

ABSTRACTS OF PUBLICATIONS

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submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 4.4. Earth Sciences, scientific specialty "Economic and Social Geography" announced in State Gazette no. 86 / 15.10.2021 for the needs of the Department of Geography at the National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

B3.1 Ravnachka, A. Demographic Situation and Labour Market in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil Districts. Az-Buki National Publishing House for Education and Science at the Ministry of Education and Science, 2021, p. 216. ISBN 978-619-7065-80-0 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

In the current conditions of economic globalization and the rapidly changing international and national economic environment, achieving sustainable growth is a challenge which regions face. At the same time, the changes occurring in demographic and socio-economic processes affect regional development. The labour market is formed and functions under the influence of two main groups of factors – demographic and socio-economic.

In conditions of deepening territorial imbalances in the country, there are significant regional and local differences in the demographic and socio-economic environment, as well as in the current state of local labour markets. Complex regional studies of the demographic and economic processes, and their impact on the labour market at different territorial levels are of particular importance for the revealing and assessing those imbalances.

The main goal of this monograph is, first of all, to identify and analyze the specific features of the demographic processes in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts, and secondly – to assess the impact which demographic processes have on the labour market. The relationship between the two studied aspects of regional development has been traced and analyzed over the last decade. Special attention has been paid to the intra-regional differences at municipal level, in order to clarify the existing similarities and differences at the lowest administrative-territorial level in the country.

The criteria for selection of the study areas – Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts, are proximity and geographical location – both districts are border districts and are neighboring each other, but in the same time are quite different in demographic and socio-economic aspects.

They differ in area, population and type of settlements, which determines the specific features of their demographic and economic development.

The monograph contains five chapters, each of which presents the relevant results and analyses.

The study of the literature on the demographic situation, the labour market and their interaction, shows the different views of the authors on the problems, which are interdisciplinary in nature. In this regard, it is appropriate to use a comprehensive research approach that combines the analysis of the demographic processes and the socio-economic ones, and their combined impact on the labour market. The geographical and the system approach have also been used in the research. Their application allows precise and comprehensive identification and in-depth analysis of the regional demographic processes in spatial and temporal aspect.

For achieving the goal of the research, various methods have been used: analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, mathematical-statistical methods, graphic and cartographic methods.

For the purposes of the comparative analysis, the grades assessment method has been applied. The method represents a typology of municipalities based on parameters describing their demographic situation and another set of indicators which enable the revealing of the specifics of the labour markets. Therefore, two typologies of the municipalities in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts have been made, where three types of municipalities have been determined by each of the typologies. The use of this method allows the delineation of regional and intra-regional differences in the manifestation of the demographic processes as a factor for the state of the labour market.

In recent decades, the country has been characterized by unfavorable demographic changes, leading to a significant population loss, a high degree of depopulation and a regressive type of natural reproduction. Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts are not isolated from the ongoing negative demographic processes throughout the country, although those processes exhibit regional specifics and manifest themselves with varying intensity.

The demographic processes in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts show significant regional differences, which have their impact on shaping out the specifics of the labour force and the state of the regional and local labour markets.

Throughout the period under review, the population number in the two districts has been declining – much less in Blagoevgrad district, where the population loss is less than the national

average. The reason for that is the relatively well-preserved demographic potential of the population in Blagoevgrad district.

Birth rates in both districts are declining and are expected to drop even more in the long run. Death rates, on the other hand, are increasing, and in Kyustendil district the average annual death rate is higher than in Blagoevgrad district, which is a consequence of the highly deteriorated age structure of the population.

In both districts the values of both the natural population growth and the net migration rate are negative, and are expected to stay negative in the future. As a result, the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the labour force in both districts will keep deteriorating in the near future and in the long run as well.

Based on the comparative demographic analysis, it has been established that Blagoevgrad district has greater potential for the formation of labour force resources. The age structure of the district's population is more favorable than that of Kyustendil district. The aging of the population is much more pronounced in Kyustendil district – more than a third of the population is in the above working-age group, while the demographic replacement rate is one of the lowest in the country.

