SSOAR

Open Access Repository
www.ssoar.info

Ethnic Diversity of Population in Vojvodina at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Stojšin, Snežana

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Stojšin, S. (2015). Ethnic Diversity of Population in Vojvodina at the Beginning of the 21st Century. *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, *4*(2), 25-37. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-428644

Nutzungsbedingungen:
Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY-NC-ND Lizenz (Namensnennung-Nicht-kommerziell-Keine Bearbeitung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/deed.de

Terms of use:
This document is made available under a CC BY-NC-ND Licence (Attribution-Non Comercial-NoDerivatives). For more Information see:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0

gesis
Leibniz-Institut
für Sozialwissenschaften

Mitglied der
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities EQPAM
Volume 4, No.2, April 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Ethnic Diversity of Population in Vojvodina at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Snežana Stojšin
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Philosophy
University of Novi Sad
Serbia

Date of submission: March 16th, 2015 *Date of acceptance: April 23rd, 2015*

Abstract

Vojvodina, an autonomous province in the Republic of Serbia, is ethnically one of the most heterogeneous regions of Europe and therefore represents an inexhaustible subject of research. There are more than 20 ethnic groups living in Vojvodina. According to the most recent 2011 census, there are 1,931,809 people living in Vojvodina and the Serbs make the largest ethnic group, 66.7% of the total population. Hungarians make 13.0% of the total population of Vojvodina and with a somewhat smaller proportion come the Slovaks, Croats, Rroma and Rromanians. In the period between the two censuses the reduction in the number of members of all ethnic groups was recorded and the only ethnic group that increased in number was the Rroma. Different socio-economic and demographic trends have had a great influence on the reduction of the share of members of almost all ethnic groups in the total population of Vojvodina in the last decades. First of all, it was influenced by forced migrations in the nineties of the previous century caused by the war on the territory of former Yugoslavia and its disintegration, a period of transition. The goal of this paper is to analyze the ethnic structure of the population in Vojvodina, as well as the factors which have had the most significant impact on the changes in the structure at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. The importance of this analysis is reflected in better understanding of the status of different ethnic groups in Vojvodina and a better quality of their inclusion in social, cultural and political life.

Keywords: ethnic groups, ethnic structure, forced migrations, Vojvodina, Serbs, Hungarians, Slovaks, Romanians, Rroma

Corresponding Author: Dr. Snežana Stojšin, Assistant Professor
Affiliation: Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy Novi Sad, University of Novi Sad, Serbia
Address: #2, Dr Zoran Đinđić Street, Novi Sad
e-mail: snezanas@ff.uns.ac.rs

Copyright @ 2015, Snežana Stojšin
European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities - EQPAM, Volume 4, No.2, April 2015, pp. 25-37.
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN–L 2285 – 4916

European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities EQPAM
Volume 4, No.2, April 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

1. Introduction

The need to examine the ethnic structure of population and the specificity of ethnic groups is indisputable in countries or regions that are characterized by a large number of ethnic communities, because good interethnic relations are an important prerogative for the progress and development of a society. Vojvodina, being one of ethnically most heterogeneous regions of Europe, represents an inexhaustible subject of research for sociologists as well as for ethnologists, historians and political analysts. In the ethnic diversity of the population of Vojvodina, there are more than 20 ethnic groups which differ in number, i.e. the share in the total population, the average age, economic activity, educational structure and other demographic and cultural characteristics, too. The ethnic groups in Vojvodina are of different origin. First of all, the Hungarians and the Romanians are ethnic groups whose home states are our neighbors; also, the Czechs, the Slovacs, the Germans and the Ukrainians are ethnic groups which originate from European countries which do not border with Serbia; in the third place when talking about the origin are the Croats, the Montenegrins and the Macedonians, ethnic groups whose home state used to be one of the republics in the former republic of Yugoslavia.

Today`s ethnic map of Vojvodina has been drawn by various changes in its history, numerous wars which caused great migrations and political changes which occurred in both the older and the recent history. By analyzing the trends of ethnic groups in the population of Vojvodina and the social context, under certain conditions three groups of factors have been allocated.

The first group of factors that have had an impact on the demographic development of the population in Vojvodina and its ethnic structure consists of social conditions among which the most important are the following: the war in former Yugoslavia in the nineties of the previous century, its disintegration and a period of transition that followed. As a result of the wars held in the former Yugoslavia, a large migratory wave occurred and brought down to Vojvodina the largest number of Serbian refugees since the colonization period after the Second World War and also influenced the emigration of a number of members of certain ethnic groups.

Furthermore, the trends of the members of different ethnic groups are also influenced by long-term factor of natural increase reduction, and this low or negative natural increase is typical for almost all ethnic groups, except for the Rroma. However, natural increase is also conditioned by social changes, i.e. by social crisis. If we consider the following determinants of declining birthrate: production (reduction in the share of the agricultural population), housing, health care, social protection, marrying later in life, then the impact of the social crisis on the birth rate is obvious (Stojsin, 2004). The consequences of transition should also be taken into account, the most important being: increase in unemployment rate, increase in the share of the poor population, increase in mortality rate, shortening of life expectancy, and they also affect both the natural and the mechanical movement of population.

