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Changes in socio-demographic indicators of the northern region of Transnistria

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Abstract

The wealth of any state is not only natural resources or material and cultural values, although they are undoubtedly important, but above all the people who inhabit it. Nowadays the problems of demography are becoming relevant for various spheres of public life. The current demographic situation in Pridnestrovian is very complex and is conditioned by a demographic crisis. This situation has developed under the influence of political, socio-economic processes in the Transnistria, as well as the demographic processes that have taken place in the previous two decades. The demographic problem of Transnistria reflects most sharply such negative trends as: "depopulation", "population aging". For our state, the demographic problem is one of the most important, so the solution of this problem should be given priority along with other problems. Demographic research is very actual, it is necessary for developing a correct demographic policy in the state, assessing labor resources and planning the number of jobs, establishing the relationship between the population and socio-economic development; understanding that the demographic problem is a consequence of the political, economic, social problems that have accumulated in the republic, and only their comprehensive solution can improve the situation.

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Keywords

Demography, population, economic security of the state, agrarian regions, market economy, state support.

Introduction

The economy of the northern region has been developed in the absence of government experience in managing the economy on a national level, as well as in the conditions of non-recognition of Transnistria as a subject of international law. The presence of large industrial enterprises, their achievements are lulled the vigilance of the leadership to the problems of the economy.

Demographic processes are the object of study of representatives of various sciences (sociologists, demographers, economists, political scientists, regional studies, ethnologists, etc.). Particularly, the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study of demographic politician are presented in the works of Burla M.P., Fomenko V.G., Krivenko A.V. and others.

The main part

In this article, the author tried to reveal the essence of modern demographic processes in the state, identify the main problems and outline the prospects for demographic development, and also try to analyze and choose the most appropriate ways out of the demographic crisis.

All this led to the loss of control over the activities of enterprises, and subsequently to their complete liquidation. In the Rybnitsa region, a knitwear factory, a pump plant and a number of other significant enterprises ceased to exist.

Since 1995, the most destructive policy for the economy of Transnistria was launched to eliminate collective farms. All this led to the complete liquidation of the construction and transport industries, as well as food industry enterprises - a sugar factory, a meat processing plant, a dairy plant, RCP-8. The Kamenka cannery all these years was on the verge of survival. Probably new organizational changes (2021) will contribute to the preservation of the most important enterprise for the northern region, which will give a chance the employable people living in the villages of the region to be engaged as in the process of growing and harvesting crops as in its processing at the enterprise.

The current situation in the economy of the northern region of Transnistria negatively affected the demographic situation and the migration of the population from the countryside to the city, which further exacerbated the problem of employment.

