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MIGRATION MOVEMENTS OF THE MACEDONIAN POPULATION OF MALA PRESPA AND GOLO BRDO WITHIN ALBANIAN BORDERS AND ABROAD – CONTEMPORARY CHANGES

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Abstract: *Migration movements of the Macedonian population from the regions of Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo in present-day Albania have occurred since the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans. These movements both within the cross-border area of the Macedonian-Albanian border and outside the regions are nothing new or unknown. In different periods these movements have been initiated by various factors, including natural, historical, political, socio-cultural, economic and similar reasons.*
Even though these migration movements can be classified in different ways according to their appearance, frequency, as well as various aspects and different categories, they have all been inevitably connected to one and only desire of improving the living conditions of individuals and their families. (Exception include some migrations caused by wars or other life-threatening situations.)
In this paper I will give a short overview of the causes and consequences of some migration movements of the abovementioned population and show how some of these migrations influenced changes in their everyday life, traditions, and even the outer appearance of the settlements.

Key words: *migration, Mala Prespa, Golo Brdo, Macedonia, Albania*

Migration movements are not new or unknown in human history. On the contrary, their occurrence is as old as mankind itself.

Contemporary scientific disciplines pay special attention to migrations as basic indicators of demographic conditions[1] and changes in certain territories. This can be concluded from the numerous research methods that involve different theoretical or empirical approaches[2].

The diversity of migrations can be seen in their different manifestations, characteristics, transformations into migration movements, and the ability to be researched from various aspects according to the researchers' interest.

Based on generally adopted classifications according to time, migrations can be classified as daily, periodic or permanent. According to their direction, migrations can be

1 Јаневска, *Современите меѓународни миграции, емиграцијата од Република Македонија и социо-економскиот развој* (Скопје : Економски институт – Скопје, 2001);
2 Ibid, 33.

internal or external, intercontinental or transcontinental, etc. According to the causes / initiators of migration movements, they can be classified, amongst other things, as voluntary, forceful, economic, political, or marriage-related.

Migrations in the cross-border regions of the Macedonian-Albanian border, especially the regions of Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo, were present in the far distant past. Conditioned by various natural, historical, socio- cultural, economic and other reasons, they can still be observed even in the present day.

Based on available written data and field research we can conclude that patterns of the founding and dislocation of certain settlements are a common characteristic of both regions. There is hardly any settlement that has not been dislocated from its original position at least once in its existence[3]. The most common reasons for dislocation and/or group migration were connected to natural disasters, floods, water shortages, infectious diseases[4] and frequent hostile attacks[5]. Confirmation of such events can be found in written documents, oral testimonies, and material remaining from former settlements and preserved toponyms.

Following previous changes and migrations of the population from various regions, we can mark some changes that are closely connected to certain historical, political, social, economic and cultural changes. In this context we can follow the migration patterns of the population from Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo through three key historical periods: from the period of Ottoman rule until 1948; the period 1948–1991; and the period after 1991. These periods also correlate to the changing of old political borders and the establishment of new borders.

The first period includes the arrival of the Turks and the incorporation of Balkan territories within the Ottoman Empire. This did not prevent the already established migration movements but only influenced their causes and consequences in terms of new initiators and new destinations. Migration movements during the period of Ottoman rule were present in both regions and distinguished by their own specific characteristics. Internal migrations were present in the wider regions[6] within the Empire. The main destinations for the migrant populations from Mala Prespa were Bitola, Florina and Korcha, while the main destinations for the population from Golo Brdo were Tirana and Debar. Important migration destinations for the population from both regions included Thessaloniki, Sofia, Istanbul and other cities[7]. These migration movements can be considered periodic migrations, although according to contemporary demographic standards if their duration was longer than one year they can also be perceived as

3 Field research 2014.

4 Миленко С.Филиповић, *Голо Брдо : белешке о насељима, порeклу становништва народном животу и обичајима* (Скопље : Штампарија Јужна Србија, 1940), 2.

5 Гуре Дума, *Мала Преспа* (Скопје : Филилошки факултет "Блаже Конески" ; Тирана : Заедница на Македонците во Албанија, 2007), 23.

6 Миленко С. Филиповић, *Дебарски Дримкол* (Скопље : Јужна Србија, 1939), 129-143.; Анета Светиева, „Голо (Д'лго) Брдо и Голобрдци нашинци", во *Голо Брдо – живот на граница* (Скопје : МЕД - Скопје; ИЕА - Скопје, 2006), 13.