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the changes in the ethnic structure were also influenced by the changes in national declaring of population, which applies in particular to a drastic decline of the number of Yugoslavs. Although some authors consider this change of national commitment to be a separate factor, it is still a consequence of political changes which occurred in Serbia during the “end of socialism”.

Monitoring of the changes in the characteristics of ethnic groups in Serbia, and therefore in Vojvodina has been hampered by changes that occurred in the census methodology during different censorial periods[1]. “The awakening of national consciousness in certain ethnicities” also influenced the problems in monitoring the number of ethnic groups, in addition to various census methodologies, “and

[1] These changes will not be mentioned in great details. See more at Breznik, 1991, Raduski, 2006

EQPAM Volume 4 No.2 JApril 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

then – the increase in the number of inhabitants who identify themselves as Yugoslavs" (Breznik 1991:163), and subjective perceptions[2] of the characteristics of the population.

Changes in the ethnic structure of population and awakening of the national consciousness which in recent years has not been typical only for Serbia, lead to an increasing interest of broader social public for the study of changes in the ethnic structure at the end of the 20th century. The process of population movements in Vojvodina is even more important for the researchers because of specific ethnic, cultural, educational and social characteristics of population. It is the process of population movements in Vojvodina that is even more important for the researchers, because of specific ethnic, cultural, educational and social characteristics of population. Due to our rich history and a limited space available, only some events from recent history that have had an impact on today`s ethnic structure of the population in Vojvodina will be accredited in this paper. In order to better understand the position of different ethnic groups, the following lines will analyze only some of the demographic and social characteristics of the largest ethnic groups in Vojvodina.

2. Depopulation in Vojvodina

Comparative monitoring of population in Vojvodina from 1869, the year when the first modern census in the region was carried out, until today has been possible only to some extent. During this period, the population In Vojvodina increased from 1,152,468 in 1869, to 1,931,809, as it was recorded in the last 2011 census. During this period, the population in Vojvodina was the most numerous in 1981, and amounted 2,034,782 people. Since then it began to decline, and in 1989 a negative natural increase was recorded for the first time. The only population increase since 1981 occurred in 2002, as a result of immigration of about 260 thousand displaced persons from former republics of SRJ.[3]

Although the influx of refugees increased the population in Vojvodina, the declining trend in the number of inhabitants continued after 2002. In the last intercensal period, from 2002 to 2011, the population declined by 100,183, which was the second decline in population in Vojvodina recorded after the Second World War. After the increase in the number of inhabitants in 2002, the population returned to the previous number. Thus the population of Vojvodina was smaller by 20,751 in 2011 than in 1981, when the decrease in the number of inhabitants started as a consequence of a very low, and later even negative, natural increase.

Vojvodina, the northern province of Serbia, has an ethnic structure of population which is much more diverse than the one in Central Serbia[4]. According to the last 2011 census, in the Republic of Serbia the majority of population are the Serbs with the share of 83.3% of total population (2011 census). In Vojvodina the share of the Serbs in total population Is not this high (66.8%) while the share of different ethnic groups in total population is 26.8%.[5] These data show that every third resident of Vojvodina belongs

[2]It should be noted that the principle of subjectivity actually "allows the change of national self-determination temporarily (due to the political, socio-psychological and other reasons) or permanently (due to the assimilation process)" (Raduski, 2006:181), and this is actually one of the reasons for difficulties in comparing changes in the number of ethnic communities.

[3] We shall not deal any further with population trends and the factors that influenced them, and the phenomenon of depopulation will be explained by analyzing the characteristics of ethnic groups.

[4] The Republic of Serbia is administratively divided into four regions: Vojvodina, Belgrade Region, the Region of South and East Serbia and the Region of Sumadija and West Serbia. A specific region is the Republic of Kosovo and Metohija, where there have not been recorded any data since the 2002 census, because its population shows no interest in participating in the census. Central Serbia includes Belgrade Region, the Region of South and East Serbia and the Region of Sumadija and West Serbia.

[5] The difference of 100% make the undecided population (4.19%), then the ones that pointed out their regional origin (1.48%) and the unknown (0.77%)

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

to an ethnic minority. In the rest of the paper it will be dealt only with the population of Vojvodina, due to the great wealth and diversity of numerous ethnic groups.

3. Impact of Migration on Changes in Ethnic Structure of Population

Migrations have had a major role in the demographic history of Vojvodina, but until the First World War it did not have the importance it has today. Migrations to Vojvodina, particularly of population of Serbian ethnic affiliation, are characteristic for the end of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century. In the first half of the 20th century, more precisely in the first two decades, only the colonization from Austria and Hungary were more significant. In that period, despite the large number of Hungarian immigrants, due to the massive emigration overseas from Vojvodina, migratory balance was negative.