Both districts are characterized by a lower educational status of the population compared to the national average. The large share of low-educated people has a negative impact on the labour force quality and hence – on the opportunities for socio-economic development. Based on the comparative analysis between the two districts, it has been established that the population in Blagoevgrad district has a lower level of education – the share of people with higher education is lower, and that of the population of primary education is higher compared to Kyustendil district.

In order to limit the negative trends in the demographic situation in both districts, the regional demographic policy should be aimed at increasing the birth rate, stimulating immigration, developing health care and social services for the elderly, and creating conditions for a successful work-and-family reconciliation.

The ongoing transformation processes in the economic environment of the two districts over the last three decades have had a direct impact on the demographic processes and on the state of the labour market. The demographic processes largely shape the qualitative characteristics of the labour force, the employment and unemployment rates, and the sectoral structure of labour supply and demand. The sectoral structure of the districts' economies shows a growing role of the service sector in the regional gross value added, as well as for the demand of labour force and job creation. Low-tech production and low-paid labour prevails, leading to

the creation of unsustainable jobs for people with secondary or lower educational level, and to a low living standard. This trend is a serious challenge for achieving smart and sustainable economic growth in both districts.

The identified regional differences in the economic environment show that Blagoevgrad district exhibits better opportunities for economic development compared to Kyustendil district. The trends in the dynamics of a number of economic indicators in Blagoevgrad district are favorable, which in turn have a positive impact on both the labour market and the demographic processes. In Kyustendil district the values of indicators such as volume of direct foreign investments, gross value added, number of enterprises, etc.) are lower, which has a direct impact not only on the economic growth of the district, but also on the state of the labour market. Some of the most serious problems in the economic development of Kyustendil district are the low investment interest, the low competitiveness and the limited opportunities for alternative employment of the population.

In order to improve the economic situation in both districts, the main focus of the integrated regional policy should be on increasing the investment activity, the entrepreneurship, developing the potential for innovative industries, creating jobs in high-tech activities, and thus – raising the level of wages. Policies at local level must effectively promote the development of cross-border economic relations, which is a prerequisite for economic growth and stability.

The state and functioning of the labour market in both districts follow the regional trends of economic and demographic processes.

The regional labour markets during the period under review are characterized by a declining number of both employed and unemployed persons, as the reported decline in labour supply in Kyustendil district is much larger than in Blagoevgrad district. The empirical analysis shows that the labour force in Blagoevgrad district exhibits a more favorable age structure, but a lower educational level compared to Kyustendil district and the country as a whole. The deepening of the aging process, combined with the current socio-economic situation, poses new requirements for the qualification and the skills of the labour force in both districts.

In view of the emerging labour shortages and the constantly aging of the labour force, it is necessary to develop and implement measures aimed at persons outside the labour force in both districts. Those persons represent an important potential for the effective functioning of the labour market and are part of the reserves for increasing the labour supply.

Regional differences in the quantitative composition and the educational characteristics of the labour force, in combination with the local socio-economic conditions, determine the

balance (imbalance) of the labour market, as well as the territorial differentiation of employment and unemployment.

Blagoevgrad district exhibits a better economic potential, while employment opportunities are more favorable than those in Kyustendil district, although those opportunities are in low-tech industries.

Until 2019 a trend of increasing employment rates and number of job vacancies had been observed in both districts. The enterprises of the tertiary sector are of the greatest importance for employment, followed by those in the secondary and primary sectors. Regional labour markets in both districts are characterized by high demand for labour force of secondary and lower educational level. There is also a discrepancy in the number of job vacancies requiring certain profession and qualification, and the lack of potential labour force with such qualification.

The indicators for evaluation of the labour supply in the two districts exhibit similar trends – the decreasing population number, together with the population aging, had led to a labour supply decrease until 2019, after which an increase was registered, which is mainly a result of the introduced restrictive measures related to the spread of COVID-19. The labour market reacts to changes in the economic conditions. Despite the reported decline in the values of the labour supply until 2019, the labour markets in both districts are not stable. Blagoevgrad district is characterized by higher number of unemployed persons (three times higher than in Kyustendil district) and higher unemployment rate as well.