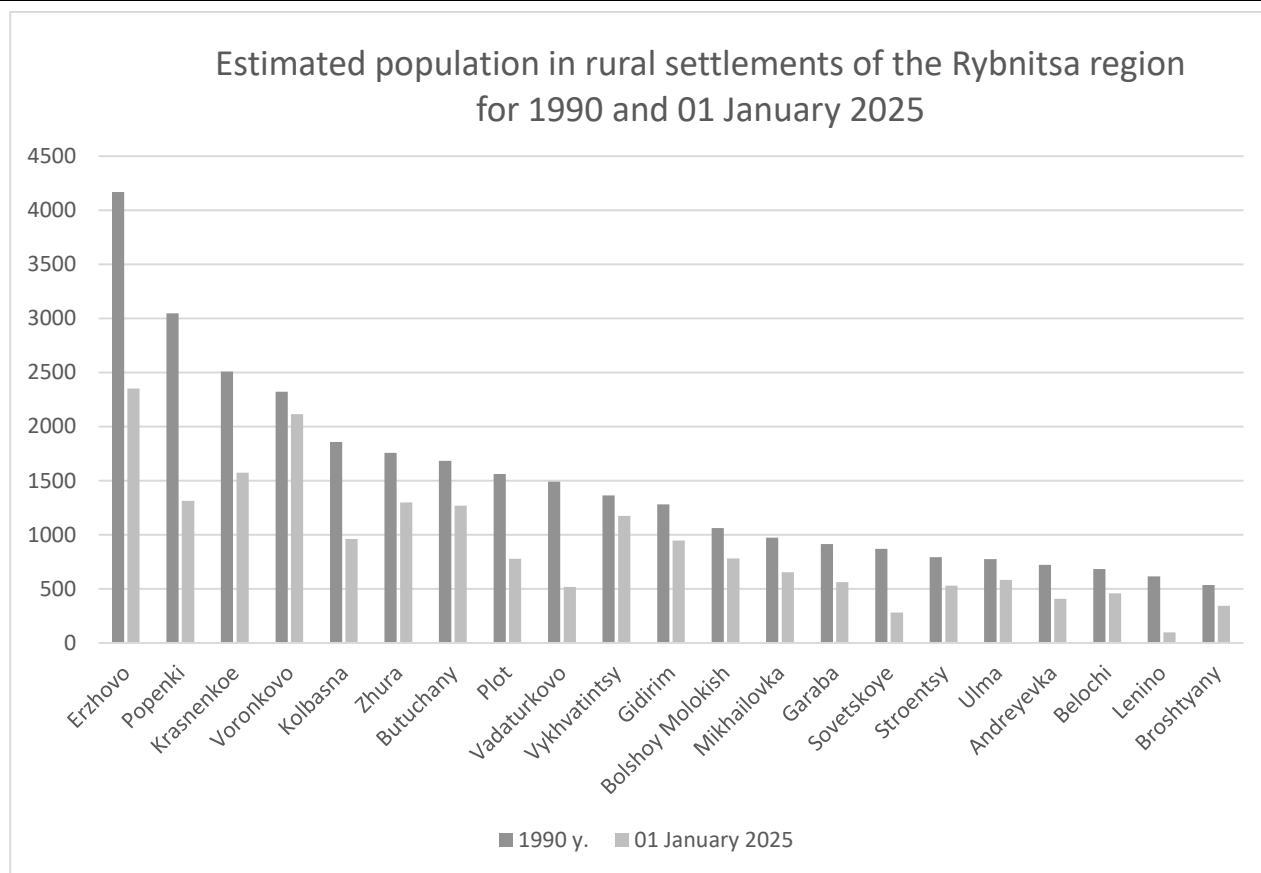
According to the data of the Rybnitsa Department of Statistics, from 1990 to 01 January 2025, the largest population decline was in such villages of the Rybnitsa district as: Erzhovo – 1817 (44%) and Popenki - 1734 (57%).

The population of the Rybnitsa district and the Rybnitsa city decreased by 7382 people since 1990 to 01 January 2025 and amounted to 64678 people at the end of the year, of which 41897 people live in urban areas and 22781 people live in rural areas. The population in such villages as Voronkovo and Vykhatintsy decreased slightly by 209 and 188 people, or by 9 % and 14%, respectively (picture1).