After these minor migratory movements of population, the first major immigration wave which has had a long-term impact on the movement of population in Vojvodina and its characteristics was the colonization of population. Namely, after the Second World War, Yugoslavia faced "the greatest organized movement of our population from underdeveloped to developed areas" (Breznik 1991:26). Djurdjev points out that with the 1945 colonization Vojvodina received "216,306 colonists who by the time of the census accepted the colonization, and 21,293 more people who soon returned to where they had come from." (Djurdjev, 1995:65). Breznik mentions approximately the same number of immigrants and says that there were about 45,000 households with 246,000 of their members who came from predominantly passive areas to the fertile plains of Vojvodina (Breznik 1991:26). In the period from 1953 to 1960, migration balance was positive for the first time after the Second World War and amounted 31,458 inhabitants (Curcic, 2006:70).

At the same time, the period before and after the end of the Second World War was characterized by a large emigration of the German population which used to have a great share in the total population of Vojvodina. So, for example, according to the 1921 census, in total population of Vojvodina there were 21.9% Germans (Djurdjev, 1995-59), and according to the first census after the Second World War, in 1948 the number of Germans fell to only 8.8% from the German population that lived on these grounds about twenty years earlier.

The second major immigration wave, also forced, which hit Vojvodina and caused great changes in the structure of population, occurred in the nineties of the previous century. The population of mainly Serbian nationality was forced to leave their homes from war torn former Yugoslav republics, primarily from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This immigration wave in the period between two censuses from 1991 to 2002 directly influenced the increase of population. During this period natural increase was negative (-82,637), while according to the results from the 2002 census, in this eleven-year period the total of 213,195 inhabitants immigrated to Vojvodina. Out of this number 88.5% from the total number of immigrants came from former Yugoslav republics, 10.2% immigrated from Central Serbia, and 1.3% from abroad. This list shows that the share of refugee population in the total population of Vojvodina amounts 9.2%, which means that every tenth inhabitant of Vojvodina emigrated from the former republics of Yugoslavia.

This major influx of mostly Serb population has had a great impact on the big changes in the ethnic structure of population. Namely, before the forced migrations from the nineties, in 1991 national minorities participated in total population of Vojvodina with 41%. After the migration of Serbs from the former republics of Yugoslavia, in 2002 the share of national minorities fell to 30.6%, which represents a decrease of up to 10.5%.

EQPAM Volume 4 No.2 JApril 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Immigration of predominantly Serbian population influenced, at the same time, an increase in the share of this ethnic group. The share of Serbs in total population raised since 1991 from 56.8% to 65.1%, as it was in 2002.

These social changes also caused changes in the number of Yugoslavs. Due to disintegration of the country this ethnic group practically disappeared. Its members used to be mainly Serbs by their own will, but there were also a number of members of other ethnic groups. Their number has drastically declined. From 1991 when 174,225 residents of Vojvodina identified themselves as Yugoslavs, through 2002 when the number of Yugoslavs fell to merely 49,881, to 2011 when this number was only 12,176. This reduction in the number of Yugoslavs is a typical example of a subjective principle of declaring ethnicity. Since most of the Serbs used to declare themselves as Yugoslavs, the reduction in their number and the change in declaring ethnicity also influenced an increase in the number and proportion of Serbian population.

4. Ethnic Structure of Population in Vojvodina Today

According to the census of 2011, out of 1,931,809 inhabitants of Vojvodina, 66.8% are Serbs and 26.8% are the members of other ethnic groups (table 1). Compared to the previous census from 2002, the share of Serbs has slightly increased from 65.1% to the above mentioned 66,8%. **Serbs** make the largest ethnic group in Vojvodina. Although the share of Serbs in the total population of Vojvodina has increased, in the last decade of the twentieth century the number of Serbs did not increase, because in 2002 there were 178,084 less Serbs than in 1991. In 2011 there were 1,289,635 Serbs in Vojvodina. At the moment, the Serbs (66.7%) and the Hungarians (13.0%) constitute two largest ethnic groups in Vojvodina and together they make up four-fifths of its population.

The largest national minority according to the 2011 census are the Hungarians, who make the largest ethnic group of the whole Serbia as well (3.5%). This national minority includes 13.0% of the population of Vojvodina, which is 1.3% less than at the previous census (table 1). Slovaks make the second largest minority (2.6%), then come Croats (2.4%), the Rroma (2.2%).

Table 1. Ethnic structure of population of Vojvodina, 1991-2011

	population		structure, %		increase/decrease
ethnicity	1991	2011	1991	2011	1991-2011
total	2,013,889	1,931,809	100.0	100.0	- 82,080
Serbs	1,143,723	1,289,635	56.8	66.8	145,912
Bunjevci	21,552	16,469	1.1	0.8	-8,083
Yugoslavs	174,225	12,176	8.7	0.6	-162,049
Slovaks	63,545	50,321	3.2	2.6	-13,224
Hungarians	339,491	251,136	16.9	13.0	-88,355
Macedonians	17,472	10,392	0.9	0.5	-7,080
Rroma	24,366	42,391	1.2	2.2	18,025
Romanians	38,809	25,410	1.9	1.3	-13,399

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Ruthenians	17,652	13,928	0.9	0.7	-3,724
Croats	74,808	47,033	3.7	2.4	-27,755
Montenegrins	44,838	22,141	2.2	1.1	-22,697

Source: censuses from those years respectively
Note: Certain age structures of the ethnic groups whose share in the total population of Vojvodina exceeds 0.5% have been specified, while the difference to 100% makes all other ethnic groups.

