
THE DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN AND RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN THE REGION OF POLOG

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Abstract: The Polog region constitutes a geographical unit which, during historical processes, has become the arena of confronting different peoples and combining their material and spiritual cultures, creating a complex demographic, socio-cultural and economic ensemble.

Nature, society and the economy, as elsewhere, even in Polog's settlements are closely linked, but the exact definition of this link is a rather complex issue for both natural sciences and social sciences.

This region, in general, is researched by authors of various fields, but encountered in the absence of data on settlements in particular, we found it reasonable to address their geographic characteristics. The main purpose of this paper is to address in particular the characteristics of each settlement, which give a clear picture of this region.

One of the characteristics of the current development of settlements in the Polog region is also the change of the demographic, economic and professional structure of the population, in particular the rapid passage of a part of the population from the agricultural sector to non-agricultural activities (services).

The development of infrastructure in settlements, especially in rural areas has led to the reduction of village-city migration and the expansion and urbanization of rural settlements. The share of peasant population in the total population is high with a tendency to decrease in recent years. However, urbanization processes in the Polog region have been slower than those at the Macedonian level. All the facts show that differences in the way of life have diminished steadily, though the quality of life in rural settlements is improving slower than in urban ones.

Constant economic and social development helps to raise the level and improve the quality of life of every society and community, thus affecting the provision and growth of social welfare. If this development takes place in parallel, then it continuously affects the reduction and elimination of poverty, concrete opportunities for stability and overall and sustainable progress are offered.

Keywords: settlements, Polog, development, demographic, urban

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

In the archaeological aspect, Polog is treated as a closed area, but despite this and its small size, it has constantly communicated with the largest neighboring regions, such as the regions of Skopje, Pelagonija and so on. Archaeological excavations have revealed that in this region, the traces of human activity and settlements are 7,000 years old. Research has identified over 20 prehistoric settlements in the Polog region. Many Polog settlements, such as Oeneum, near Zhelina (Krojmir), near Brvenica, date back to the Neolithic (New Stone Age). In Zelino (Krojmir), on the peak of Çika, near the village of Rogle; in the Tetovo Castle, Leshka, Draudakum (today's Gradeci), Debresh, Çajle, Pirok, etc. the ruins of some castles have been discovered. On the shore of Mount Derven, near the banks of the Vardar River, elements of pottery, smooth bricks, tools, utensils etc. have been discovered, dating to 6,000-4,000 years. (*Skenderi, 2002*)

Today some results have been achieved in the study of the populations of this area in the past. Thus, the Neolithic period was recorded on the basis of archaeological excavations in the village of Lower Palcisht, where the Neolithic period settlement was discovered, as well as fragments of the Bronze Age, with objects of Mikenas culture, such as the bronze sword and the statue Menada. The settlements in the Polog Region have experienced major socio-economic transformations, especially during the last half of the last century. Settlements are mainly concentrated in the Polog villages, the surrounding area and Mavrovo, which have a suitable geographic position and good living conditions. As a result of various natural, historical and socio-economic conditions, two towns and 183 rural settlements have been formed in Polog, which differ from position, size, appearance, functions etc. Urban population has been very dynamic after the WWI. However, in contrast to the post-war period, when urbanization was at a very low level (20.5%), after 1961 the pace was accelerated and, in 1981, this process developed at faster rates than the average state rate. However, Polog region remains with the lowest percentage of the urban population (34.26%) in Macedonia.

Table 1. Urban population in relation to the general population (1953-2002).

N.r.	Urban population in relation to the general population						
		1953	1961	1971	1981	1994	2002
1.	Macedonia	31,3	38,6	48,8	53,9	59,8	62.47
2.	Polog	20,5	23,8	28,0	28,2	32,6	34.26
3.	Tetovo	21,7	24,2	27,2	28,7	29,2	35.70
4.	Gostivar	18,2	23,1	29,1	27,4	27,9	32.10

