



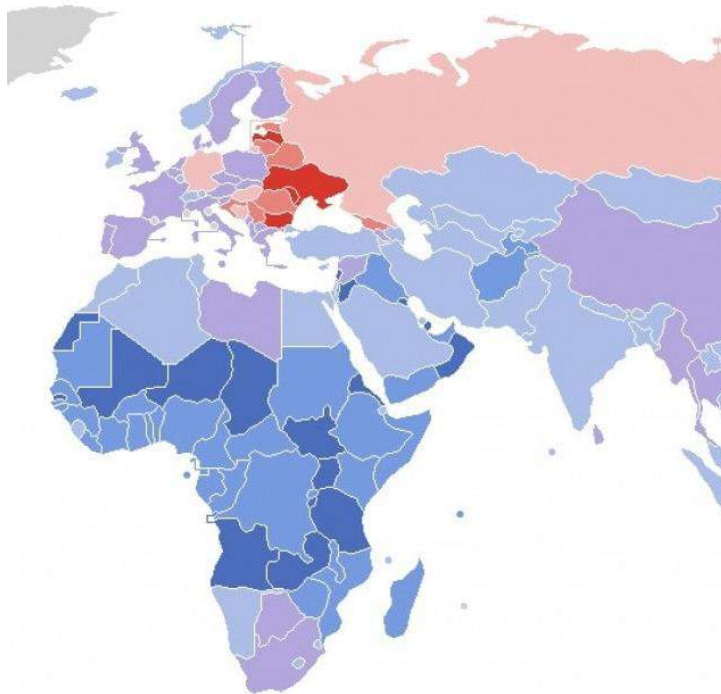
Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development
in Transition Economies

Rural depopulation

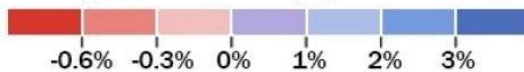
Judith Möllers

Depopulation in SEE - situation

- Depopulation happens all over Europe, but is particularly strong in the East: the top 10 countries with the fastest shrinking populations are all in Eastern Europe



Average annual rate of population change



Max Fisher/Washington Post

Currently shrinking in SEE....

One birth every 14 minutes		Croatia
One death every 10 minutes	████████████████████	
One net migrant every 65 minutes		
Net loss of one person every 22 minutes	████████████████████	
One birth every 6 minutes		Serbia
One death every 5 minutes	████████████████████	
One net migrant every 53 minutes		
Net loss of one person every 18 minutes	████████████████████	
One birth every 16 minutes		BiH
One death every 13 minutes	████████████████████	
One net migrant every 1440 minutes		
Net loss of one person every 72 minutes	████████████████████	

Currently (still) stabile in SEE....

One birth every 76 minutes		Montenegro
One death every 85 minutes	████████████████████	
One net migrant every 1440 minutes		
Net gain of one person every 1440 minutes		

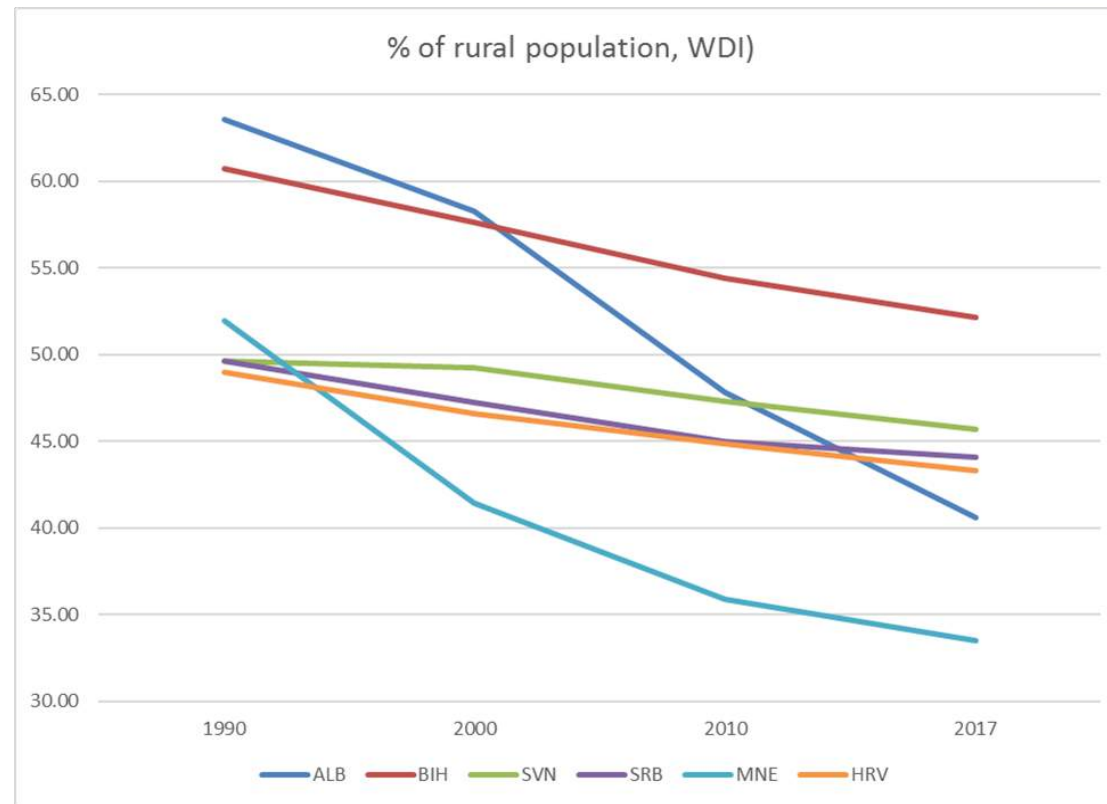
(also SLO, ALB, MKD)