The results of the research show that there are a number of challenges that regional labour markets in both districts face. Overcoming those challenges requires a set of policies and measures aimed at: development of industrial activities whose produce is of higher added value; development of research and innovation activities; attracting investments in the field of tourism and ecological agriculture, in order to create new jobs in the peripheral municipalities that are located far from the district centers; income policy change; active inclusion of the economically inactive and the part-time employees; increasing the skills of the labour force, in order to integrate it into the labour market.

In conditions of deepening regional imbalances in the country, significant disparities in the demographic and socio-economic environment emerge, as well as in the labour markets at municipal level. In order to determine those differences, two typologies of the municipalities within the two districts have been made, resulting in three types of municipalities according to their demographic situation and three types of municipalities according to the current state of the labour market. The results of the comparative analysis between the different types of

municipalities show a deterioration of the demographic situation in all administrative-territorial units of in both districts, but with some differences – Blagoevgrad district has a larger number of municipalities with a favorable demographic environment, in contrast to Kyustendil district, where two thirds of the municipalities fall into the unfavorable demographic situation type. Improving the demographic environment in these administrative-territorial units in Kyustendil district will be very difficult if possible at all.

Regarding the persistent negative trends in the demographic processes in the municipalities of the two districts, it can be expected that in the medium term some municipalities with a transitional demographic situation will move to the unfavorable demographic situation type of administrative-territorial units.

In terms of the current state of the local labour markets, in both districts it is best in municipalities with a favorable demographic situation. The only exceptions are the municipalities of Garmen and Belitsa in Blagoevgrad district, and Bobov Dol in Kyustendil district. In both districts, with few exceptions, the labour market is most imbalanced in municipalities with an unfavorable demographic situation. The expectations in the medium term are that municipalities from the type exhibiting a moderate state of the labour market will move to the type of municipalities with an unfavorable state of the labour market. The state of the local labour markets will remain relatively stable in the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Sandanski, Gotse Delchev and Dupnitsa. In the other municipalities the demand for labour will keep decreasing.

The analysis of the demographic situation and the labour markets in Blagoevgrad and Kyustendil districts clearly outlines the regional differences and the trends of their development. The suggested typologies aimed at better revealing the territorial disproportions in the manifestation of the studied processes, could be applied as a tool for the development of targeted policies and measures for regional development.

Г7.1 Koulov, B., E. Ivanova, B. Borisova, A. Assenov, **A. Ravnachka**. GIS-based Valuation of Ecosystem Services in Mountain Regions: A Case Study of the Karlovo Municipality in Bulgaria. *One Ecosystem*, 2, Pensoft, 2017, ISSN 2367-8194 (online), DOI:10.3897/oneeco.2.e14062.

Abstract

This study aims to apply approaches, methods, and indicators from the conceptual framework of ecosystem services valuation to a real world, local level case study. It tests a GIS-based mapping and valuation of ecosystem services model in a typical mountain municipality in Bulgaria. Investigation results address opportunities, challenges and limitations in the practical application of the ecosystem services concept. They include an integrated assessment of the ecosystem services in a specific administrative territorial unit and suggest its Total Economic Value. The introduction of the term “ecosystem services dysergy” should contribute to valuation theory and practice. The study upgrades the currently available knowledge base that supports geospatial planning and sustainable development of the Karlovo Municipality and offers recommendations for improvement of the municipal ecosystem services utilization, which include identification, analysis, and visualization of hotspots and dysergy areas.

Г.7.2 Nedkov, S., K. Naydenov, **A. Ravnachka**, M. Ivanov. The new vision towards smart geography in south eastern Europe. *European Journal of Geography*, 10, 2, 2019, pp. 6-11, ISSN: 1792-1341.

Abstract

Global changes include a variety of climate transformations, as well as transformations of the ecosystems, the natural resources and the human society, which began in the 20th century and are continuing with an increasing intensity today. This leads to significant constraints on resources, climate and environmental sustainability, which are the main challenges human society is facing and has to deal with. The 21st century geography can offer science-based methods, and provide concrete solutions to overcoming such challenges. Modern geography is expected to support the development of a knowledge-based society by offering specific, "smart" spatial solutions. The works presented in this special issue demonstrate the current trends in geographical research in some countries of Southeast Europe, which are in line with the new interdisciplinary ideas, and focus on the application of advanced science in practice. Examples from Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Georgia deal with various aspects of demography, tourism and landscapes, and offer spatial solutions applicable to local and national scale.