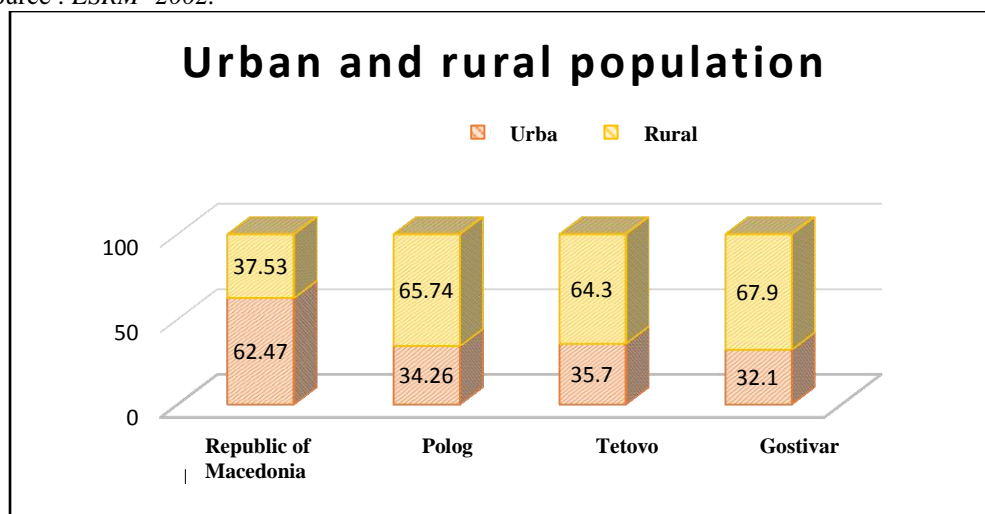
Source : *ESRM, 1953-2002.*

The high natural increase of the population influenced the acceleration of urbanization . But in this process, industrialization, deagrarization and migration have also played an important role. Too fast urbanization is the result of the rural exodus. The fastest pace in Polog is not only the result of the high natural increase of the population but also of the inclusion in the urban areas of Tetovo and Gostivar in some suburban neighborhoods. The urban population in Polog in 1981-2002 has increased from 28.2% to 34.26%. In the municipality of Tetovo, the urban population increased from 28.7% in 1981 to 35.70% in 2002, while in Gostivar, from 27.4% to 32.10% in 2002 .

Table 2. Urban and rural population in Polog (2002).

N.r.		Total	Urban	Rural
1.	R. of.Macedonia	2.022.547	1.263.642	758.905
2.	Polog	304.125	88.762	215.363
3.	Tetovo	189.066	52.915	136.151
4.	Gostivar	115.059	35.847	79.212
		Structure %		
1.	R. of.Macedonia	100	62.47	37.53
2.	Polog	100	34.26	65.74
3.	Tetovo	100	35.70	64.30
4.	Gostivar	100	32.10	67.90

Source : *ESRM -2002.*



Graphic 1. Urban and rural population (2002).

Rural settlements represent a real mosaic, in rapid change especially after 1990, when some remote mountainous villages began to populate at fast pace, others with better position and conditions than the first ones remained almost unchanged and some others, besides important traffic roads and urban centers, recognized growth of the population and the surface, development of the economy, infrastructure, etc. Special interest is the time, conditions and factors that have influenced the formation of the villages and their evolution, demographic and spatial development. In the formation and development of Polog settlements, a number of factors have influenced: relief, climate and water resources, lands, socio-economic conditions, opportunities for communication etc. (*Skenderi, 2000*)

Table 3. The number, density for 100 km² and the average surface of villages in R.Macedonia and the region of Polog (2002).

No	Municipalities	Surface km ²	Villages	Villages/100 km ²	Surface/ village
1.	Jegunovce	173.60	17	9.8	10.2
2.	Tearce	136.20	13	9.5	10.5
3.	Tetovo	264.80	20	7.5	12.8
4.	Zelino (Krojmiri)	201.00	18	8.9	11.1
5.	Bogovinje	140.50	14	9.8	9.3
6.	Brvenica	162.60	10	6.2	16.4
7.	Vrapciste	185.10	15	8.1	10.5
8.	Gostivar	408.50	35	8.4	12.5
9.	Mavrovo&Rostushe	655.00	41	6.2	15.2
10.	Polog	2.417	183	7.6	12.1 km ²
	Macedonia	25.713	1645	6.4	15, 4 km ²

Source: (The municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia, 2006).

In the Polog Region there are 183 settlements or 9.3% of Macedonia's settlements, out of 1644 total. At a country level, every 100 km² there are 6.4 settlements, while in Polog 7.6. By way of settlements and neighborhood densities, rural settlements in the Polog Region are of a concentrated and dispersed type, but the first type is predominant.