7 The data on this kind of migration was collected during the field research, as well as with the comparative analysis for the regions where, even though in some cases the particular villages of origin of the migrants has not been mentioned, one cannot exclude the fact that part of the population from the villages of Mala Prespa and Golo Brdo could be involved in such migration movements directed towards Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia or other places; Филиповић, *Дебарски*.; Мери Стојанова, „*Можности за културна и економска афирмација на Преспа врз основа на етнолошки и фолклорни вредности*," (MSc. diss. Instiitute of Ethnology and Antropology - Skopje, UKIM, 2008).; Кимет Фетаху, „Голо Брдо и Голобрдци денес", во *Голо Брдо – живот на граница* (Скопје : МЕД - Скопје, ИЕА – Скопје, 2004), 19.; Цветан Мазнику, „Етнокултурата во Голо Брдо (Голо́-Бордо) (реалност и проблематика)," *во Голо Брдо – живот на граница* (Скопје : МЕД - Скопје, ИЕА – Скопје, 2004), 22.; Вељо Цварку, „Примери на заемно разбирање и соживот помеѓу етносите и верите во Голо Брдо (Голо-Бо́рдо)," во *Голо Брдо – живот на граница* (Скопје : МЕД - Скопје, ИЕА – Скопје, Скопје 2006).

migration movements. These migration movements relied on earlier communication links and only involved the male population that migrated in order to earn money. After a period usually longer than one year they would go back to their native paces, classifying this type of migration in this context as temporary migrations.

From the 15th to the 19th century[8], other than the migration movements towards the already mentioned destinations, there were also large-scale permanent migration movements from Albania and western Macedonia towards Bulgaria[9]. In many cases these were gradual, meaning that migrants sometimes stayed several years in certain places before continuing to their final destinations. These migrations are confirmed by abundant preserved data and numerous toponyms referring to 'Arnauti'[10]. One example is the village of Arbanasi, located near the city of Veliko Trnovo in Bulgaria, inhabited by migrants from Albania and western Macedonia. In many cases this population was also called 'Debarlii', meaning 'the population coming from the wider Debar district'. Numerous migrants from these regions also settled in the city of Varna.

During the 19th century a large number of periodic migrants, known as 'dulgeri', worked as builders in Serbia and especially in Belgrade. Like the abovementioned migrants, they were also known and identified as "Arnauti", "Debarlii", "Rekalii", "Gogi", etc[11].

Although in smaller number, these movements included populations from the region of Mala Prespa. This population gradually moved towards Bulgaria and settled in territories in eastern Macedonia, especially in the region of Kavadarci. One part of this population stayed there permanently while the other part continued its "journey" towards Bulgaria.

Other than these internal migrations within the Ottoman Empire, there were several important migration directions characteristic of the populations of particular regions. From the beginning of Ottoman rule, Italy was a very important migration destination for the population from Golo Brdo. This is known from research undertaken by Milenko Filipovic[12], who additionally supports this fact with data presented by Knchov[13] on the migration of 3,000 people from Ohrid to Italy in the same period, as well as additional data from Italian sources.

For the population from Mala Prespa, the first important migration movements directed outside the Ottoman Empire occurred during the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. At first they were directed towards South America. Later these migrations changed their course and were directed towards the USA and Canada. According to the available data[14], these directions were common for the population from the wider region of Prespa.

The 20th century was characterized by numerous military actions and frequent changes of borders that brought about an end to some of the already established internal migration movements characteristic of the period of Ottoman rule.

The demarcation of the border with Albania was merely formal up until the middle of the 20th century, and in practice was not perceived or treated as a real liminal territory and zone of separation. It only formally divided the same ethnographic region with already established mutual connections and established group endogamy. The formalization of the

8 Димитър Ярановъ, „Преселническо движение на Българи отъ Македония и Албания къмъ източнитѣ български земи презъ XV до XIX вѣкъ," *Македонски прегледъ* година VII, кн. 2 и 3 (1932): 63-115.

9 Анета Светиева, *Резбарени тавани, долапи и врати во Македонија* (Скопје : Институт за фолклор „Марко Цепенков", 1992), 31.

10 Migrants from Albania and the western Macedonian regions in this period were also known as "Arnautluk".

11 Светиева, *Резбарени,* 130.

12 Филиповић, *Голо,* 15-18.

13 Васил Кънчов, *Македонија – етнографија и статистика* (София : Дръжавна печатница 1900).