Changes in the number and share of national minorities between two censuses are typical for most ethnic groups.

Thus, the proportion of the Hungarians, the largest ethnic minority in Vojvodina, decreased in 2011 compared to the previous census years. Before the social changes which have already been dealt with, the share of the Hungarians in total population of Vojvodina in 1991 was 16.9%, while in 2002 it was 14.3%. In 2011 the share of the Hungarians slightly decreased compared to the previous census year and was 13.0% of total population. In the above mentioned twenty-year period it was registered by 88,355 less members of the Hungarian minority. The 2011 census recorded a further decline in the share of the Hungarian nationality to 13.0%, and in the last decade the number of Hungarians in Vojvodina has been reduced by 39,071 members of this ethnic group (Stojsin, 2012). The reduction in the share of the largest ethnic minority in total population of Vojvodina was influenced by a number of factors. First of all, immigration of a large number of Serbs influenced the decrease in the share of all ethnic groups in total population. Furthermore, the decrease in their share was also influenced by a negative natural increase, which is typical for almost all ethnic groups. However, it should not be forgotten that a number of Hungarians emigrated to Hungary, an EU member. Namely, it has been estimated that after the war in the nineties of the previous century, and especially due to a major crisis which in the period of transition occurred not only in Serbia, but in Vojvodina too, 50,000 of Hungarians living in this province migrated to Hungary (Gabric-Molnar, 2014:573). The characteristics of this new type of migration are "job seeking in the international space, brain circulation, multiple citizenship and identity" (ibid, 581). Thus, most of the migrants to Hungary, an EU member, are highly qualified experts, students who want to study there because of greater mobility, but also those who are seeking for any kind of physical work on the periphery of Hungary.

In the last decade in municipalities where the Hungarians form the majority of population, their number and their share in total population of these municipalities also decreased. In 2011, most members of the Hungarian nationality lived in the municipality of Subotica (50,469, which makes 35.7% of the total population of Subotica) (table 2). Hungarians have absolute majority in five municipalities: Kanjiza (85.1%), Senta (79.1%), Ada (75.0%), Backa Topola (58.0%, Mali Idjos (54.0). Ten years ago the municipality of Coka also belonged to this group with 51.6%, but in 2011 the share decreased to 49.7%. Apart from Subotica and Coka, this nationality has a relative majority in the municipality of Becej (46.3%). In the period between two censuses the share decreased more in the municipalities where Hungarians had a relative majority, than in the ones where they had more than 75% of inhabitants.

The Hungarian population in Vojvodina is among the older ones. The average age in 2011 was 44.97 years. Such old average age influenced the gender structure inconsistency of the population so, due to a shorter life expectancy of men, out of the total number of Hungarians there are 47% men and 53% women.

The number of the members of other ethnic groups has also decreased as well as their share in the total population of Vojvodina.

EQPAM Volume 4 No.2 JApril 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

According to the 2011 census, 50,321 members of the **Slovak minority** were registered, which is 6,316 Slovaks less than in 2002. Approximately the same decrease was also noted between 1991 and 2002, when the number of Slovaks decreased by 6,908. Considering that negative birth rate is typical for the members of this minority too, and its values correspond to the reduction of the number of Slovaks, it is clear that a greater number of deaths than births is the major cause of reducing the number of Slovaks, and not migrations which are characteristic for the members of the Hungarian ethnic group for example (Stojsin, 2012).

The municipality where the Slovaks were the majority in 2011 is Backi Petrovac, 65.4% of the total population of this municipality, which is one per cent less than in 2002 (66.4%). They have a relative majority in the municipality of Kovacica, 41.8%. In this municipality the number of Slovaks decreased compared to 2002 by as much as 7% (in 2002 the share was 48.8%). Slightly more than half of Slovaks live in villages, 55.8% of the total population of this ethnic group, while 44.2% live in urban areas.

Romanians, who numbered 25,410 inhabitants in Vojvodina according to the 2011 census, are concentrated in the South Banat, where live 71% of the total number of Romanians in Vojvodina. Their number decreased by 5,009 since the census from 2002, while in the last decade of the twentieth century 8,390 less Romanians were recorded. The Romanians are not the majority population in any municipality (Stojsin, 2012).

Romanians are an ethnic group that has the greatest share of the rural population in their ethnic group. Namely, in 2011 it was recorded that even 73.8% of the Romanians in Vojvodina lived in villages, while only 26.2% lived in urban areas.

According to the 2011 census, after the Rroma, the Romanians had the lowest educational structure. There were 3.7% of the Romanians without primary education, and with an incomplete primary education there were 22.4% of the members of this ethnic group. 32.1% of the Romanians completed primary school, while 29,8% had a secondary school degree. 4.2% acquired higher education, and 7.5% had the university degree[6] (Djuric and co., 2014:134).