Г8.1 **Ravnachka, A.** State and Problems of Unemployment in Blagoevgrad District during the Transition Period. *Europa XXI* 12 Central and Eastern Europe: Changing Spatial Patterns of Human Activity, 12, 2005, pp. 203-210, ISSN:1429-7132, http://rcin.org.pl/Content/3093/Wa51_13310_r2005-t12_EuropaXXI.pdf

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the unemployment in Blagoevgrad district during the period of transition to a market economy. The labour market in the district is in a state of formation and integration into the European labour market. The regional analysis was made for the period 1993-2003. The study analyzes the trends in the unemployment rate. The dynamics of the unemployment rate is positive. The specific features of the demographic, educational and professional characteristics of the registered unemployed persons have been clarified. It has been established that the share of the long-term unemployed is still high in the district. The importance of the active labour market policy implemented by the Regional Employment Service Directorate – Blagoevgrad, has also been analyzed.

Г8.2 Nikolova, M., J. Krumova, **A. Ravnachka.** Hazardous Natural Processes and Phenomena in Eastern Stara Planina Mountain. In: Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference 8-11.06.2005, "Mathematics and Natural Sciences" Vol. 2, 2, South-West University "Neofit Rilsky" Blagoevgrad, 2005, pp. 226-23, ISBN: 954-680-352-9 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

Decentralization of decision-making is important in the strengthening of organization for disaster preparedness prevention and mitigation. In respect of this there is a need to identify the municipalities at risk of natural hazards and the degree of the natural hazards pressure of their territory. The municipalities which are characterized by an accumulation of some climatic and geomorphological hazards had been divided by 3 risk classes according to the frequency and intensity of the hazards. The results show that no one of the municipal is affected by at least one hazardous phenomenon in its lowest intensity and the most affected municipalities in the Region of Eastern Stara Planina are Antonovo, Elena, Dolen Chiflik, Sliven and Zlataritsa. It is obvious that local authorities should be faced to the problem 'natural hazards'.

Г8.3 **Ravnachka, A.** Unemployment in the Rural Regions of Southwestern Bulgaria. *Problems of Geography, vol.1-2, 2006*, Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, pp. 83-89, ISSN: 0204-7209 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The labour market in the rural areas of Southwestern Bulgaria at the beginning of the 21st century is characterized by significant changes in its condition and functioning. In the first years of the study period the labour market is in a state of instability – a high unemployment rate and a low economic activity rate. This is a result of both the unfavorable demographic processes in the region and the ongoing socio-economic reforms. As a result of the implemented programs and measures, and the financial resources of the pre-accession funds, the situation on the labour market improved in the following years. The trends of change in the unemployment rate in the rural areas of Southwestern Bulgaria have been traced in the study. The paper analyzes the intra-regional differences of the labour market in the rural areas of Southwestern Bulgaria, as well as the labour market potential of the studied planning regions.

Г8.4 **Ravnachka, A.** 100 Years since the Birth of Assoc. Prof. Guncho Gunchev. Geography Training. Scientific-methodical journal, MES, year XLVII, 5, 2004, Sofia, pp. 40-47, ISSN: 0204-6849 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The paper is dedicated to the life and work of the remarkable Bulgarian geographer Guncho Gunchev. The year 2004 marks the 100th anniversary of his birth. The scientist left considerable amount of publications in the field of geography as a science. Guncho Gunchev has a significant contribution to the development of anthropogeography and geomorphology in Bulgaria. Along with his research on Bulgaria itself, Guncho Gunchev described the nature, the way of life and the culture of a number of settlements abroad too. His works are a source of rich factual material on the development of the settlement network in Bulgaria. His scientific activity includes over 120 scientific, as well as popular science publications, studies and reviews, some of which are still relevant today. Assoc. Prof. Guncho Gunchev was not only a researcher and scientist, but also a talented lecturer. For many years he taught students at the Faculty of Geology and Geography at Sofia University. He lectured in Geography of the Continents, General Ethnography, and Oceanography – subjects which were attended with great interest by the students.