14 Стојанова, *„Можности за културна".*

border in the migration context only meant that the already established internal migrations within the region would now become "international". In many cases these migrations can be regarded as "wedding migrations"[15] according to contemporary terminology. As an explanation of this terminology, it is important to emphasize that these migrations usually happened due to marriages concluded between spouses within the same region who inhabited different states after demarcation. This forced woman to migrate to another country, usually the place of their spouse. This change illustrates another dimension of these decades-long established practices. It shows the absurdity of the newly created condition and the effect that a border can have on the life of a population. Demarcation of the border in this period caused the gradual movement of a large number of people towards some of the bigger settlements, such as the town of Debar where a great number of migrants from Golo Brdo settled. It was the same case with one of the most important cities in that period, the city of Skopje. One strong migration wave from 1912 to 1918 was directed towards Greece, especially to Thessaloniki[16] and towards places in Bulgaria. This was a result of Bulgarian influence during the Bulgarian occupation of these territories in this period[17].

At the same time, the migration of people from Mala Prespa essentially retained the same directions. One strong migration wave occurred in 1924 when the whole population from the village of Upper Gorica left their village and moved to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia due to a misunderstanding with the local bey. The Yugoslavian government considered them to be Albanians and sent them to Kosovska Mitrovica. When they responded that they were Macedonians and not Albanians they were returned to Macedonia and settled in Kavadarci, Rosoman, Negotino and other places[18].

The first half of the 20th century was critical for the intercontinental migrants who departed for the USA and Canada. The major world economic crisis at the beginning of the 1930s prevented migrants in the USA and Canada from finding jobs that would enable them to earn sufficient funds to return to their villages later on. Many of the migrants from villages in Mala Prespa never managed to return to their homes[19].

The second period of migration from 1948–1991 was a period of the complete closure of the Albanian borders. This initially occurred as a result of a dispute between Yugoslavia and other countries of the "Informbiro" and finished with the exclusion of Yugoslavia from the Bureau. This period was characterized by a complete, almost hermetical closure of all Albanian borders. This newly created situation meant a complete interruption of any migration directed outside Albanian borders, with only limited internal migration from rural to larger urban areas[20] following the fall of the regime of Enver Hodza and the period 1991-1992.

The complete internal state organization of Albania, together with collectivization, the system of education, recognition or non-recognition of minorities and their ghettoization, as well as a complete system of control, especially in the border regions, as was the case with Golo Brdo and Mala Prespa, in a significant manner influenced the weak internal relocation of population especially from the respective regions. The harder conditions of migration movements, although much weaker, were still present. Korcha and Elbasan were the main

15 *Lisa Anne Simons, "Marriage, Migration and Markets: International matchmaking and international feminism"* (PhD diss. The University of Hong Kong, 2001).; Bruce Andrew, *"Making the Family - Marriage within and across Borders, IOM regional Representative, South East Asia,"* accessed 15.10.2010, http://www.metropolis2009.org/Presentations/Marriage%20A_Bruce_marriage_across%20borders.pdf.; Лидија Стојановиќ-Лафазановска, *Миграција и хабиτус. Македонскаτа емиграција во Германија* (Скопје, 2008), 29.

16 Филиповић, *Голо,* 22.

17 Field research, village of Klenje 13.09.2014.

18 Field research, Mala Prespa, 2014.

19 Дума, *Мала Пресūа*, p.34.

20 Field research, village of Klenje, 13.09.2014.

migration destinations for migrants from Mala Prespa and only one smaller part migrated to Tirana. The population from Golo Brdo mainly migrated to Tirana and Drach, and one smaller part migrated to Elbasan. These migration movements were permanent in their duration, while based on the typology they were considered as group migrations that involved complete families[21].

The fall of the regime of Enver Hodza, and the especially strong political movements and changes that took over Albania after 1991, also known as the period of "democratization", brought gradual changes in migration movements in Albania and in the specific regions. Albania became the starting point of more than 1,000,000 migrants in this period. According to the population census conducted in 2001, this situation qualified Albania as the site of one of the most dramatic demographic phenomena in Europe[22].

According to the available data it is clear that new demographic changes had an impact on the entire territory of Albania. Internal migrations were directed from rural to urban areas. Tirana had the largest number of incoming migrants, with its number of inhabitants increasing from 200,000 to 800,000 in the period 1990–2006[23]. Migration movements mainly retained the same directions as in the previous period, with the largest number of migrants from Golo Brdo migrating to Drach and Tirana[24] and from Mala Prespa to Korcha[25].

To adapt more easily to the new communities the migrants usually settled in the same areas in the cities, in this way comprising whole districts like Macedonian ghettoes. The Macedonian population in Tirana mainly inhabited the districts known as the Macedonian District and the Debar District, and such districts existed in Korcha as well. The region of Golo Brdo as a part of the prefecture of Debar (Dibër), which is one of the poorest areas in Albania, was characterized by massive depopulation.