Table 2. Educational structure of some ethnic groups

ethnicity	no education	incomplete primary education	primary education	secondary education	higher education	university degree
Bunjevci	0.9	18.0	26.2	46.5	3.5	11.5
Croats	1.7	12.8	21.8	48.8	5.6	9.5
Hungarians	1.0	15.6	28.8	45.2	4.0	5.2
Rroma	19.5	34.2	33.3	1.5	0.3	0.3
Romanians	3.7	22.4	32.1	29.8	4.2	7.5
Slovaks	0.7	16.0	31.7	42.5	3.6	5.7
Serbs	2.4	10.4	19.6	50.4	6.0	11.4

Source: Djuric, Etnomozaik Srbije, 2014.

In 2011 the oldest population in Vojvodina was **Croat**, with an average age of 51.02 years, and the gender structure so changed that in the same year there were 41% of men and 59% of women living in Vojvodina. According to the 2011 census there were 47,033 Croats living in Vojvodina, which is by 9,513 Croats less than in 2002. In that year were recorded as much as 18,262 less Croats than in 1991. Of the

[6] Data for the educational structure of ethnic groups are given for ethnic groups on the territory of Serbia. However, as most of these ethnic groups live on the territory of Vojvodina, these data are relevant.

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

total number of Croats living in the Republic of Serbia, 86.6% live in Vojvodina. This decline in the number of Croats can be explained in the first place by emigrating into their home country, but also by aging population of this ethnic group (Stojsin, 2012).

Somewhat different characteristics, both demographic and social, have the Rroma in Vojvodina. Although the share of the Serbs in total population is increasing, the absolute number of the members of this ethnic group is not. The only ethnic group which has an increasing trend in both the number and the share in total population are the Rroma. The number of the Rroma has been increasing every year. Namely, in 1991 there were 24,366 members of the Rroma nationality living in Vojvodina, in 2002 29,057 and in 2011 42,391. In two decades from 1991 to 2011 the number of Rroma almost doubled. This increase is due to a high birth rate, but also because more and more people declare themselves as Rroma. However, the number of Rroma should by all means be regarded with a certain amount of caution. The major problem when determining the number of members of this ethnic group is the fact that a large number of the Rroma have not been registered. This group includes the Roma who have been displaced from Kosovo and Metohija, then those who have returned from European countries, those who live in illegal settlements and so on, so that "nongovernmental organizations and the state presume that the number of the Roma in Serbia is at least two times larger than the one shown in the official statistical documents" (Popovic, Stankovic, 2013:3). On the other hand, the number of the Roma is uncertain because of changed statements on ethnicity in certain census years. Recently, in order to increase the level of education of the Roma and their inclusion in the educational system, certain incentive measures have been introduced, and there is a growing number of people identify themselves as members of this ethnic group.

In spite of these measures, this ethnic group has the worst educational structure (2011 census). Even one fifth of this ethnic group 19.6% never went to primary school, while 34.2% has not completed it. By 2011, only 0.33% of the Rroma acquired high education and 0.32% a higher one. According to some research (Miladinovic, 2008) the Rroma are an ethnic group towards whom the Serbs, the major population in Vojvodina, have great social distance. After them come the Muslims and the Albanians. The position of this ethnic group is described by the author of this research as "traditional conflicts of these nations with the Serbs, which were revived and brought to the boiling point at the end of the 20th century" (Miladinovic, 2008:421), but the distance towards the Rroma, the nation with whom there were no ethnic conflicts, can be explained by numerous prejudices about negative characteristics of this ethnic group.

For the members of Rroma nationality it is characteristic that they are spatially distributed throughout Vojvodina. Most Rroma live in Novi Sad 8,4%, then in the municipality of Zrenjanin (3,410, that is 8% of the total population of Rroma in Vojvodina). The Rroma mostly live in developed municipalities: Subotica (2,959), Pancevo (2,118), Kikinda (1,981).

5. Age Structure of Ethnic Groups in Vojvodina

Age structure of population in Vojvodina belongs to a regressive type of age structure[7]. The population of Vojvodina is getting older every year. Share of the population younger than 19 in Vojvodina in the period of only nine years between the censuses of 2002 and 2011, decreased from 22.6% to 20.0%. On the other

[7] Sundbärg divided population according to the share of age contingents, so the population belongs to the **progressive type** if there is 40% of young population which belongs to the age group from 0 to 14 years, 50% of population from 15 to 49, and 10% of them older than 50 years; the age structure of the **stationary type** is made of 26,5% of population from 0 to 14 years old, 50,5% from 15 to 49 years old, while 23% of population is older than 50; the population of the **regressive type** contains 20% of young people from 0 to 14, 50% from 15 to 49 and even up to 30% older than 50.

EQPAM Volume 4 No.2 JApril 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

hand, share of the population older than 60 in the total population in Vojvodina was 21.4% in 2002 and 23.7% in 2011, which means that one of four people is older than 60. (Stojsin, 2014). Also, analysis of the share of population age groups of 20-39 and 40-59 showed that in all regions, except in South Backa, there were many more residents of 40-59 than from the younger group. It is obvious that in the period from 2002 to 2011 there were significant changes in the population age structure. The share of children in the total population of Vojvodina, which is an indicator of changes in the age structure, decreased from 15.6% in 2002[8] to 14.3%.

