MARITAL STATUS AND ETHNICITY IN BAČKA ACCORDING TO THE 2002 CENSUS

Milan CVETANOVIĆ
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Science, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management

Bojan DJERČAN
University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Science, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management

Abstract: The subject of this paper is the marriage structure of the population of Bačka, analyzed by the dominant ethnic groups, according to data of the last conducted census in 2002. As in previous censuses, the data of the marital status in 2002 is related to the formal legal status of persons (legal marital status), and not to the factual situation within the family community. This means that the persons living in informal alliance gave information on the formal legal marital status that preceded their current status.

Rezumat: Tema acestui articol este starea civilă a populației din Bačka analizată din prisma grupurilor entice predominante, în conformitate cu datele ultimului recensământ din 2002. Așa cum s-a observat la recensământele anterioare, datele referitoare la starea civilă în 2002 sunt concordanță cu statutul legal al persoanelor (stare civilă legală) și nu de situatia din cadrul comunității. Aceasta înseamnă că persoanele care trăiesc în concubinață au declarat statutul lor legal dinaintea stării lor civile actuale.

Key words: marital status, celibacy, divorce, Bačka, Vojvodina

Cuvinte cheie: stare civilă, celibat, divort, Bačka, Vojvodina

1. INTRODUCTION

The population has a great importance in all spheres of the social and economic life, whether we talk about the total population, natality and mortality or the population structures in various categories. The marital status is one of the most important factor of population reproduction. In most countries, so in Serbia, the birthrate is mostly a result of legal marriage. The source for marital status structure are censuses performed in substantial time intervals (usually 10 years). Vital statistics also follow the natural movement of population, revealing data on the number of marriages.

Various science and scientific disciplines deal with the topic of marriage. In addition to demography, sociology, statistics, ethnology and history, important is the theological literature (ecclesiastical law), as well as ethics and anthropology.

An analysis of the population requires to know the society which directly affects the marriage. Sladjana Nedeljkovic in her work, "Sources for the Study of Movement and
Structure of the Population - with particular emphasis on the structure of the population according to marital status" from 2005, says that we are witnessing an increasing number of "informal partnership models". It is almost a rule for young people to "live together" before deciding to conclude a formal legal marriage (Nedeljković, 2005).

Mirjana Bobić in her work "Marriage in the Population of Vojvodina at the Beginning of the Third Millennium" from 2006., represents the thesis of the "blocked second demographic transition in Vojvodina." At the beginning of the new millennium in Vojvodina is an undergoing demographic development, which started in the late 60s in the developed European regions, and in case of countries in postsocialistic transformation from the 90s.

The basic of this demographic phase is the "decline of the universality of marriage, the postponement of the formation of a union for later years, expanding the variety of lifestyles in pairs outside of marriage, the increase of divorce and instable unions, celibacy and birth outside the marriage, increasing gender equality in the private and the public sphere, with further fertility decline to very low levels, and consequently, accelerating the aging of the population." Bačka, as well as the entire Vojvodina, follows these trends, with a certain delay. The modernization of marriage, loosening the institution of living in pairs, abandonment of traditional values, individualization and diversification of life flows are the main features of marriage in Bačka (Bobić, 2006).

2. MARITAL STATUS AND ETHNICITY IN BAČKA ACCORDING TO THE 2002 CENSUS

Bačka is one of the three regions in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Its natural borders are the Danube on the west towards Croatia, on the south towards the region of Syrmia and the Tisza River on the east towards the region of Banat. The northern neighbour is Hungary. The administrative centre is Novi Sad.

The population of Bačka according to the 2002 Census is 1,022,488. There are as many as 26 ethnicities living in Bačka, the majority are the Serbs 559,700 (54.7%), followed by Hungarians (221,882 or 21.7%), Slovaks, Croats, Montenegrins, Ruthenians, Yugoslavs, Roma, etc. (Kicošev et al., 2006.)
The number of marriages in Bačka between 1971-2001 is in constant decline, the decrease is 48%, taken the first and last year of the period in consideration. The nuptiality rate declined from 9.16 to 4.8 ‰. The reduced marriages are connected to the fear among
young people to establish a family due to poor financial situation, but also accepting an informal union and marriage in later years as patterns from the West (Kicošev et al., 2006.) The population 15y and older in Bačka according to the 2002. census was taken in consideration, that is 888,329 persons.

