Slovenian government secretly carried out an administrative deletion of all former Slovenian residents (about 35,000) who did not ‘timely’ apply for the Slovenian citizenship and thus express their recognition of the new Slovenian state. Most of the “erased” were Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks, but some Croats and Slovenes as well (Josipović, 2015).

pronounced as the economic crisis took its full swing in mid-2011. In a five-year period 2011–2016 Slovenia lost some 14,000 citizens (70 per cent women) through permanent emigration, while gaining 28,000 immigrants (with balanced sex ratio; 52 per cent women) making the net balance positive for about 14,000 (SI-STAT, 2016).

Table 4b

Population balance between 2015 and 1989/1991 in the Ex-Yugoslavia space

Territory	Total population NSO 2015	Differences in total population size			
		NSO 2015 - WDI 1990 (1)	NSO 2015 - NSO 1989 (2)	NSO 2015 - Census 1991 (3)	Average of (2) and (3)
Serbia	8,866,987	-581,013	-963,013	-912,004	-937,509
Central Serbia	5,203,682	-404,318	-636,318	-605,224	-620,771
Vojvodina	1,891,701	-86,299	-159,299	-122,188	-140,744
Kosovo-Metohia	1,771,604	-90,396	-167,396	-184,592	-175,994
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3,335,000	-1,192,000	-1,144,000	-1,042,033	-1,093,017
Montenegro	622,000	14,000	-17,000	6,965	-5,018
Croatia	4,203,604	-576,396	-479,396	-580,661	-530,029
Macedonia	2,070,225	60,225	-40,775	36,261	-2,257
Slovenia	2,063,077	65,077	115,077	97,091	106,084
EX-YUGOSLAVIA	21,160,893	-2,210,107	-2,529,107	-2,394,381	-2,461,744

Sources: SZS (1990; 1991; 1992); World Bank (2016).

Note: NSO - National statistical offices, WDI - World Development Indicators.

Setting aside the direct demographic loss, it is of analytical importance to assess the indirect loss as well. To estimate the extent of the indirect demographic loss together with the net loss more realistically, two conditions have to be met: first, the methodological status of non-presence of the guest workers to suite the problem of changed population definitions, and second, a demographic development according to the trends from 1980's. The latter is befittingly at hand in the Yugoslav population projections regularly produced by the federal statistical office. According to the last projection from 1990 (based on the 1981 census), with demographic trends *ceteris paribus*, Yugoslavia was projected to have 26.2 million inhabitants in 2015, which is roughly a 10 per cent growth in a 25-year period (SZS, 1991). Instead, the total population plunged to 21.161 million (Table 4b), surpassing 5 million people of the direct and the indirect demographic losses. Apart from 2.47 million of direct losses, there is arguably another 2.57 million of the population deficit through the postponed or omitted natural reproduction. On the other hand, it could be

argued that a huge number of Yugoslav citizens were already permanently (or temporarily as perceived in the official statistics) living and working abroad in the 1980's (1.06 million).¹² Deducing these migrations from the direct losses as war casualties in a 1991–2001 period,¹³ victims of persecution and forced migrations,¹⁴ pseudo-voluntary¹⁵ and other types of migration until today, the overall population loss may be reckoned at about 3.98 million people.

Conclusion

There is a wide array of studies on the recent demographic trends in countries of the South-eastern Europe, though rarely a synthetic study across countries could be found. After 25 years as Yugoslavia collapsed, a suitable opportunity to try to deal with the challenging methodological difficulties of producing such a comparative research across the former Yugoslavia space popped up. How do new developments match up with the recent demographic past?

The combined analysis showed that the whole post Yugoslav area suffered a loss of about 4 million inhabitants (or 5 million if to include about 1 million of former guest-worker population). Except from Slovenia, all countries from the Yugoslav space have lost more or less of their population. While Montenegro and Macedonia numerically stagnated the space from Sotla/Sutla to Morava Rivers lost immense share of its population. Losing a quarter (1.093 million) of its pre-war population, Bosnia-Herzegovina suffered the most, but the high loss was determined also for the neighboring Serbia and Croatia. Regarding its pre-war territory, Serbia lost almost a million or one tenth of its population, while Croatia lost

¹² According to the 1981 census 874,960 Yugoslav workers and their family members have been residing abroad (SZS, 1990). Notwithstanding, this number is underestimated and should be increased for about 185,000 Yugoslav citizens living abroad according to the national statistics of the main countries of Yugoslav immigration (Friganović, 1980; 1987). Thus, we deal with more than a million citizens (1,060,000). An historical high was registered in 1973 with 1.4 million Yugoslav “guest-workers” abroad (Friganović, 1980; 1987).

¹³ At least 150,000 death casualties in Yugoslav wars between 1991 and 1999 were reported (cf. Tabeau, 2009).

¹⁴ Based on author's compilation from UNHCR estimates (1994-2000), around 4 million inhabitants were internally or internationally temporarily or permanently displaced as a consequence of 1991–2001 wars, out of which approximately 1.765 million permanently left the area of post-Yugoslav space (mostly from Bosnia-Herzegovina (1.2 mill.), Croatia (0.270 mill.), and Kosovo-Metohia (0.295 mill.), making the Kosovo-Metohia data most controversial. Accordingly, some 0.850 million Albanians fled and some 0.750 immigrated or returned to Kosovo making the net loss of 0.1 million, adding to some 155,000 Serbs and 40,000 Roma, Croats, Gorani, Ashkali, Montenegrins etc. émigrés) (UNHCR, 2000; 2016).