Not only internal but also external migration saw an upswing in this period. During a decade- long period, 1,000,000 migrants[26] left Albania. One more fact does not go in favour of the Albanian demography and of course not even of the two respective regions inhabited with the Macedonian population, which is that the male population aged 20-29 years comprise about 70% of the migrants[27]. Italy, Greece, the USA, Canada and Great Britain[28] remained the main external migration destinations of Albanian migrants in this period.

We must emphasize that an especially important destination for migrants from both regions were the northern parts of Greece also known as Aegean Macedonia. The reason for such migrations was the fact that these areas were already settled with a Macedonian population and so the migrants could easily communicate in Macedonian language.

"In Florina there are many. Because of the language![29]"

" In Edessa. Peopole from our village go to Edessa. There where they speak Macedonian.

21 Инес Црвенковска – Ристевска, „Селската заедница и семејството кај Македонците од делот на Голо Брдо во Република Албанија во социјалистичкиот период", во *Голо Брдо – живоѿ на ѓраница* (Скопје : МЕД - Скопје, ИЕА – Скопје, 2006), 87.

22 *Migration in Albania*, Population and Housing Census 2001, INSTAT.

23 Erka Çaro and L. J. G Van Wissen, „Migration in the Albania of the post-1990s : triggered by post-communist transformations and facilitator of socio-demographic changes," in *South-East Europe Review* 3/2007 (2007): 88.

24 This can be indirectly concluded from the Population Census 2001 and data given by regions to which respective areas belong

25 Field research, village of Klenje 13.09.2014

26 Migration, 2001, INSTAT.

27 Çaro and Van Wissen, "Migration," 95., This can be indirectly concluded from the Population Census 2001 and data given by regions to which respective areas belong.

28 *The Republic of Albania Migration Profile,* prepared by Alin Chindea, Magdalena Majkowska-Tomkin and Isabel Pastor (Ljubljana : IOM International Organization for Migration, Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of the Interior, 2007), 14.

29 Field research, village of Pustec, 21.03.2014

In Florina here, in Amindeo.[30]"

Although these destinations were identified as the most attractive for the migrants from Albania involving a large number of Macedonians, it is undeniable that for the Macedonian population from these regions Macedonia still remained one of the favourable destinations.

Migration movements directed towards Macedonia differed among the regions by their cause and structure. Lack of statistical or other precise data does not allow us to make a precise analysis for the migrants from these two regions who either temporarily or permanently migrated to Macedonia. However, based on the field research data we can draw several key conclusions.

In numerous cases the Macedonian population from the respective regions started its migration as periodical, seasonal migration. They usually worked as builders, widely known for their skills. According to this profiling the migration movements were comprised of a male workforce population. The migrants from Golo Brdo usually worked in close cross-border regions such as Debar Drimkol, Tetovo, Skopje, Ohrid and other places. Those from Mala Prespa worked in the wider region of Prespa within the political borders of Macedonia, in Resen, Bitola, Prilep and other places. In many cases seasonal migrations for migrants from Mala Prespa became permanent and they usually settled in the places where they worked. Some of them continued with their building practices and some of them started to work in other professions[31]. In many cases, female migrants from Mala Prespa used to come, and still do, as temporary migrants bringing small goods and various household products from Albania to Macedonia. They sell these products in the markets in Resen, Bitola, Ohrid or Struga. Due to strong patriarchal relations within the families and the status of women according to Islam and to the wider social community, the female population from Golo Brdo has almost never been involved in such activities or seasonal migration.

The migration of the young population towards Macedonia was usually connected to education. The reasons for such migrations have included: favourable conditions and free education for a large number of students through a mutual agreement for free education of Macedonians from Albania concluded between the organizations of Macedonians and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Macedonia. Thus a large number of students from Mala Prespa migrated to some of the larger cities in Macedonia, such as Bitola, Prilep and Skopje, where they gained high school or university degrees. This kind of migration usually starts as temporary but often becomes permanent.

Education migration towards Bulgaria was also present among the young population. This was a result of the policy that Bulgaria pursued and still pursues for alienating the Macedonian minority, whereby a certain number of students declare themselves to be Bulgarians gained with the right of free education in this country. At the beginning of this process, the intensity of migrations based on this right was stronger, but over time it decreased. What is interesting in this case is that this migration started as temporary and rarely became permanent.