Depending on the relief, rural settlements in Polog are classified as: plains, hills and mountains. The majority of rural settlements are located in flat territories, out of 183 villages, 110 are field (60%). Some of them have taken the view of the towns, while mountainous and hilly villages develop spontaneously or no longer develop. Villages in the hills make 57 or 31.2% of the total (close to the state average of 39%). Mountain villages make up 9% of the settlements in the region.

Table 4. Classification of villages according to the relief in the Polog Region (2002).

Nr.	Municipalities	Number of villages	The type of villages					
			Field	%	Hill	%	Mountain	%
1.	Jegunovce	17	12	70.6	5	29,4	/	/
2.	Tearce	13	9	69,2	4	30,8	/	/
3.	Tetovo	20	10	50	6	30	4	20
4.	Zelino (Krojmiri)	18	14	77,8	4	22,2	/	/
5.	Bogovinje	14	8	57	3	21,4	3	21,4
6.	Brvenica	10	9	90	/	/	1	10
7.	Vrapciste	15	11	73,3	4	26,6	/	/
8.	Gostivar	35	22	62,9	9	25,7	4	9,7
9.	Mavrovo&Rostushe	41	15	36,6	22	31	4	8,7
10.	Polog	183	110	60.1	57	31.2	16	8.7
	Macedonia	1664	683	42.4	632	39.2	295	18.4

Source: (The municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia, 2006).

Polog villages vary according to the number of inhabitants. Those with less than 300 inhabitants make up about 30% of the villages, while in Macedonia they account for over 60%. Settlements over 800 inhabitants are 85 and make up 46% of the villages. (Selmani, 2006)

Table 5. Distribution of villages by altitude in the Polog Region (2002).

Nr.	Municipalities	Number of villages	Altitude					
			Under 500m	%	501-1000 m	%	> 1000m	%
1.	Jegunovce	17	11	64,7	6	35,3	0	/
2.	Tearce	13	0	/	12	92,3	1	7,7
3.	Tetovo	20	5	25.0	8	40.0	7	35.0
4.	Zelino (Krojmiri)	18	6	33,3	11	61,1	1	5,5

5.	Bogovinje	14	2	14,2	9	64,2	3	21.4
6.	Brvenica	10	4	40.0	5	50.0	1	10.0
7.	Vrapciste	15	-	0	13	86,6	2	13.4
8.	Gostivar	35	2	5,7	27	77,1	5	14.3
9.	Mavrovo&Rostush e	41	-	-	-	59,0	25	61.0
10.	Polog	183	30	16,4	107	58,0	45	24,6
	Macedonia	1664	516	31,4	949	57,8	179	10.8

Source: (The municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia, 2006).

Polog region is characterized by the small percentage of villages with an altitude of up to 500m (only 16.4%) and their large concentration at 501-1000m (58%). This shows that most rural settlements extend to 1000m.

The majority (65%) of the population of Polog Region is rural. The dynamics of rural population in Polog are a rare example compared to other regions of Macedonia. The rural population in Polog in 2002 accounted for 65.74% (64.30% in Lower Polog and 67.90% in Upper Polog).

Recently, rural exodus and population deagrarization are taking place in rural Polog. According to 2002 data, 10 villages have been depopulated in Polog (6 in the municipality of Gostivar and 4 in Tetovo). Based on the number of processes and demographic processes, it is expected that 10 villages will be dismantled in the near future. The most vulnerable are the villages of the Mavrovo area and the remote mountain areas of Sharr.

Interest is also the analysis of rural settlements located within a 5 km radius of urban centers. There are 14 such around Tetovo, and around Gostivar 12 villages. (Hamiti, 2013).

Table 6. Rural settlements with decrease in the number of population .

Nr.	Settlement	1953	1961	1971	1981	1994	2002
1.	Sellca Kec	275	263	328	416	308	212
2.	Vratnica	1 387	1 384	1 579	1 710	572	505
3.	Belovisht	888	809	825	852	316	311
4.	Rogačevo	563	574	554	572	353	347
5.	Starasello	428	424	454	537	230	217
6.	Llukavic	374	369	238	90	37	47
7.	Upper Leshnica	384	390	407	271	242	189
8.	Jellovjane	1 0647	687	743	897	719	599
9.	Urvic	1 027	770	747	830	811	756
10.	Brezna	478	295	67	13	2	8
11.	Varvara	239	199	54	21	7	-
12.	Jelloshnik	234	37	18	-	-	-
13.	Lesok	915	785	718	667	399	440
14.	Prce	269	370	109	-	-	27
15.	Jedoarce	56	37	13	9	11	5
16.	Otuj	177	78	29	10	-	-
17.	Setola	100	27	9	12	7	2