Г8.5. **Ravnachka, A., M. Nikolova.** The municipalities in the Eastern Stara Planina and their Vulnerability to Hazardous Natural and Socio-Economic Processes and Phenomena. *Problems of Geography, vol. 3-4, 2007*, Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, pp.133-147, ISSN: 0204-7209 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The results from the analysis show a tendency towards a growing share of farmland in the eastern part of the study area at the expense of the municipalities of Smyadovo, Varbitsa, Omurtag, Antonovo, Kotel, Zlataritsa and Elena in the western part where the human impact, the mountain relief and the dangerous natural processes are more pronounced. The nature of hazards allow to mitigate the risk for the population and economy by investments in preventive measures and in training of the population to respond adequately when crisis occurs. Man is not only an object, suffering from hazard-related damages, but he is a subject of social and economic behavior. Therefore, the number and density of population, its educational, cultural and ethnic characteristics also have a strong influence on the activities aimed at restriction and prevention of natural and man-induced risk.

Г.8.6 Roukova P., M. Varbanov, **A. Ravnachka**. Globalisation impact on information technology services in the European Union in the pre-crisis period. *Problems of Geography, vol.1-2, 2015*, Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, pp. 12-20, ISSN: 0204-7209. http://geoproblems.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/2015_12/3_roukova_2015_12.pdf.

Abstract

The paper presents important aspects of the impact of globalization on the development of the IT sector in the European Union, during the period before the global economic crisis. As a result of globalization, many new sub-sectors and new markets are emerging in developing economies, while global consumption is growing rapidly. The increased spatial mobility of these services is accompanied by intensification of the product specialization. The EU IT sector faces the challenges of strong competition from developing economies. The subject of this study is the "computer services and software" subsector, and the paper presents the trends in their development in the EU, as well as their place in world trade in the years before the crisis. The forms of territorial organization and the development of computer services and software in Bulgaria have also been analyzed. The study shows that in the pre-crisis period, these services in the EU saw a significant development both in terms of economic indicators and in terms of employment. The EU is a world leader in computer services. The intra-regional distribution of employment shows a high spatial concentration in the leading Western European economies. Significant growth was also registered in the new member-states, which ranked third in the world in terms of outsourcing attractiveness after India and China.

Г.8.7 **Ravnachka, A.** Territorial features in the natural movement of the population in the mountainous territories of Bulgaria in the period 2001 - 2013. Proceedings of the Scientific

Conference "Geographical aspects of planning and use of the territory in the context of global change", Varshets, Bulgaria, 23.09–25.09. 2016, pp. 491-496, ISBN: 978 6199044612 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The paper examines the features and the spatial differences in the natural movement of the population in the mountainous and semi-mountainous regions of the country at the municipal level, as well as their determining factors, in the period between 2001 and 2013. The changes in the number of population have been analyzed in a comparative aspect, in the conditions of low birth rates, high death rates and high degree of population aging. In order to establish the regional differences and their gradual overcoming, the author classifies the municipalities according to the levels of birth rates, death rates and natural increase rates.

Г8.8 Cherkezova, E., G. Ilieva, N. Ilieva, St. Genchev, **A. Ravnachka**. Development a Spatial Database for Physio-Geographical Information for the Territory of Bulgaria. Proceedings Papers of the Fifth International Scientific Conference "Geographical Sciences and Education", Shumen, November 4-5, 2016. University Publishing House "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski", 2017, pp. 46-48. ISBN: 978-619-201-172-7 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

In the last decades the Geographic Information System (GIS) play an essential role in gathering, storage, analysis and visualization of spatial data and information. Their effective use depends largely on their modeling and creation of spatial database.

This article introduces the concept, logical and physical models of the created spatial database on example of the hypsometric map of Bulgaria (Scale 1: 600 000). The spatial database includes hypsometric data (elevations, contours), river network, coastline, roads, settlements and state border. A Digital Elevation Model (DEM) was created and stored in the geo-database. The geo-database allows complementarity with updated information and can be used for compiling small-scale thematic maps in GIS environment.