¹⁵ See Josipović (2013) for more detail on the so-called pseudo-voluntary migration.

more than half a million or one ninth of its population. Only the aforementioned three countries lost more than 2.5 million. There are striking regional differences as well. The highest relative depopulation was recorded in Republika Srpska of Bosnia-Herzegovina contrary to the expectations that the Serb refugees from Croatia and elsewhere would end up there. The data confirms the thesis “once on the move – always on the move” is more than ostensive for thousands repeatedly leaving after the initial move (either or not directly caused by wars) to eventually leave for good. In this sense the Slovenian case is instructive. While still esteemed at the former Yugoslavs, nowadays, given the socio-psychological unease and economic retrenchment, Slovenia plays as a middleman for procuring the west-bound migration.

It is important to observe that the former high fertility regions are gone as well. Even the Kosovar population, renowned for its high natural population growth, is below the replacement fertility level. On the other hand, the whole post-Yugoslav area, including Slovenia, lacks an attraction for long-term immigration from third countries. Notwithstanding the impenitent racism and xenophobia, changing this will remain an arduous task yet to be consumed.

The statistical “Yugoslavs” are long-gone in some parts (e.g. 527 in Slovenia in 2002, 331 in Croatia in 2011) while still present in other parts (e.g. 23,303 in Serbia in 2011). Despite rather low percentage in populations across the late federation, a sense of affinity or nostalgia towards the former Yugoslav space is consolidating or even accruing (Debeljak, 2014). When comparing statistics on the “Yugoslavs” and the factual affinity to the Yugoslav space, a striking discrepancy may be observed. On one hand censuses bring about an extinguishing affiliation and on the other hand newly intensified relationships on various fields from economy to scholarly and scientific collaborations showing that intolerance has largely, though not completely, been overcome (cf. Sekulić et al, 2006). The wars and conflicts from the last 25 years seriously burdened the international relations, but peculiarly enough the last financial and economic crises brought together many people across the former Yugoslav space, less hampered by the troubled past.

The article presents findings from the research on the demography of former Yugoslavia after its demise as part of the Programme P0507–081 *Ethnic and Minority Studies* funded by the Slovenian Research Agency.

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Prostor bivše Jugoslavije na demografskom raskršću: 25 godina posle raspada

R e z i m e

Prostor bivše Jugoslavije 25 godina nakon raspada zajedničke države karakterizuju procesi unutar druge demografske tranzicije. S jedne strane su to varijabiliteti niskog fertiliteta i mortaliteta, a s druge procesi relativno jakog iseljavanja bez stvarnog potencijala nadoknađivanja demografskih gubitaka. U takvoj situaciji nalazi se većina država i teritorija današnjeg jugoslovenskog prostora.

Međutim, postoje značajna odstupanja u intenzivnosti osnovnih demografskih procesa. Tako, s jedne strane postoje prostori bitnog povećanja ukupnog broja stanovnika, kao što s druge strane preovlađuju prostori pražnjenja stanovništva i sveobuhvatne depopulacije. Analiza je obuhvatila nacionalne statistike država i teritorija, međusobno metodološki usklađene radi upoređivanja. Poseban analitički problem su predstavljale različite definicije stanovništva. Takozvani princip

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stalnog stanovništva zamenio je princip „uobičajenog“ prebivališta. Donekle je moguće izdvojiti prisutno stanovništvo i preko tog principa pristupiti analizi podataka.

Cilj analize je bio odrediti demografske promene jugoslovenskog prostora. Rezultati pokazuju da su demografski gubici u periodu 1990–2015 iznosili čak 5 miliona ljudi, uključujući pri tom i „gastarbajter“ *privremenu* emigraciju iz jugoslovenskog doba koja se pretvorila u trajnu emigraciju. Najveće smanjenje ukupnog broja stanovnika zadesilo je Bosnu i Hercegovinu (–1,093 miliona), zatim Srbiju (–0,94 miliona na predratnom području) i Hrvatsku (–0,53 miliona). Pored velikog dela stanovništva koji je ostao u inostranstvu, kao što su radnici na privremenom radu i njihovi porodični članovi, još od kraja osamdesetih, na ovako masovne gubitke uticali su žrtve rata i progona, a u najnovijem razdoblju – posle izbijanja svetske finansijske, te privredne krize – i pojačana emigracija usled prekarizacije tržišta rada i neo-liberalnih politika vlada. S druge strane, postoje kako područja stagnacije ili blagog pada ukupnog broja stanovnika (Makedonija i Crna Gora) tako i područja povećanja broja stanovnika. Slovenija je, uprkos promeni definicije stanovništva, jedina od zemalja bivše Jugoslavije koja je u periodu 1990–2015. uspela da poveća ukupan broj stanovnika (0,11 miliona).

Analiza, između ostalog, pokazuje i da su nastale bitne demografske promene unutar regija. Najveće relativno smanjenje broja stanovnika zabeležilo je područje Republike Srpske u Bosni i Hercegovini, koje je izgubilo 21 posto ili 0,334 miliona stanovnika.

Ključne reči: *bivša Jugoslavija, demografske promene, post-socijalizam, emigracija, depopulacija*