Tab. 1. The population of Bačka by municipalities (2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>18,994</td>
<td>16,051</td>
<td>84.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apatin</td>
<td>32,813</td>
<td>28,070</td>
<td>85.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bač</td>
<td>16,268</td>
<td>13,547</td>
<td>83.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bačka Palanka</td>
<td>60,966</td>
<td>51,538</td>
<td>84.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bačka Topola</td>
<td>38,245</td>
<td>32,340</td>
<td>84.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bački Petrovac</td>
<td>14,681</td>
<td>12,380</td>
<td>84.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bečej</td>
<td>40,987</td>
<td>34,139</td>
<td>83.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanjiža</td>
<td>27,510</td>
<td>23,194</td>
<td>84.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kula</td>
<td>48,353</td>
<td>40,437</td>
<td>83.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali Idoš</td>
<td>13,494</td>
<td>11,133</td>
<td>82.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novi Sad</td>
<td>299,294</td>
<td>252,783</td>
<td>84.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odžaci</td>
<td>35,582</td>
<td>30,278</td>
<td>85.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senta</td>
<td>25,568</td>
<td>21,497</td>
<td>84.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sombor</td>
<td>97,263</td>
<td>82,845</td>
<td>85.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srbobran</td>
<td>17,855</td>
<td>14,755</td>
<td>82.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subotica</td>
<td>148,401</td>
<td>125,519</td>
<td>84.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temerin</td>
<td>28,275</td>
<td>23,509</td>
<td>83.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titel</td>
<td>17,050</td>
<td>14,041</td>
<td>82.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vrbas</td>
<td>45,852</td>
<td>37,857</td>
<td>82.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žabalj</td>
<td>27,513</td>
<td>22,416</td>
<td>81.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,022,488</strong></td>
<td><strong>888,329</strong></td>
<td><strong>86.88</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The largest share of population 15y and older is within the municipalities of West Bačka - Apatin (85.55%), Sombor (85.18%) and Odžaci (85.09%). Two municipalities in Potisje have the smallest share - Žabalj (81.47%) and Titel (82.35%), as well as Mali Idoš (82.50%) in Central Bačka.

Now let us take a closer look on the regional distribution according to the share of unmarried, married, divorced and widowed in Bačka’s municipalities, and the divergence between major ethnicities. The following maps are done in ArcGis using the 2002 Census data.

According to Figure 3 the municipalities of Central Bačka are the ones with the highest share of bachelors. The maximum occurs in the municipality of Vrbas, where in average every third (33.5%) male 15y and older is single. Areas with the smallest share of
bachelors are Southern Bačka and municipalities in NE along the Tisza River. The minimum occurs in the municipality of Ada (28.6%).

Fig. 3. The share of bachelors (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)

Procentul celibatarilor în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 4 The share of bachelorette (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)

Procentul celibatarelor în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka
As the Figure 4 shows us, the municipalities of Novi Sad and Vrbas have the largest share of bachelorettes. Maximum occurs in the municipality of Novi Sad, where in average every fourth (24.6%) female 15y and older is a bachelorette. The reason could be a greater emancipation of women and patterns of an urban lifestyle. The area with the lowest share of bachelorette is clearly distinctive – along the Tisza River (those are municipalities with a Hungarian majority). In some parts of Southern Bačka the share is under average as well. The minimum occurs in the municipality Kanjiža (16.2%).

**Fig. 5. The share of married male (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)**

Municipalities in SW Bačka have high share of married male. The maximum occurs in the municipality Temerin (63.5%). The lowest share of married male can be found within the municipalities in Central and Northern Bačka. The minimum occurs in Senta (58.9%).
Municipalities along the Tisza River and in SW Bačka have the largest share of married female. The maximum occurs in the municipality of Titel (61.3%). The lowest share can be found in the municipalities of Subotica, Novi Sad and Vrbas. The minimum occurs in Subotica, where about the half (53.4%) of 15y and older female are in marriage.

As the Figure 7 shows, the share of widowers is in general low, knowing that female have longer life expectancy than men. Municipalities along the Danube and Tisza River have the largest share of widowers.