The average population age in Vojvodina, according to the last census, is 41.8%. Male population is on average 40.2, while female population is 43.3 years old. In urban areas the average population age is 41.4 and in villages it is 42.3.

Unfavorable age structure and average population age over 44 years is typical for most ethnic groups.

The population of Rroma is the youngest, with average age of 27.2 years in 2002, and 28.3 in 2011. Other nationalities with an average age under 30 years are only the Ashkali (25.8) and the Egyptians (26.5).

In 2011[9] the highest average age had the Slovenians, 57.8 years, the Croats 51.0, then the Bulgarians 50.9, the Bunjevci 48.7, the Hungarians 45.0, the Ruthenians 45.1, the Romanians 44.6 years. Such a high average age shows a deep demographic age of all ethnic groups, except for the Rroma. With an aging population and negative natural increase, the population of Vojvodina is going to continue to decline in the following period, regardless of the ethnicity. Unless there is larger mechanical inflow of population in the future, at the following census we can expect a continuation of the decline in the number of members of all ethnic groups, except for the Rroma.

Mother Tongues of National Minorities and the Possibilities of Their Use

According to the Law of protection of rights and freedoms of national minorities, national minorities can freely use their language both privately and in public (Article 10) and it can be equally used on the territories of the local government where they traditionally live (Article 11) Also, minorities are guaranteed the "right to get upbringing and education in their own language in institutions for pre-school, primary and secondary education" (Article 13).

According to the Ministry of Education, in places inhabited by ethnic minorities in Serbia, teaching at schools is performed in eight more languages beside the Serbian, while six more languages of minorities are taught as part of the subject called "mother tongue". The entire education in minority languages, from the first grade of primary school until the end of secondary school is provided in the following languages: Romanian, Hungarian, Albanian, Bosnian, Ruthenian, Slovac, Bulgarian and Croat. Likewise, pupils have the possibility to attend the elective course "mother tongue with elements of national culture" in four more languages: Czech, Bunjevaci, Vlach and Rroma language.[10] However, there is a certain drawback for members of minorities that are educated in their mother tongue: a large number of them after graduation do not speak Serbian language, which constitutes major obstacle to their integration and active participation in social, cultural and political life in Serbia. One of the possible solutions to this problem is the

[8] Source: 2011 Census, book 2
[9] The data are valid for ethnic groups in Serbia, since the ones for the regions are not yet available.
[10] Data is for the whole Serbian territory. *Source*:
http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/ci/story/124/Друштво/1836838/Матерњи+језик+се+мора+неговати.htm

European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities EQPAM
Volume 4, No.2, April 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

implementation of recommendations for improving the quality of teaching. The aim of these recommendations addressed by the Ombudsman "is that pupils, members of national minorities, after completion of schooling have an active knowledge of Serbian language, and the pupils of Serbian nationality are able to use the language of a national minority, as the language of the social environment"[11]. The solution lies in developing the standards for learning Serbian language as non-mother tongue, and in further development of education in languages of national minorities.

Like the ethnic structure of population, mother tongue structure is very diverse. Table 3 shows that most ethnic groups with a mother tongue which differs from Serbian language declared that their mother tongue was actually the language of their ethnic group. In these groups there is little difference in the number of their members and of the residents with this mother tongue (the Hungarians, the Romanians, the Slovacs, the Ruthenians).

On the other hand, the members of ethnic groups whose mother tongue is very similar to Serbian, the language of the major ethnic group, pleaded to a lesser extent that the language of their ethnic group is also their mother tongue. Because of the previously stated, there is a great difference between the number of members of ethnic groups and the number of people who speak the language of the group (the Bunjevci, the Croats). The inhabitants of Vojvodina whose mother tongue is Serbian are more numerous than the ones who declared themselves as Serbs, so it can be concluded that a part of the Croats, the Bunjevci, the Rroma and the members of other ethnic groups, as well as those undeclared, stated Serbian as their mother tongue.

Table 3. Ratio of the number of members of some ethnic groups and mother tongue

ethnicity	size of the ethnic group	mother tongue	differences
Bunjevci	16,469	6,821	-9,648
Croats	47,033	14,576	-32,457
Hungarians	251,136	241,164	-9,972
Rroma	42,391	27,430	-14,961
Romanians	25,410	24,133	-1,277
Slovaks	50,321	47,760	-2,561
Ruthenians	13,928	11,154	-2,774
Serbs	1,289,635	1,485,791	196,156

Source: 2011 Census

6. Participation in Political Life: The National Councils

According to the above mentioned law from 2009 and the Law on National councils of national minorities, national minorities can organize their national councils, as most of them have already done. These councils represent a minority "in the field of cultural autonomy and as a form of self-organizing of minority communities; they provide and institutionalize participation in decision-making and management on all issues in these fields."[12]

[11] *Source*: Ombudsman
[12] Source: http://www.pravamanjina.rs/index.php/sr_YU/ostvarivanje-prava/manjinska-samouprava/nacionalni-saveti-nacionalnih-manjina

EQPAM Volume 4 No.2 JApril 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

The purpose of forming these councils was greater possibility of exercising of rights to self-government in culture, education, informing and official usage of language and alphabet"[13]. However, the question is, to what extent are the members of national minorities interested in the formation of these councils and their work? The very interest is, in some way, an indicator of the necessity for participation in the political life of different ethnic groups.

