

## **CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND URBAN PROBLEMS IN THE DANUBIAN DOBRUDZHA (REGION BULGARIA)**

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***Abstract:** The administrative units in Dobrudzha in Bulgarian part of the Danube are municipalities of Silistra and Tutrakan. The demographic crisis is a very negative fact in Bulgaria. The article examines the contemporary situation in this part of the country. It researches the trend of decreasing number of population, the reasons and the trends in the future. The decreasing number of children in schools is pointed out. An attempt has made to highlight the specific problems for this part in the country through a comparative analysis. The author describes the reasons for these trends.*

***Keywords:** population, urban, Danubian Dobrudzha, problems, trends*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Territorial range**

Danubian Dobrudzha in Northern part of Bulgarian territory comprises Tutrakan, Glavinitsa, Sitovo and Silistra municipalities. The Southern and Western boundary is disputed but it considers all territory of Silistra municipalities and mostly of Tutrakan municipality goes into the range of Bulgarian part of Danube Dobrudzha. With them are Glavinitsa and Sitovo municipalities with outlet on the Danube River. Without details this area border with Ludogorie (Deliorman – in Turkish language). And the border between them passes through Tutrakan municipality Southern Staro selo village, alongside Kolofapa gorge encircle Tutracanian forest plateau Boblata, then passes Northern from Shumentsi village through Dabtaka gorge continue on Elbasan hill between Antimovo and Tsarev dol and then through Bogdantsi and Zefirovo villages alongside the road Tutrakan – Silistra through Kolarovo and Nova Dolina villages after this passes the land of Polyana village, the border goes down to Sitovo village (Iliev, 2007).

We describe this border but for the aim of this research we have to take in mind the real area borders of municipalities. How this can be subjective for an ethnographic and natural geographic detached territory? This is in respect of use and the right interpretation statistics data for the population and the settlements in this part of Bulgaria. In this meaning even it isn't comprise the whole territories of Tutrakan, Glavnitsa and Sitovo municipalities we will analyze the present statistics data for whole their territories.

## METHODS AND DATA

In the four municipalities of Silistra region which have outlet on the Danube river in 2013 lived 79 967 people (Table 1). The biggest and populated is Silistra municipality with near 50 000 people. This is almost 62 % from the whole population in Danubian municipalities. This presence a big concentration of people in regional center. Two of every three citizens live in this municipality. The poorest populated municipality is Sitovo with around 5000 people.

Table 1. Population in Danubian municipalities for the period 2001 – 2013

Municipality	Total (people)		In towns (people)		In villages (people)	
	2001	2013	2001	2013	2001	2013
Tutrakan	19152	14780	10322	8373	8830	6407
Glavnitsa	13743	10553	2087	1521	11656	9032
Sitovo	6740	5197	-	-	6740	5197
Silistra	61294	49437	41597	34216	19697	15221
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100929</b>	<b>79967</b>	<b>54006</b>	<b>44110</b>	<b>46923</b>	<b>35857</b>

Source: NSI

It is interest in demographic aspect Sitovo municipality - 100 % of its population lives in villages which means - the municipal center is a village. In distribution of population in towns and villages has an interesting trend. The quota of urban population (so called level of urbanization) in the researched area is at least 55 %! Here we can mention that the average level of urbanization in Bulgaria in 2013 is 73 % - the quota of the urban population. Danubian municipalities give a essential response with this trend.

From one side its due of entirely village municipality, but at all its influence with population 5200 people is not essential.

In Table 1 we can see Glavnitsa municipality has very small quota of its urban population- only 11 %. Over 9 000 people live in villages. The urban level in this researched territory is on the average

one for the country in 60s of 20th century. Only Silistra municipality has index near to the average one for the country- in 2013 the urban level was 68%

If proposed for analysis demographic data are examined in comparable principle for a longer period, then appear interesting trends. In comparable aspect in the period 2001- 2013 obviously the population greatly decreases. In the researched municipalities from 100 000 people in 2001 has decreased to under 80 000 people in 2013 – reduction in 20 % (Penerliev, 2013). This trend is higher than the average one for the country. For the researched period the population of country decreases with around 8 %. There in Danubian Dobrudzha the trend of depopulation is greatly represented. In regional plan, on municipality level this trend is permanent. Interesting coincidence has in the quota of decreasing population in the municipalities with outlet on Danube. Tutrakan, Sitovo, Glavinitsa municipalities have decreased their population exactly with 23 % each. Silistra municipality also follows this trend with 20 % reduction. In fact the conclusion is that all researched municipalities have depopulated faster to average rates in country.

The examination actual process of depopulation in towns and villages shows a sequence of negative trends. For example in period 2001 – 2013 if in Bulgarian towns have lost their population in 3.3 % in these researched municipalities this quota was 21 %. This process of urban depopulation is with extreme negative parameters even according EU scale. Some more: Glavinitsa municipality has decreased its town population for the aforesaid period with over 27 %. Silistra municipality also has lost (as the biggest and most economic developed among all) with 17 %. Obviously the problems of the towns in these municipalities are bigger than the other ones. In analysis of village depopulation essential response with the average indexes are not represented. With average rate in Bulgaria of the village depopulation 19 % for the period 2001 – 2013, for villages of Danubian municipalities is around 24%. Tutrakan municipality is the first one with this index 27 % (Table 1).

### **Where are hidden the reasons? Primary analysis**

The extremely negative trends which we mark above they need detailed analysis. With use of the regional approach we have searched the differences and similarities in demographic development. The demographic crisis in the country affects all regions. Still in Danubian Dobrudzha have to search those particularities of the territory which lead to this result.