The maximum occurs in the municipality Odžaci (5.1%). The lowest share is found in Southern Bačka. The minimum occurs in the municipality of Novi Sad (3.6%).
Fig. 7 The share of widowers (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul văduvilor în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 8 The share of widows (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
A large area in Bačka has a high proportion of widows, especially municipalities along the northern flows of Danube and the Tisza River. The maximum occurs in the municipality of Bač, where in average every fifth female (20.8%) outlived her husband. The lowest share is found in the municipalities of Novi Sad and Temerin. The minimum occurs in the municipality of Novi Sad (14.7%).

Fig. 9. The share of divorced male (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul bărbaților divorțați în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

The greatest shares of divorced male occur in the municipalities of Northern Bačka and the ones along the Tisza River, from Subotica to Bečej. These municipalities have Hungarian majority or significant proportion Hungarians. The maximum occurs in the municipality of Senta (5.7%). The lowest share occurs in Central and South Bačka. Minimum occurs in the municipality of Bač (2.5%).

As the Figure 11. shows, the largest share of divorced female is in the two municipalities with the most inhabitants – Novi Sad and Subotica, and in some municipalities along the Tisza River. The maximum occurs in Subotica (7.4%). The lowest shares are recorded in the municipalities of South Bačka, the minimum was recorded in the municipality of Titel (3%). The reason could be the more patriarchal society in the area, where the female rarely reach in a request for divorce, even if the marriage might not be perfect.
Fig. 10  The share of divorced female (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul femeilor divorțate în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 11  The share of Serb bachelors (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul celibatariilor sârbi în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)
The largest share of Serb bachelors are found in municipalities of North and Central Bačka, along the axis Subotica-Vrbas, and in some municipalities along the Tisza River. Those are all municipalities where Serbs have share around or less than 50%. The maximum occurs in the municipality of Mali Idoš (34.8%). The lowest share prevails in SW Bačka. The minimum occurs in the municipality of Ada (28.8%).

![Map of Serb bachelorettes by municipality in Bačka (2002)](image)

**Fig. 12 The share of Serb bachelorettes (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)**

Procentul celibatelor sârboaice in municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

The largest share of Serb bachelorettes is concentrated in the municipalities of Northern Backa, and in the municipalities of Novi Sad and Temerin in the south. The maximum occurs in Subotica, where in average every fourth (26.2%) Serb female 15y and older is unmarried. The minimum occurs in the municipality of Titel (18.2%).
Fig. 13  The share of Hungarian bachelors (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)

Procentul celibatarilor maghiari în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

On the Figure 13 it is clearly visible that the lowest share of Hungarian bachelors is along the Danube (the minimum is in Bački Petrovac - 18.2%), while in other parts of Bačka the share is medium. There is only one municipality with higher share, Žabalj, with 35.7%. All municipalities with a Hungarian majority belong to the medium category.

As we seen on the previous figure, the unmarried Hungarian females have a low share in Western Bačka, along the Danube as well (the minimum is in Bačka Palanka, 11.4%). In the rest of Bačka the share is medium, municipalities with Hungarian majority included. High share has only Bački Petrovac (21.1%). However, it must be noted that here lives the lowest share of Hungarians in Bačka.
Fig. 14 The share of Hungarian bachelorettes (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002) Procentul celibataretelor maghiare în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 15 The share of Yugoslav bachelors (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002) Procentul celibatariilor iugoslavi în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)
The majority of those declaring themselves as Yugoslavs are from multiethnic marriages or those refused to declare themselves as one of the ethnicities in Bačka. The share of Yugoslav bachelors is high across Bačka in general. The highest share is in the NE Bačka. The maximum occurs in Ada, with a share of 43.2%. The lowest occurrence is in Southern Bačka, the minimum is in Odžaci - 27.6%. Subotica, where we have the highest share of Yugoslavs in Bačka is in the category with a high share of bachelors.

As well as the male, the female Yugoslavs have, comparing with other ethnicities in Bačka a high share of unmarried (Figure 16). A relative low share is visible in Western and Central Bačka. The minimum occurs in Odžaci (17.6%). The rest of Bačka has a medium share. Higher share is only in municipalities Ada, and Bački Petrovac, in which the maximum occurs - 38.5%, respectively. Also, there is the lowest share of Yugoslavs in Bačka.