Falling fertility rates (and relatively high mortality)

- Low fertility rates of around 1.3 children/woman in the West Balkan states.

Massive out-migration

- Due to conflicts and wars, but also due to underdevelopment.
- Diaspora of WB-6 is 4.5 million people, equivalent of a quarter of region's current total population.
- 200,000 people left the region according to UN estimates between 2010–2015



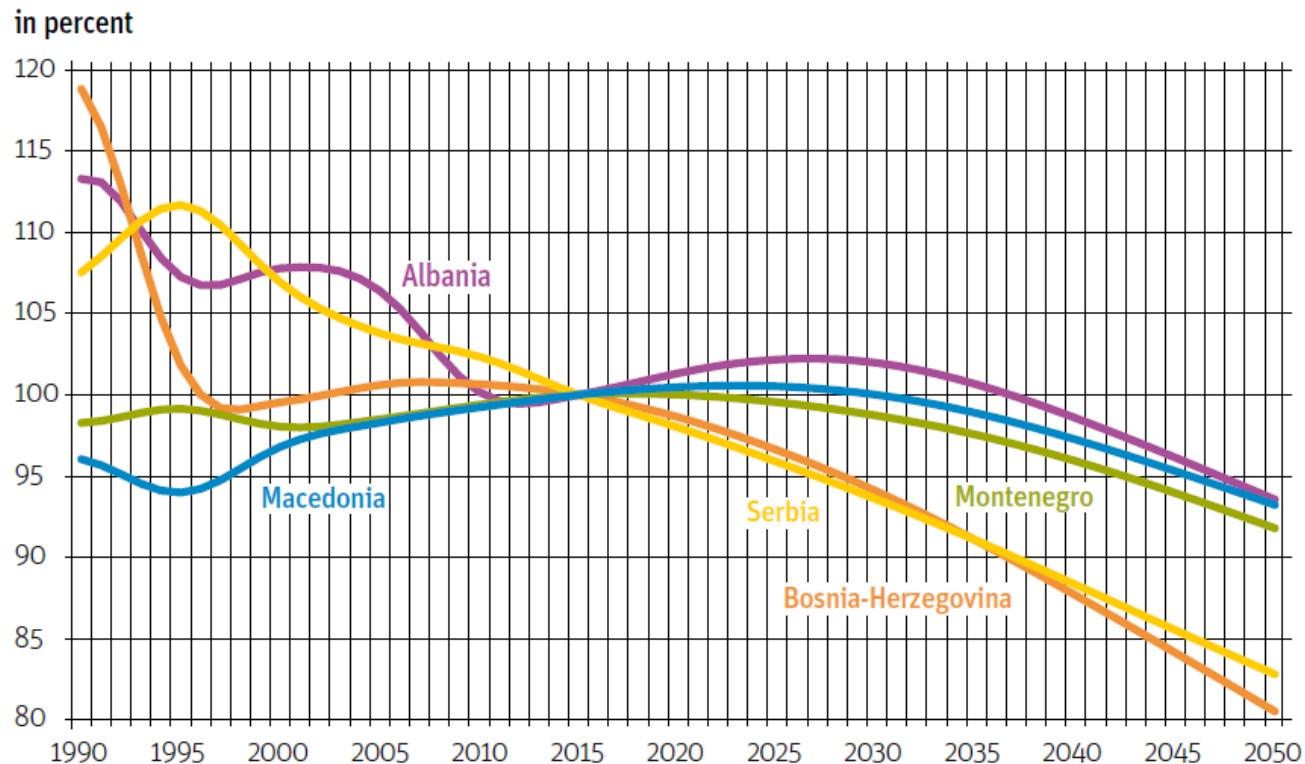
Rural-urban migration aggravates the situation in rural areas

Impact of rural and agricultural policies?