Г8.9 **Ravnachka, A.** Unemployment in Blagoevgrad District: status, trends and regional differences. Problems of Geography, *vol. 1-2*, 2015, Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, pp. 85-94, ISSN: 0204-7209 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

Regarding the dynamics of the unemployment rate in Blagoevgrad district, two sub-periods can be defined within the whole study period. The first one is between 2001 and 2008

when, as a result of the stabilization of the economy and the labour market, a steady trend of employment growth was detected. The second sub-period started with the emerging of the economic crisis and lasted till the end of 2011. During that period the number of registered unemployed people, as well as the unemployment rate in Blagoevgrad district, significantly increased. Serious spatial disparities in the unemployment rate exist in the district, which are being deepened by the economic and financial crisis in the country as a whole. That negative trend requests the implementation of specific measures for reduction of the regional disparities, mostly aiming at bringing investments and thus creating new jobs, as well as at boosting the education level of the population and its vocational training in fields adequate to the local economy needs.

Г8.10 N. Ilieva, B. Kazakov, S. Genchev, **A. Ravnachka**, V. Stoyanova. Application of Gis in Spatial Segregation Measurement (a Case Study of Plovdiv, Bulgaria). Proceedings 8th International Conference on Cartography and GIS, 2020, Vol. 1, Nessebar, Bulgaria, Eds: Bandrova T., Konečný M., Marinova S., 1, Bulgarian Cartographic Association, 2020, pp. 94-109. ISSN:1314-0604.

Abstract

In Bulgaria, spatial segregation is mostly related to the Roma quarters, which occupy a significant part of the urban space and thus represent a functional barrier to urban development. The paper presents the results of measuring spatial segregation in its five dimensions proposed by Massey and Denton's conceptual scheme: evenness, exposure, concentration, centralization and clustering. Specific indicators providing information on the above-mentioned dimensions of the Roma segregation in the urban area of Plovdiv have been calculated, based on official national statistical data, satellite and orthophoto images, and GIS. The proposed methodology can be used for other cities as well, making comparison and spatial analysis possible.

Г8.11 **Ravnachka A.**, B. Kazakov. The Roma on the labor market - trends, problems and perspectives (a case study of Harman Mahala – Plovdiv, Bulgaria). 6 TH Internatonal Scientific Conference Geobalcantica 2020, Geobalcancia Society – Skopje, North Macedonia, 2020, pp. 371-380. ISSN: 1857-7636, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18509/GBP.2020.42>.

Abstract

Over the past two decades the issues of social integration of Roma in Bulgaria, including their participation in the labor market, have been of growing importance to the society due to the growing number of Roma people in the country. Problems related to employment, type of

income and reduction of unemployment benefits are becoming more and more urgent. The study represents the general overall situation of the Roma on the labor market in Bulgaria on the one hand and the results from a survey at a low territorial level – a Roma quarter – which makes it possible to reveal in detail the specifics of the process of Roma integration and their way of coping with the changes in the labor market. The specific features of the various Roma communities in Bulgaria should be taken into account in the process of strategic and planning documents development, in order to achieve their main objective – to reduce regional and intra-regional disparities and social inequality. The scientific research on Roma participation in the labour market, the policies of their integration and the accompanying problems are insufficient in Bulgaria. Most of the research is general, at national level. The main reason for this is the lack of information and limitations in studying the labor force and the labor market at local level, and especially on the basis of ethnicity. The paper presents the results from a survey among 500 residents of the Roma quarter of Harman Mahala, Plovdiv, based on questionnaires and expert interviews. The study aims to reveal the participation of the Roma in the labor market in terms of scale, types of employment, attitudes towards work and last but not least – the obstacles hampering the Roma social inclusion.

Г8.12 **Ravnachka, A.** Trends in the Demographic Development of the Dabrash Karst Area of the Western Rhodopes. *Problems of Geography, vol.3*, 2020, Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, *Sofia*, pp. 187-211. ISSN:0204-7209, DOI:/doi.org/10.35101/prg-2020.3.10.