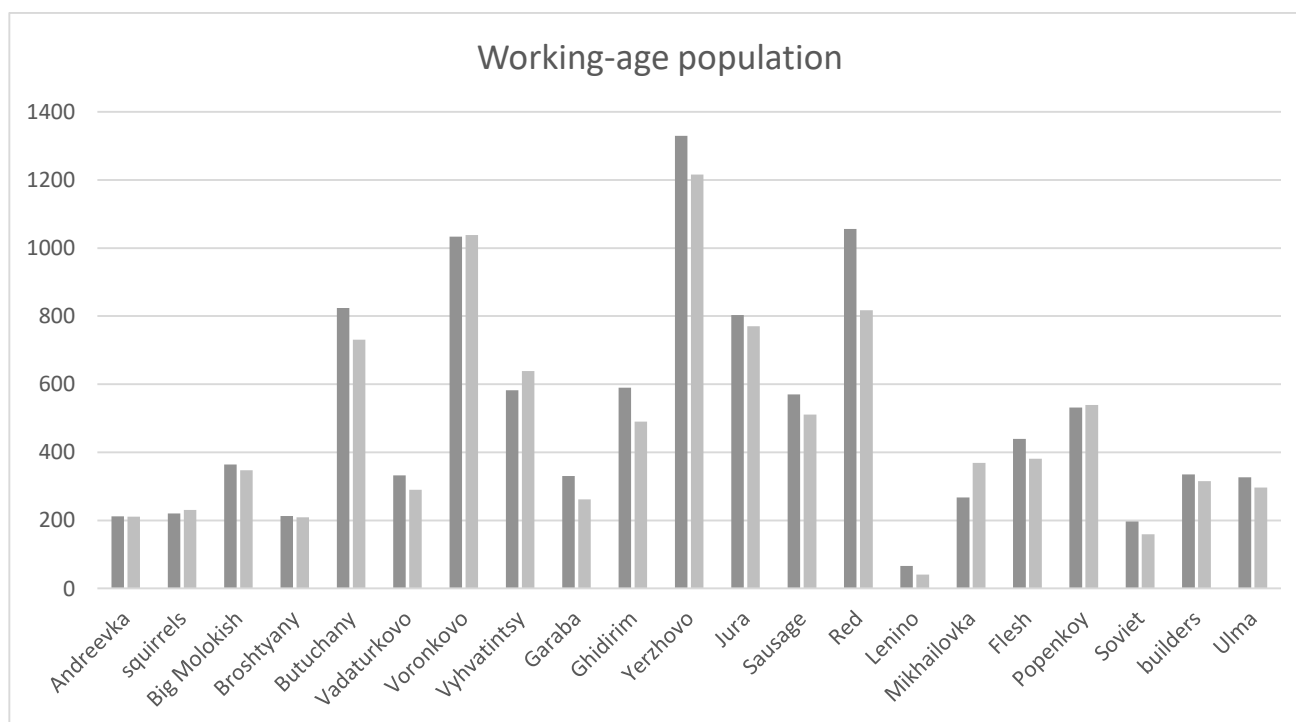
In the north of Transnistria, the most elderly population: the share of residents of retirement age reaches 34% here, while in the region it is 27%. Considering the villages of the Rybnitsa district, one can note a decrease in the number of people of working age and an increase in the number of pensioners.

Picture1 presents the data on the population count in rural settlements of the Rybnitsa district for 1990 and 2025.

Based on the results of the data obtained, it can be argued that a decrease in the share of the working-age population with an increase in the share of pensioners will lead to a further increase in the demographic burden. Regarding above, an unpopular decision to increase the retirement age is expected.



Picture 1 - Population of the Rybnitsa region.



Picture 2 - The population of the Rybnitsa region in working age (2014 y. and 2024 y.).

As can be seen from the above data, in these industries there is a significant reduction in the number of employees.

Number of unemployed in Rybnitsa region:

- in the food industry - 8636 people;
- in construction - 3108 people;
- in the transport industry - 1509 people.

For the agrarian region, an extremely negative ratio of urban (70%) and rural (30%) population has developed. This creates the problem of employment of the employable people in the city and its shortage in rural areas.

It is possible to return part of the population to the villages only through the optimal sectoral structure of agriculture, the creation of modern agricultural organizations, and the development of small businesses.

Unfortunately, the lack of a strategy for the development of the agro-industrial complex in the new economic and political conditions of management at the end of the 20th century led to such a complex problem. The vast majority of land users are mainly engaged in the cultivation of cereals, legumes and industrial crops - about 90% of all sown areas. Cultivation of these agricultural crops and their harvesting are carried out with the help of machinery, with a minimum of labor costs.

Only 10% of land is allocated for the cultivation of vegetables, fruits, berries, grapes, and, accordingly, only 10% of the employable people can have the opportunity to work in the countryside. For an agricultural region with rich lands and large villages with modern infrastructure such situation is unacceptable.

In this situation, the state, as the owner of the land, is obliged to provide the lease agreements for the optimal use of the land in terms of growing crops.

At the same time, one should not stop only at the cultivation of agricultural raw materials, it is also necessary to ensure their deep processing and the production of food products locally.

For this, the world market offers a wide range of modern, high-tech mini-modules. Concurrently, the state must ensure the protection of the domestic producer from imports, which will motivate him to develop local production.

Imports can take place if the given goods are not produced by local producers or production power is insufficient.

The solution of this problem allows creating jobs for women, whose share in the total working-age population is 54.6%.

At present, the proportion of unemployed women reaches 55% of the total number of unemployed.

At the state level, it is necessary to support the development of industries that are characterized by female labor – textile and food industries.