In the case of Golo Brdo, the number of students who gained their education in Macedonia is sufficiently smaller. The reason for this situation is the lower level of interest of this category of the young population, as well as an internal unwritten agreement of the Macedonian organizations in Albania in which certain quotas of the number of students from Mala Prespa were larger than the quota from Golo Brdo. Another factor is that the female

30 Field research, village of Golemo Ostreni, 13.09.2014

31 Meri Stojanova, "Region of Prespa between three countries", *EtnoAntropoZum* no.10 (2014): 57-77.

population from Golo Brdo has been almost completely absent from this type of migration. This is due to the established patriarchal relations according to which girls do not necessarily gain from high school or university education. That is especially notable among the Macedonian Muslim population[32].

One other type of migration more common for Golo Brdo is the so-called "wedding" migration[33] that involves the female population from the region. Namely, a large number of girls from this region engaged in marriages with Albanians or Macedonians from Macedonia where they permanently migrate. These migrations can be, but are not necessarily, connected to economic reasons and are usually conducted with the help of matchmakers. They are directed towards various places such as Tetovo and Debar, but mainly to rural areas in Macedonia[34].

Based on the presented data we can conclude that migrations have been one of the almost continuous socio-cultural elements that characterize these two regions. Economic, educational, social and other reasons might be considered as basic initiators for numerous migrations without regard to their final destinations or time period. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that besides the large number of similarities there are also certain differences in the migration movements which are usually due to gender structure and the type of migrations that involve the population. Formerly individual migrations today usually become family migrations due to a short individual migration of the spouse in order to secure basic living conditions that very quickly turn into the migration of the rest of the family members. In contemporary conditions, the number of migrants of smaller family communities becomes shared characteristics of both regions.

Noticeable ghettoization, which has been present not only inside larger cities but in the final destinations of the migrants, is a common mark for this population and for the wider communities of migrants, regardless of their place of origin or final destination. Although this situation of mutual connection eases the period of adaptation, at the same time it slows down the process of the complete acculturation of the population in destination countries–recipients. Based on the research conducted so far, complete acculturation can happen even with the third or fourth generation of migrants.

Changes that happen as a result of these migrations and immigrations influence not only cultural changes within families and the closer family community but also outside of it. Positive material changes and the rise of living standards of the population caused by economic migration are more noticeable in the region of Mala Prespa than in Golo Brdo, where the changes are less visible. Contemporary one- or two-storey houses that can be noted in the villages of Mala Prespa are almost completely absent in the region of Golo Brdo. This is not due to the worse economic situation of the families in Golo Brdo, but reflects the general infrastructure conditions of the villages as smaller social cells and the complete road and communicational infrastructure inside and outside the region, which is in a poor condition or completely absent. This situation directly influences and speeds the process of one-way migration of the population, or as symbolically said "on the road with no return".

32 Field research 2014.

33 Лафазановиќ-Стојановска, *Миграција и хабиѿус.*

34 Field research, village of Golemo Ostreni 13.09.2014.

РЕЗИМЕ́

МИГРАЦИСКИТЕ ДВИЖЕЊА НА МАКЕДОНСКОТО НАСЕЛЕНИЕ ОД МАЛА ПРЕСПА И ГОЛО БРДО ВО И НАДВОР ОД АЛБАНИЈА - СОВРЕМЕНИ ПРОМЕНИ

Мери СТОЈАНОВА

Темелејќи се на презентираните податоци може да се заклучи дека миграциските движења на македонската популација од Мала Преспа и Голо Брдо се гледани само во контекст на три различни историски и политички периоди, пред 1948, помеѓу 1948-1991 и после 1991.

Додека првиот период се карактеризира со индивидуална миграција насочена кон поголемите центри во Турската Империја, вториот период од миграцијата се карактеризира со групна, внатрешна миграција од руралните кон урбани средини во рамки на територија на Албанија, како за популацијата на Мала Преспа така и за популацијата од Голо Брдо. Оваа ситуација е поврзана со политичките случувања во Албанија за време на строгиот режим.

Третиот миграциски период (по 1991 год.) се карактеризира со индивидуална миграција на почетокот но, низ времето, ситуацијата се менува и групната миграција е скоро рамномерно присутна. И двете миграциски движења главно се перципираат како надворешни миграции, насочени кон различни држави и континенти.

Иако секој од разгледаните периоди си има свои специфичности коишто придонесле за миграцијата, сепак може да се заклучи дека тие се континуирани и придонесуваат за депопулација на посочените региони, што во долг период ќе предизвика социјални, културни, економски и други последици.