Abstract

The paper examines the trends in the demographic development of the Dabrash karst area. Those trends, in combination with the economic activity of the population, have an impact on the development of karst formations, causing various problems. The Dabrash karst area coincides geographically with the eponymous part of the Western Rhodopes, formed between the valleys of the rivers Matnitsa, Mesta and Dospat. Karst formations in Dabrash have a limited spatial development, but despite this fact, they are extremely diverse, and therefore, the area is characterized by a large number of protected areas and significant biodiversity. The paper analyzes the modern processes of depopulation, aging and migration of the population in the Dabrash karst area. The demographic and social characteristics of the population have been studied by tracking certain indicators, which enables the disclosure of a number of features that predetermine both the current demographic situation, as well as and future trends of development. The demographic situation in the area is more favorable than that of the Blagoevgrad district and the country as a whole, which is due to specific historical development

of the population, its ethnicity and religious beliefs. Nevertheless, throughout the period under review, the population of the studied area decreased, but with lower rate (relative change of the population number -9.8%) compared to those of Blagoevgrad district (-10.6%) and the country as a whole (-11.8%). A negative trend is observed in approximately 80% of the settlements in the area, which is partially due to natural population decline, but above all – to negative net migration rates. Although less pronounced, the area exhibits a processes of deterioration of the age structure of the population, which is manifested by the increase in the share of persons over 65 years of age. The most significant demographic problems are the decline in birth rates, the emigration, and the high share of population of low educational level – more than half of the population in the area exhibits primary and lower educational level, while the share of people who have never attended school is 1.2% (2011). These are processes that will have an increasing negative impact on both the demographic situation and the overall sustainable development of the area in the future. Demographic changes, in combination with poor economic development and low investment activity in the area, the use of natural resources, and the large number of protected areas attractive to tourists, are all key factors for the state and the changes in the process of karstogenesis and karst formations in the area.

Г8.13 **Ravnachka, A.**, G. Metodieva. Professor Tyanko Yordanov – Life and Creativity. Journal of the Bulgarian Geographical Society Volume 42, 2020, pp. 156–162. ISSN: 0375-5924 (Print) (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The paper is dedicated to the works of Prof. Tyanko Yordanov (1914 - 2003) - a prominent Bulgarian geographer, longtime lecturer and established researcher in the field of economic geography. Tyanko Yordanov left a lasting trace in geographical sciences with his numerous studies related to agriculture, economic regionalization of Bulgaria, problems of world economy, research in the field of local history, as well as teaching activity. Along with that, Prof. Tyanko Yordanov will remain in the history of Bulgarian geography as one of the co-founders and hosts of the popular “Atlas” Television show.

Г8.14 Gotova-Petrova, Ts., **A. Ravnachka**. The Labour Market in Blagoevgrad District in the Conditions of Economic Crisis. Proceedings Papers 28-th Scientific-Technological Session, CONTACT 2011, 28.10.2011, The interdisciplinary idea in action, Tempo, 2012, pp. 102-108, ISSN: 1313-9134 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The study of the labour market represents a complex and multifaceted problem, which is the research focus of a large number of scientists from various scientific fields - economists, sociologists, demographers, geographers, etc. Over the last two decades, the labour market in Bulgaria has been in a process of constant change, occurring in conditions of unstable and unfavorable economic environment and negative demographic impacts. At the same time, the labour market is key to the economic stability and the overall quality of life.

Г8.15 **Ravnachka, A.** Social and Economic Changes in Blagoevgrad in Connection with the integration of Bulgaria to EU. Regionality and Licality. Centre for regional studies of HAS, Pech, 2007, pp. 169-178, ISSN: 0238-2008.

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the changes in the demographic and socio-economic environment in the municipality of Blagoevgrad during the period of the country's accession to the EU. Current statistical information and data from the Department of Civil Registration and Administrative Services (DCRAS) have been used to reveal the specific processes in the socio-economic development of the municipality. The results of the study reveal the state and the problems in the socio-economic environment in Blagoevgrad municipality. Its favorable geographical position is an important prerequisite for its development. It is characterized by a more favorable demographic situation compared to other territorial units of the same administrative-territorial level in the district. The leading role in the structure of the economy is occupied by the production of food, tobacco and textile products. The level of income of the population and the poverty line in the municipality of Blagoevgrad are similar to the national average during the study period. The functions and the role of Blagoevgrad as a regional economic and educational center will continue to play a key role in the future development of the municipality.