Currently, there are two large enterprises in Rybnitsa (JSC MMZ, CJSC RCC), which require exclusively male labor (approximately 90%), as well as organizations such as power grids, heating networks, water supply management, Tirastransgaz.

This situation negatively affects the demographic situation and the qualitative composition of the population.

A significant reserve of jobs for women is available in the use of ownerless household plots in rural areas. According to the most conservative estimates, at least 25% of household plots are abandoned. They can be used for the development of greenhouses for growing vegetables. The entire infrastructure in the villages has already been created, a reliable supply of water, electricity, gas, and high-quality transport logistics have been provided.

This requires effective state support in terms of providing preferential loans, and possibly (at the initial stage) interest-free ones, as well as protecting the domestic market from imports.

If the current trend in the sectoral structure of the economy continues, then in the near future the region will experience a serious problem with a lack of labor resources for the agro-industrial complex, which will lead to its further degradation and food dependence of the region on imports. Such a prospect is extremely undesirable, as it will negatively affect the preservation of unique rural settlements, the reduction in the economically active rural population and the deterioration of the demographic situation in the region as a whole.

Given that there is structural unemployment in the region, i.e. the economy has changed in favor of industries that are dominated by male labor, the need for jobs for women continues to decrease. At the same time, structural changes in the economy were caused by a decrease in production by enterprises in the ferrous metallurgy and building materials industry, as well as a critical decrease in production in the textile and food industries.

This was a consequence of the spontaneous development (if it can be considered as such) of the economy, the loss of state control over the state of the economy, first of all, large enterprises in the early years of the formation of Pridnestrovie. In times of crisis, in times of uncertainty, the primary task of the state and local authorities is to preserve vital economic entities and the population, which has not been done.

The economic security of the state as a whole, as well as its food security in particular, depends primarily on the availability and efficient use of its own resources. At the same time, there is not a single state in the world capable of ensuring harmonious socio-economic development based on its own resources.

The level of socio-economic development in such situation will depend on how efficiently the available resources are used - natural, labor, as well as climatic conditions and geographical location. Our region has it all. All is needed a science-based development strategy, taking into account the prevailing conditions.

The usage of available resources will require the development of a flexible investment policy and thus the achievement of a balanced trading.

For example, the countries of the Middle East satisfy their domestic needs for food by the profit of oil sales; China, Japan, Hong Kong, Israel are developing knowledge-intensive industries by the expense of labor resources and effective investment policy.

The presence of local resources and their development are closely interconnected, this relationship can contribute to their grow or partial loss, and sometimes significant, as evidenced by inefficient decisions in the field of reforming the agro-industrial complex.

This situation is clearly observed in agrarian regions, the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century are characterized by a sudden deterioration in the demographic situation (the birth rate is decreasing, migration processes are accelerating). One of the most important factors of such changes (trends) is the inefficient use of land and the opportunities provided by the diversification of agricultural production for the harmonious socio-economic development of the region, the state. This leads to technological, technical and food dependence of the state to negative migration processes of the population.

This is evidenced by the data of the socio-economic development of Pridnestrovie. The region, which has excellent natural and climatic conditions, occupies a favorable geographical location, the population of which consisted mainly of rural workers, currently has a negative trade balance, a negative demographic situation.

In the first years of region's independence the absence of a clear vision of its socio-economic development, and above all of the agro-industrial complex, led to a sharp reduction in the rural population. As a result of the selfish interests of land users (tenants), which consists in violating the structure of sown areas for the sake of profit, the loss of state control over its use, an inefficient, in terms of socio-economic efficiency, sectoral structure of agriculture has developed.

This situation very convincingly reveals the essence of a market economy, in which the main goal of an entrepreneur is to make a profit - and nothing more!

According to the laws of capital movement, the availability of cheap labor is an attractive factor for him. However, the compatibility of the interests of employers and employees is of decisive importance. The employer must receive the results of the work of employees that suit him, and the latter - a decent salary. Achieving harmony in this principle of labor organization and its payment is important, first of all, for the business itself. The successful entrepreneur will be the one who complies with this requirement, who has reached the appropriate level of business culture.

The consequences of non-compliance with this business principle can be very serious. This is eloquently evidenced by the situation in the agrarian sector in most regions of the post-Soviet areas.