One of the main indexes characterized the level of economic development and potential is unemployment. At the end of 2013: Glavinitsa municipality- 41,3 %, Sitovo municipality – 24,8%, Tutrakan municipality – 18,4 % and Silistra municipality – 11,3 % have levels of unemployment over the average one for the country. For whole Silistra region divided on their educational status in the total number of unemployed people predominates these ones with primary and elementary education which quota is 51 %, people with secondary education 42 % and these ones with university education – 7 %. The division in age groups preserve the quota of unemployed people age over 50 years old - 40 %, next group 30 to 49 years – 44 % and the youth group till 29 years – 16 % (Employment agency). But if the unemployment is a consequence, the real reason for this negative trend has to clear up.

If we see on settlement structures in researched municipalities there are some characteristics. There are only three towns – Silistra, Tutrakan and Glavinitsa from 69 settlements in four municipalities. If we check with the statistics ([www.nsi.bg](http://www.nsi.bg)) we can see in the first three months of 2014 unemployment in towns is 11 % and in villages is 20 %. It's no need analysis. In rural territories of these four Dunabean municipalities the population has less opportunity for work. This fact discourages the people and they try to make living in other regions in the country and abroad. There are leak of these enterprises of manufacturing industry on which base the agricultural recourses create workload. As Petrov (2013) mentions:

*“... even in towns like Silistra and Tutrakan have possibilities for building food factories this isn't done ...”*

There isn't clear strategy for building mill bases in respect of this – Dobrudzha is Bulgarian granary. If we examine another indicator – the average population density (in people/sq.km). It can characterize the demographic potential of territory. Implementing the regional approach we examine this index on municipal level. With average density for Bulgaria - 65 people/sq.km the differences there are more striking! The average density in Sitovo municipality is only 19,1 people/ sq.km, in Glavinitsa municipality is 21,9 people/ sq.km and in Tutrakan municipality is 33 people/ sq.km. These municipalities have lower indexes. The process of depopulation is obvious. We consider about the fact these municipalities are rural and in Bulgarian villages live only 1.9 million people. Obviously in respect of the only three towns the low

average density is not surprising. But it is a threat for future social – economic development of the territory.

In the research of population in settlements we can outline potential settlement centers for a future development. In Danubian Dobrudzha municipalities have only 15 villages with population under 100 people. In national plan this is good index. These villages suppose to have no future in respect of there live people in pension age. On the other side there are villages with population over 500 people. Even according Bulgarian standards these are big villages. They are 24. Eight in Glavinitsa municipality, seven in Tutrakan municipality, six in Silistra municipality and four in Sitovo municipality. In fact for the country predominant are villages with population under 200 people. There the villages on this index are bigger which from one side gives potential for future demographic planning. Is that true?

Table 2 Educational centers (by type) in the villages in Danubian Dobrudzha municipalities (Except municipality centres)

Village		School	Nursery school	Population /number of people/
Silistra municipality	Bradvari	•		1008
	Prof. ishirkovo	•	•	1097
	Kalipetrovo	•	•	4387
	Idemir		•	6571
Glavinitsa municipality	Zefirovo	•	•	918
	Listets	•		579
	Sokol	•		357
	Stefan Karadja	•		1009
	Kalugerene		•	561
	Zebil		•	677
Sitovo municipality	Dobrotitsa	•		441
	Iskra	•	•	1961
Tutrakan municipality	Varnentsi	•		349
	Tsar Samuil	•		1362
	Nova Cherna	•		1698

Source: MUS, Population data from CSS – 15.06.2014

Their demographic future is definite by present number of educational centers in them. In Glavinitsa municipality and its eight villages with population over 500 people have six educational centers. In four villages have primary schools and in three ones have nursery schools. Only in Zafirovo village have both educational centers. This is one of the biggest villages with population of 918 people (June 2014). In fact the biggest village Stefan Karadja hasn't educational center. In this municipality the number of new - borns are 103. The common analysis of Table 2 shows that nowhere in the villages have secondary schools. The educational centers are till 8 grades which show their demographic potential. Even more, they shelter children from near villages who travel by bus. The smallest village Varnentsi with around 300 people have educational center. Confusing fact is the less number nursery schools toward primary schools. It points highly reduced birth – rate and small quote of the group of 7 years children. The enviable position is in Tutrakan – there is only one nursery school in town municipality center.

It's the fact that in bigger villages functioning educational centers. Their territorial location toward the municipality center as and among them also have geographical aspect. For example Idemir village is the biggest village in Bulgaria but there isn't school. It is because its location – near to Silistra.

We examine the villages in context of educational network and we can conclude a primary conclusion. Where have educational centers there have favorable perspectives. In these centers we have to direct the efforts to hold the youth. It have to find active variants for a contemporary pro- analytic politics – financial stimuli, work load and concentration of manufacturing industry.

## CONCLUSIONS

Even it is short the scope of the main demographic processes in Danubean Dobrudzha **municipalities represents** highly negative trends. They are in the following:

- Predominating of village population
- Small quota of towns ( only three towns)
- Low birth - rate and low average habitant density
- Low number educational centers and lack of secondary schools

It has to be analyzed and prognoses:

- Geographical location of villages with educational centers
- The educational centers and their functioning in settlements located on equal distances from municipality center as and the villages give students for the educational center
- It will pointed centers (villages) with demographic effect. These ones with educational centers.
- In this villages have to stimulate the economic in respect of decreasing migration.

This has to be executed with use of whole theoretic – methodological power of Geographical science I respect of its practical character and to be near with people.

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