No significant effects compared to main triggers, but some potential to ease situation by keeping rural areas attractive

Rural Depopulation Trends

- Further significant depopulation to be expected in the region
- E.g. BiH has lost a fifth of its population since the 1990s, and it is likely to lose the same share again by 2050



(Projected) population development in the
Western Balkans, 1990–2050 (Index: 2015=100
percent, projections from 2015 onwards)*
(Data source: United Nations⁷⁰)

	Gallup Potential Net Migration Index	Gallup Potential Net Youth Migration Index
Croatia	-2%	-13%
BiH	-14%	-26%
Montenegro	-14%	-21%
Serbia	-21%	-39%
Kosovo	-28%	-31%
Macedonia	-28%	-46%

Gallup based on surveys conducted between 2007 and 2010; youth index refers to persons aged 15-29

Gallup potential net migration indices: hypothetical percentage shrinking in the adult population that would take place if people would see the opportunity to leave as they wish

- ☛ alarmingly high numbers of young people who would move if the opportunity arises
- ☛ Implications for ageing!

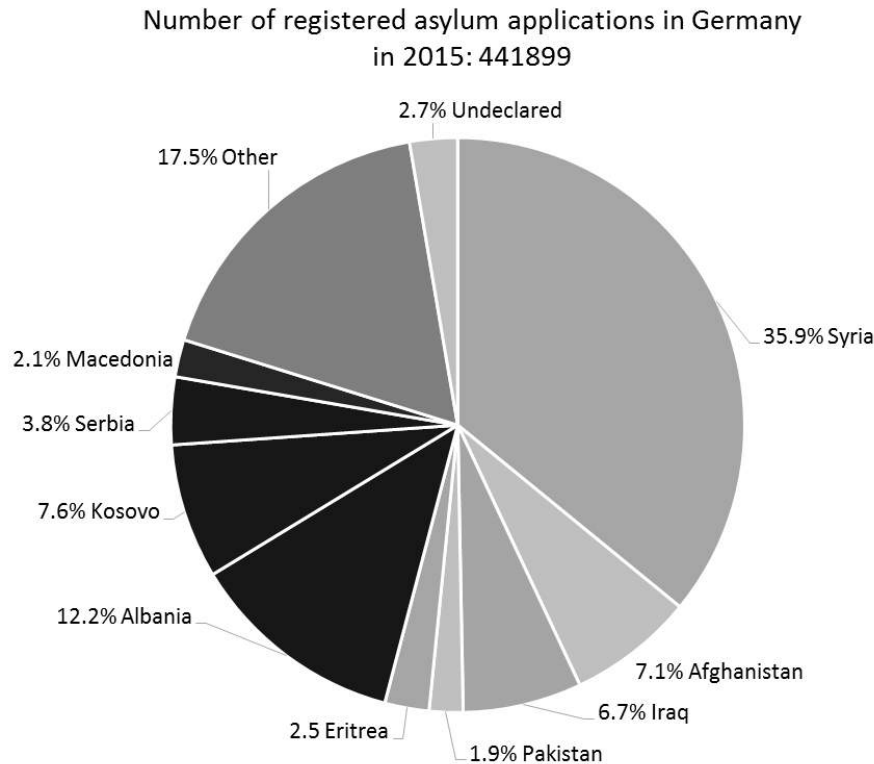


Figure: Origin countries of registered asylum seekers in Germany in 2015

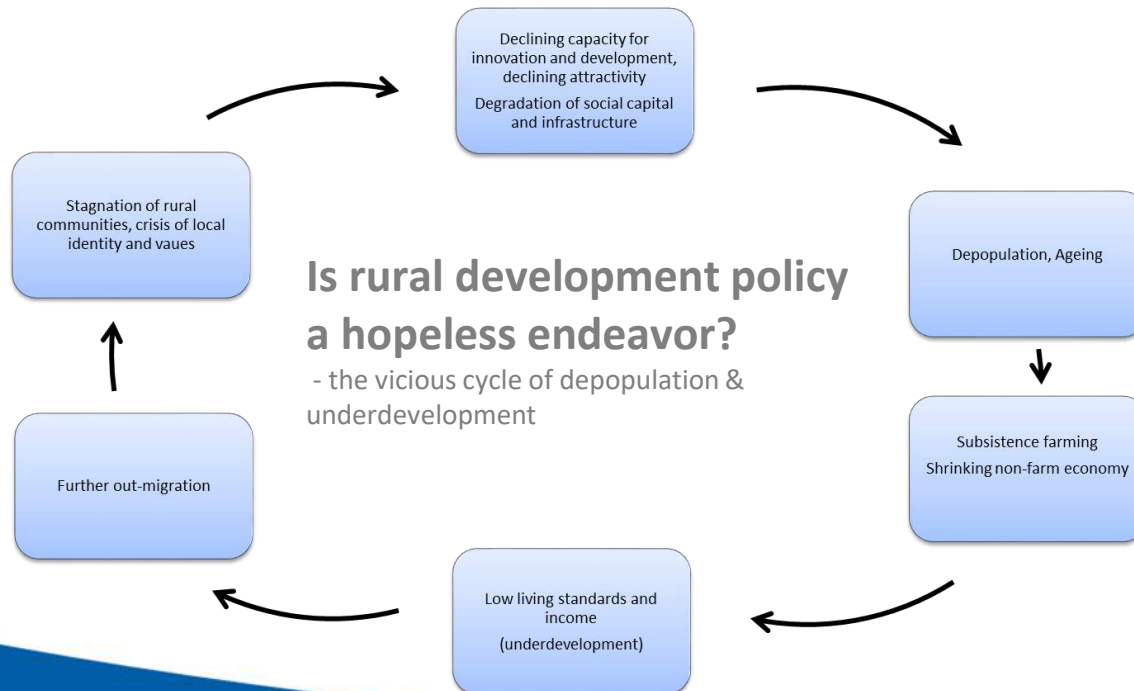
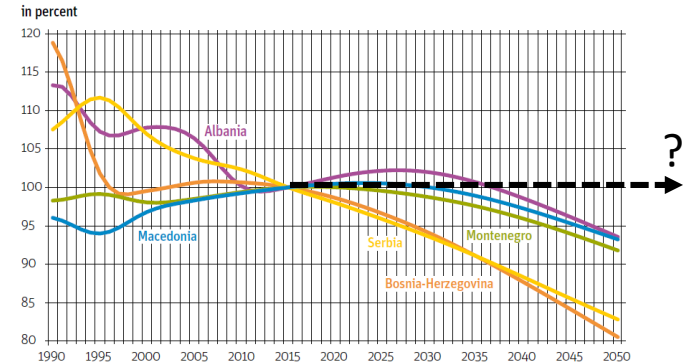
From theory to reality...
people actually leave if they
see a chance:

➤ Western Balkans nations
share among asylum seekers
in Germany during the
migration wave in 2015.

Policy Options – targeting depopulation?

Can the depopulation trend be reversed
(decreased/stabilised)?

- By providing incentives to stop potential migrants to leave? By huge investments in rural areas?



Rural development policy is urgently needed

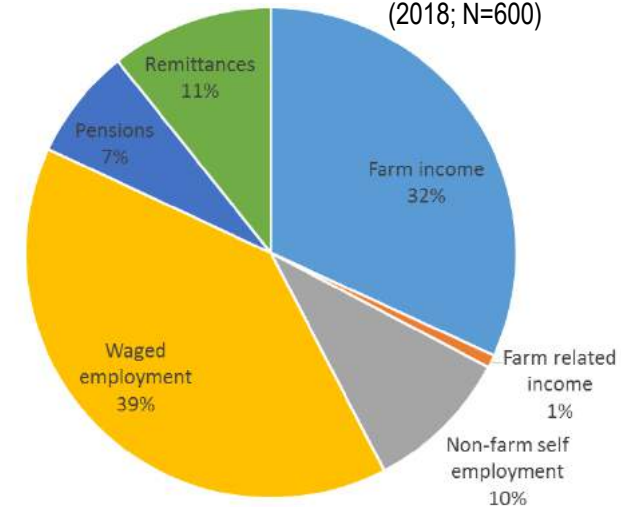
- for reaching social cohesion, political stability, economic development
- because we know that impoverished rural areas are breeding grounds for conflicts

How to reach socio-economic development? And what is the role of the rural non-farm economy?

Creating **jobs** is of highest importance ➔ Moving the focus toward the rural non-farm economy....

- higher chances for job creation
- absorb labour from farm sectors
- acknowledge widespread diversified livelihoods
- low interest of younger generation in farm work

Income portfolio of Kosovar farm households
(2018; N=600)



IAMO-FAO survey 2018

When setting priorities....

1. Use rural funds for **broader rural development, investments and modernization** instead of coupled direct payments
2. Concentrate on **those who want to stay** and want to make a living in the rural areas (farm and non-farm!), and support **entrepreneurs** and job-creating investments
3. Consider to focus on small **rural towns**