The extent of the interest for taking part in political life, was shown by the elections for National councils of national minorities held in October 2014. The basic characteristic of most ethnic groups is a very low turnout in elections. It seems that the bigger an ethnic group, the smaller the interest for national councils. Thus, the biggest turnout within their national minority recorded the Bulgarians with 66.2% of members of their ethnic group who voted, then the Greeks with 64.5%, while for the Czech National Council voted 51% of Czechs registered. There were far fewer members of other ethnic groups who went to the elections for representatives of their national councils (47.8% of the Germans entitled to vote; 44% of the Ukrainians; 41% of the Slovenians; 41.5% of the Romanians; 40,5% of total number of the Hungarians; 40% of the Ruthenians; 40.3% of the Albanians; 37.6% of the Bunjevci; 35.6% of the Bosniak national minority; 33.4% of the Ashkali; 32% of the Vlachs; 31% of the Slovaks; 28% of the Rroma; 18.8% of the Egyptians)[14].

The functions of the National Council are, among other things, to establish institutions, associations, foundations and companies in the fields of culture, education, information and official use of language and alphabet; to propose the representatives of national minorities for the council for interethnic relations in the local government; to initiate adoption and monitor the implementation of laws and other regulations in the field of culture, education, information and official use of language and alphabet; to participate in the preparation of regulations and to propose the revision and amendment of the regulations which regulate the constitutionally guaranteed rights of national minorities in the fields of culture, education, information and official use of language and alphabet; it takes positions, takes initiatives and measures in relation to all matters that are directly related to the position, identity and position of national minorities (Article 10)[15].

7. Conclusion

Good relations among numerous ethnic communities are an important prerequisite for the development of a society, while the analysis of demographic, socio-economic and cultural differences between ethnic groups is essential in the countries or regions that are characterized by a large number of ethnic communities. This analysis has shown that numerous ethnic groups in Vojvodina differ in average age, educational structure and other demographic characteristics, but they also have a lot in common. The ethnic structure of bimodal type in which the Serbs and the Hungarians constitute four-fifths of the population in Vojvodina does not make big differences compared to smaller ethnic groups. The entire population of Vojvodina is getting older, the process of depopulation has engulfed the entire province and the number of members of all ethnic groups is decreasing. The exception is the Rroma nationality with its younger population, but with an extremely unfavorable educational structure of population. A particular problem is represented by a very poor and incomplete social statistics about this ethnic group.

[13] Protector of Citizens, Ombudsman, source: http://www.pravamanjina.rs/index.php/sr/aktivnosti/622-kvalitetno-obrazovanje-pripadnika-nacionalnih-manjina-na-maternjem-jeziku-je-u-interesu-celog-drutva

[14] Minority news: http://izbori.minoritynews.rs/propisi

[15] Article 10 of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities

ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

In Vojvodina, a multinational region, the number and the share of ethnic groups in total population has changed due to different factors. A negative and very low natural increase influenced the decrease in number of all ethnic groups, except for the Rroma. This factor has primarily influenced the change in number of the Slovaks, the Ruthenians, the Romanians. Mechanical movement of population influenced an increase in the share of the Serbs in total population of Vojvodina. Likewise, migrations have contributed to the reduction in the number of the Hungarians and the Croats. Due to the subjective feeling, or due to changes in declaring ethnicity, the number of the Yugoslavs decreased in the first place.

The need for integration and more active participation in social, cultural and political life does not in any case mean assimilation of different ethnic groups. On the one hand, it is necessary to accept the common characteristics, but also preserve the particularities. Active involvement in social life involves the knowledge of the Serbian language, but also the knowledge of the languages of national minorities, or the local language of the region where the members of the Serbian ethnic group live. A path like this, with preservation of specific characteristics of all ethnic groups regardless of size, leads to cultural diversity and richness of life together.

References

Breznik, Dušan (1991). *Stanovništvo Jugoslavije*, Titograd: Konzorcijum Instituta društvenih nauka

Etnički mozaik Srbije - prema podacima popisa stanovništva 2002. (2004). Beograd: Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava Srbije i Crne Gore.

Gabrić-Molnar, Iren, Slavić, Agneš (2014). The Impact of emigration from Serbia to Hungary on the Human Resources of Vojvodina, *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke*, Matica srpska Odeljenje za društvene nauke, br. 148, str. 571-581

Golubović, Petar; Marković-Krstić, Suzana (2006). Kretanje stanovništva Vojvodine tokom 20. i početkom 21. veka, *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke,* broj 121., Novi Sad.

Đurić, Vladimir, i saradnici (2014). *Etnokonfesionalni i jezički mozaik Srbije*, Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2011. u Republici Srbiji Beograd : Republički zavod za statistiku prikazi.

Đurđev, Branislav (2006). Kretanje stanovništva Srbije prema dosadašnjim popisima stanovništva, u: *Stanovništvo i domaćinstva Srbije prema popisu 2002. godine*, urednik Goran Penev, RZS, IDN CDI, Beograd.