Taking into account the agrarian orientation of the region, the existing geography of rural settlements, the migration processes of the population, first of all the main efforts should be directed to the organizational restoration and development of the agro-industrial complex, as well as to a more effective investment policy.

Thus, as noted, at present 70% of the population lives in regional centers and only 30% in villages. The main reason for this is the lack of jobs in the field. And this despite the fact that the current Pridnestrovian villages, in terms of the educational, cultural infrastructure created in them, are unmatched throughout the entire territory of the former Soviet Union. Full electrification, gasification, centralized supply of high-quality drinking water, educational institutions, Internet, reliable transport links, i.e. everything for a comfortable living, except for the main condition - the lack of jobs.

Excessive urbanization of the rural population also carries certain threats in cases of man-made disasters.

The current situation can and should be improved. To do this, the state needs to direct investment activities to the creation of various types of economic organizations in the field with the highest concentration of labor resources within a radius of 10-15 km. These can be food industry enterprises, service stations for agricultural machinery, enterprises for the repair of household appliances (similar to household plants).

The preservation of the employable population on the ground will also be facilitated by the opening of branches of foreign enterprises to perform simple technological operations for the assembly of finished products. A positive example of this kind of cooperation can be found in Moldova (the city of Orhei), where citizens of Transnistria also work.

For foreign partners, Pridnestrovie is attractive in terms of investment policy, cheap labor resources, their diligence, and good transport logistics. The investment opportunities of Pridnestrovians are extremely insignificant to solve the set tasks. Therefore, in order to solve them, it is necessary to attract external investors, especially since the legislation of Pridnestrovie provides for significant favorable conditions for this.

The settlement of people across the territory of the country or region is always associated with their desire for certain life resources and conditions.

Thus, cities and villages were formed and developed, and this has been proceeded for centuries. They have created the infrastructure necessary for life, a certain way of life of the population, traditions,

a certain specialization of activities, their own culture, and history in general.

The task of the state should be not only the preservation of the village, but also its development.

The basis for such development is the creation of a favorable socio-economic environment, i.e. the opportunity to work, study, raise children, play sports, have the prospect of growth, etc.

The most important of these conditions is the availability of the opportunity to work as a source of income for life in general.

According to the results of this study, the main problem of the northern region is the lack of jobs, which, in turn, is a consequence of the lack of a strategy for the socio-economic development of Pridnestrovie, taking into account its regional characteristics.

The geographical location of the northern region, good natural and climatic conditions, the rich history of the region, the availability of transport and modern rural infrastructure make it possible to develop eco- and agro-tourism. To do this, it is necessary to create a state program for their development, which should include both credit, tax, and methodological assistance to entrepreneurs in its implementation.

Even at the current situation, it is noted that in the villages of the region, through which the international route runs, the population decreased by only 16-19% (Rashkov, Podoyma, Podoymitsa), while in other villages it decreased by 40 percent or more.

Conclusion

The growth of this socio-economic direction is also extremely important from the point of view of the preservation and development of the enterprising population characteristic in this region. It is impossible to stop halfway, because the state has already created a set of educational, social and living conditions for the local population, which are not found in any rural region on the territory of the former USSR. A decrease of the population in the villages will lead to the inefficiency of the entire created rural infrastructure, and its maintenance will simply be economically inexpedient, or will lay a heavy burden on the state budget.

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Изменения социально-демографических показателей населения северного региона Приднестровья

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Аннотация

Настоящее исследование посвящено анализу социально-демографических изменений в северном регионе Приднестровья. Актуальность работы обусловлена сложной демографической ситуацией, характеризующейся кризисными явлениями, сформировавшимися под влиянием политических и социально-экономических процессов последних двух десятилетий. Основное внимание уделено таким ключевым проблемам как депопуляция и старение населения. Исследование выявляет взаимосвязь между демографическими тенденциями и социально-экономическим развитием региона. Особый акцент сделан на необходимости комплексного подхода к решению демографических проблем, учитывающего их политические, экономические и социальные аспекты. Практическая значимость работы заключается в возможности использования полученных результатов для разработки эффективной демографической политики, планирования трудовых ресурсов и социально-экономического развития северного региона Приднестровья.

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Ключевые слова

Демография, численность населения, депопуляция, старение населения, социально-экономическое развитие, Приднестровье.

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