Г8.16 Ilieva, M., P.Roukova, A.Ravnachka. Labour market in planning regions, bordering to EU. – In: Proceedings of the Scientific Conference “European future of Bulgaria and population development” 26.05.2005. Sofia, Centre of Population Studies – BAS, 2005, pp. 98-108, ISBN 954- 91728-1-3 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

The labour market in two planning regions bordering the EU - the Southwest and the South Central region – has been studied. The research was conducted within the framework of a cross-border study aiming to assess the impact of the EU enlargement on regional labour

markets under the "Employment, Regional Mobility and Entrepreneurship" project, funded by Directorate-General for Enlargement at the European Commission. The paper analyzes the intra-regional differences in the labour market, as well as its potential in the studied planning regions.

Г8.17 **Ravnachka, A.**, Sv. Ivanova. State and Problems of Labour Market in Blagoevgrad District. In: Proceedings of the Scientific Conference "European future of Bulgaria and population development" 26.05.2005. Sofia, Centre of Population Studies – BAS, 2005, pp. 129-140, ISSN: 954-91728-1-3 (in Bulgarian).

Abstract

This report analyses the state and problems of the labour market in Blagoevgrad district. Bulgaria's accession to the EU is accompanied with a difficult transition to market economy. The changes that took place in the country caused negative tendencies in the condition and functioning of the labour market. The labour market particularly in Blagoevgrad district as well as on a nationwide scale is heavily affected by social, economic and demographic factors. For that purpose investigations were conducted on the demographic situation and the economic structure of the district, the changes in the employment and unemployment level recorded in the Labour Offices and the implemented measures and national programs, aimed at increasing the employment and improving the education level.

Г9.1 Koulov, B., V. Boyadjiev, **A. Ravnachka**. The Demographic Draining of Bulgaria's Rural Area: a Gis-Aided Geospatial Analysis (1992-2017). Banski, J. (ed.) Three Decades of Transformation in the East-Central European Countryside, Springer, 2019, ISBN: 978-3-030-21236-0, DOI: 10.1007/978-3-030-21237-7_11, 22.

Abstract

The goal of this study is to diagnose the demographic situation in rural Bulgaria and analyze the impact of the last 25 years of transformations. The main proposition is that, during the post-1989 transition and its first EU membership decade, Bulgaria's rural area expanded territorially and suffered a severe demographic depletion, which led to large and widening discrepancies between the national and local/regional scales and became one of the main factors to influence the country's overall development for many decades to come. The study uses GIS-aided comparative analysis and assessment of local-level statistical information, and field monitoring to territorially identify and evaluate the rate and scale of the ongoing rural

depopulation, as well as highlight the most vulnerable regions and pinpoint the few areas of exception. The research reveals tendencies of importance to the research and administration of the Bulgarian and EU rural regions. It concludes that Bulgaria's EU membership has so far not been able to terminate the process of deep and continuing depopulation and the ensuing peripheralization of the vast majority of the local and regional administrative units in the country. The fact that the land state boundary and the mountainous areas are the most vulnerable parts of rural Bulgaria implies significant geostrategic consequences for EU's sensitive southeastern outer border.

Г9.2 **Ravnachka, A.**, B. Kazakov, N. Ilieva, K. Asenov. School segregation of the Roma ethnic group: a case study of Harman Mahala Roma quarter, Plovdiv. Smart Geography. Nedkov, S., Zhelezov, G., Ilieva, N., Nikolova, M., Koulov, B., Naydenov, K., Dimitrov, S. (Eds.), Springer, 2020, pp. 201-216. ISBN: 978-3-030-28190-8, DOI:10.1007/978-3-030-28191-5.

Abstract

School segregation among minority groups represents a serious social and educational problem in a number of countries across Europe, including Bulgaria. While in some countries this problem arises on the basis of social stratification or concerns both local minority communities and immigrant communities, in Bulgaria—as in other Eastern and Central European countries—school segregation is mainly associated with the Roma ethnic group. Education of Roma children is almost entirely provided in segregated schools located in or near the Roma quarters, regardless of the efforts by the governments to implement measures for overcoming the problem. The paper analyzes the specifics and the trends of the Roma school segregation in Bulgaria, based on the example of the Roma children from Harman Mahala quarter in the city of Plovdiv.