Source: *ESRM -1953-2002.*

SUMMARY

The Polog region lies in the northwestern part of the Republic of Macedonia. The region in the north and northwest is bordered with Kosovo, west of Albania, in the east with the Skopje region, and in the South and the Southeast with the southwestern region. The region lies between the Sharr Mountains in the NorthEast, the Korab Mountain Range in the west, the Suva Gora Range in east, Mount Bistra in the south and Mount Zheden (Derven) in Northeast, with distinct morphological contrasts between them and with very distinctive natural boundaries.

In the aforementioned borders, the region has a total area of about 2417 km², covering 183 settlements, while the altitude ranges from 385m (Raotine to NorthEast) to 2764m (Korab peak in NorthWest) and, in relation to the relief format settlements, we classify settlements: field - 110 settlements, hilly - 57 settlements and mountain - 16 settlements. The aforementioned conditions of relief and climate of these settlements have also determined a significant plant property with vertical, also prominent, zonality, represented by the herd of oaks, alps and alpine

pastures. All of the natural resources have created very favorable conditions for the economic development of the settlements, because the region lies in the passageways between the eastern and western and southern parts, providing links to the Adriatic and Aegean. Of course, the main roadway is Macedonia's western freeway: Skopje-Tetovo-Gostivar. This highway is one of the key segments of Corridor VIII, passing through Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria, opening up a secure perspective for transport and communication of the region with other regions of Macedonia and beyond. It is the geological, geomorphological, economic values of natural resources and the strategic values of the geographic position of the settlements in the region, which form the basis for undertaking demographic, social and economic studies of settlements. Polog settlements and their development in time and space have experienced great transformations. Traces of human activity and settlements in the Polog region are of a period of about 7,000 years. According to archaeological research, more than 20 pre-historic settlements have been identified in the Polog region. Settlements in the Polog Region have experienced major socio-economic transformations, especially during the last half of the last century. The settlements are mainly concentrated in Polog / Polog area, the surrounding area and Mavrovo. In the Polog Region there are 183 settlements or 9.3% of Macedonia's settlements, out of 1644 total, where at country level, every 100 km² are located 6.4 settlements, while in Polog 7,6 settlements. Analyzing the urban population, it has been very dynamic right after WWII. However, in contrast to the post-war period, when urbanization was at a very low level (20.5%), after 1961 the pace accelerated and in the period 1981-2002 increased from 28.2% to 34.26%.

Generally, data on post-WWII records show that during the period 1948-2015, the region's population has increased from 1.15 million to over 2.07 million, while Polog from 144,000 to 320,299 residents in 2015. This is explained by the much higher rates of natural increase during the period 1961-1994 and with some improvement in the socio-economic situation in Yugoslavia at that time.

The population in the Polog region is distinguished by the higher density of population in the flat part of the Polog Mountains (Lower Polog), where more than 80% of the population and less density in the mountainous areas are concentrated. In 2015, the population density of Macedonia was about 80.5 inhabitants / km², while in the Polog region 132 inhabitants / km² or 51.5 inhabitants / km² greater. Compared to 1948, the population density in Polog has risen about 2.2 times, while at the state level about 1.8 times.

However, it should be concluded that some parts of the rural area and settlements are of great agrarian importance, which is one of the specific problems, as the population in correlation with the size of working land and land is no longer able to ensure the existence only from agricultural activity, but in countries with a high agricultural density, other non-farm activities should also be developed. Analyzing all the demographic parameters recently, we see rural exodus and population deagrarianization in the rural Polog area. According to 2002 data, 10 villages have been depopulated in Polog (6 in the municipality of Gostivar and 4 in Tetovo).

Finally, let's conclude, not to mention our concerns about the depopulation of the settlements of this region, which would have the greatest attention of the state, an infrastructure that would meet the needs of the inhabitants and the beauties and natural resources that there would be very suitable places for housing and the development of mountain tourism, where new jobs for the inhabitants would be opened. However, unfortunately, facing the reality, the harsh living conditions, the lack of infrastructure in mountainous settlements, and not seeing a prospect in those settlements, the largest population is migrating, especially their workforce.

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