Đurđev, Branislav (1995). *Posleratno naseljavanje Vojvodine*, Novi Sad: Matica srpska

Đurđev, Branislav (1986). Razvoj spoljnih migracija u Vojvodini, *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke,* broj 80, Novi Sad

Ćurčić, Slobodan (1996): *Broj stanovnika Vojvodine*, Novi Sad: Matica Srpska

Kicošev, Saša (1997). Promene u etničkoj i verskoj strukturi stanovništva Vojvodine tokom 20. veka, *Teme*, br. 3-4, str 255-264

Minority news (2014). http://izbori.minoritynews.rs/propisi

Miladinović, Slobodan (2008). Etnička i socijalna distanca prema Romima, *Sociološki pregled*, vol XLII, no., str. 417-437

Penev, Goran (2006). Vojvođanske migracije tokom 1990-ih godina: više doseljenih manje odseljenih, *Zbornik Matice Srpske za društvene nauke*, broj 121, 77-86

Raduški, Nada (2006). Struktura stanovništva prema nacionalnoj pripadnosti i maternjem jeziku, u *Stanovništvo i donaćinsta Srbije prema popisu 2002. godine*, (2006). ur. Goran Penev, Beograd: Republički zavod za statistiku, IDN, Društvo demografa Srbije.

Republički zavod za statistiku (2014) *Uporedni pregled broja stanovnika*. Knjiga 20, Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u 2011. godini, Beograd: Republički zavod za statistiku

Republički zavod za statistiku (2013). *Veroispovest, maternji jezik i nacionalna pripadnost.* Knjiga 4 (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2011). Beograd: RZS.

Republički zavod za statistiku (2012). *Stanovništvo Republike Srbije prema nacionalnoj pripadnosti*. Knjiga 1 (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2011). Beograd: RZS.

Republički zavod za statistiku (2012). *Starost i pol* (2012). Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2011. godine u Republici Srbiji, knjiga 2, Beograd: Republički zavod za statistiku Srbije.

Republički zavod za statistiku (2003*). Nacionalna ili etnička pripadnost*. Knjiga 1 (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2002). Beograd: RZS.

EQPAM Volume 4 No.2 JApril 2015
ISSN 2285 – 4916
ISSN-L 2285 - 4916

Republički zavod za statistiku (2003). *Veroispovest, maternji jezik i nacionalna ili etnička pripadnost prema starosti i polu*. Knjiga 3 (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2002). Beograd: RZS.

Republički zavod za statistiku (2003). *Pol i starost*. Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2002. godine, knjiga 2, Beograd: Republički zavod za statistiku Srbije.

Stanković J, Popović A. (2013). *Nacionalni izveštaj Srbija,* Niš: Ekonomski fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu, http://www.eknfak.ni.ac.rs/dl/FINALLY/Nacionalni-izvestaj-Srbija.pdf

Stevanović, Radoslav (2005). Izbeglištvo i demografski rast stanovništva Srbije, *Stanovništvo*, 1-4, str. 43-60

Stevanović, Radoslav (2006). Migrantsko stanovništvo Srbije, u: *Stanovništvo i domaćinstva Srbije prema popisu 2002. godine*, urednik Goran Penev, RZS, IDN CDI, Beograd.

Stojšin, Snežana (2014). Specificity of Population Trends in Vojvodina – The 2011 Census, *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke*, Matica srpska Odeljenje za društvene nauke, Br. 148, str. 471-479

Stojšin, Snežana (2013). Ethnic Groups in Vojvodina at the Beginning of the 21st Century, ed. Šljukić, Srđan, Šljukić, Marica, *Changes and Obstacles*, Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, Department of Sociology, p. 214-226

Stojšin, Snežana (2012). Basic Characteristics of the Population Movement of the City of Novi Sad, *International Scientific conference*: *Population: Development/Crisis* Proceedings, editor: Alpar Lošonc; Novi Sad: University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Tehnical Sciences, r. 135-143

Stojšin, Snežana (2011). Promene u kretanju stanovništva Vojvodine, Tematski zbornik *Društvo, struktura, promene,* ur. Srđan Šljukić, Novi Sad: Odsek za sociologiju, Filozofski fakultet, str 224-243

Stojšin, Snežana (2006). Promene u kretanju stanovništva grada Novog Sada u periodu između dva popisa, *Zbornik za društvene nauke Matice srpske*, br. 121, Novi Sad

Stojšin, Snežana (2004). Društvo u tranziciji i promene u kretanju stanovništva – primer Vojvodine *Sociološki pregled* XXXVIII, januar-jun, str. 355-365

UNHCR (2002). Statistical Yearbook Country, 2002, str. 306-307

Zakon o zaštiti prava i sloboda nacionalnih manjima, Službeni glasnik RS br. 72/2009 http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_zastiti_prava_i_sloboda_nacionalnih_manjina.htm

http://www.pravamanjina.rs/index.php/sr/aktivnosti/622-kvalitetno-obrazovanje-pripadnika-nacionalnih-manjina-na-maternjem-jeziku-je-u-interesu-celog-drutva