As no other ethnicity in Bačka, mentioned in this paper, the Roma most outstanding with their low share of married (Figure 17). It must be said, that many Roma live in unlegal marriages. The lowest share is in Central Bačka, the minimum is in Vrbas, where only every third (33, 3%) Roma male is in marriage. In the rest of Bačka the share is predominantly medium. A surprisingly high share is visible in Temerin, where as high as 90% of Roma male is married. It must be noted, that Temerin has only 9 persons declared themselves as Roma in 2002.As the males, Roma females have a low share of married. Looking at the map, there is now rule for the distribution of the various categories. The maximum occurs Mali Idoš (66.7%), the minimum in the neighboring Vrbas, where only every fourth (23.3%) Roma female, 15y and older, is married.
Fig. 17 The share of married Roma male (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul bărbaţilor rromi căsătoriţi în municipaliităţile regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 18 The share of married Roma female (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul femeilor căsătorite rrome în municipalităţile regiunii Bačka (2002)
The share of Serb females who outlived their husbands is the largest along the northern flow of the Tisza River and in some municipalities along the Danube (Figure 19). The maximum is in Kanjiža (22.5%). Lower share occurs in Novi Sad and Subotica, municipalities with the largest population. The minimum is in Subotica (13.1%).

Fig. 19. The share of Serb widows (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul văduvelor sârboaice în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 20. The share of Hungarian widows (in %) in Bačka by municipalities
Procentul văduvelor maghiare în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)
As the Figure 20 shows, the highest share of Hungarian widows in Bačka is along the Danube, the maximum is in Bač, where in average almost every third (30%) Hungarian female, outlived her husband. The lowest share is in Bački Petrovac (13.2%). In municipalities with a Hungarian majority the share has medium value.

Fig. 21 The share of Croat widows (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul văduvelor croate în municipalitățile regiunii Bačka (2002)

The share of Croat widows is the highest in SW Bačka and some other peripheral municipalities. The maximum occurs in Kanjiža, where in average every third (30.2%) Croat female outlived her husband.

The lowest share is along the Tisza River and in Northern Bačka. The minimum is in Srbobran (14.1%). Interesting is the difference in the share between the municipality of Apatin, where we have the highest share of Croats in Bačka and Subotica, with a large concentration of Croats as well.
Slovak bachelors have a high share in some municipalities along the Tisza River (the maximum is in Kanjiža, 50%, Figure 22). The lowest share is in the NE Bačka. The minimum occurs in Subotica (14.1%). The municipality Bački Petrovac, which has the largest share of Slovaks in Bačka belongs to the medium share category.

Fig. 22 The share of Slovak bachelors (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul celibatarilor slovaci in municipalitatii regiunii Bačka (2002)

Fig. 23 The share of Slovak bachelorettes (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002)
Procentul celibatarelor slovace in municipalitatii regiunii Bačka (2002)
The share of unmarried Slovak female is high in some municipalities along the Tisza River and in some Central Bačka municipalities (Figure 23). The maximum occurs in Srbobran (40%). Low share is along the axis Sombor - Bečej. The minimum is in Sombor (8.1%). As by the males, Bački Petrovac has a medium share.

![Map showing the share of unemployed Montenegrin females in Bačka by municipalities (2002)](image)

**Fig. 24 The share of Montenegrin bachelorettes (in %) in Bačka by municipalities (2002) Procentul celibatelor montenegrine în municipiile regiunii Bačka (2002)**

In most municipalities the share of unmarried Montenegrin female is quite high (23.9% and more), especially in the Northern Bačka, and along the axis Sombor - Novi Sad. The maximum is in Senta (39.5%). The municipality of Vrbas, where we have the largest share of Montenegrins in Bačka, belongs to the same category. The lowest share of unmarried Montenegrins is in some parts along the flow of the Danube and the Tisza River. The minimum is in Žabalj (8.3%).

3. **CONCLUSION**

The number of marriages in Bačka is in a downtrend since the 70s. The nuptiality rate in the period decreased from 9.2 to 4.8‰. The reasons could be the worsening wellbeing and copying marriage patterns from developed countries as well. This paper takes in consideration the ratio of bachelor, married, widowed and divorced population in Bačka on a commune level, according to the 2002 census. The patterns of seven ethnicities, both sexes, are analysed. The findings show, that, in average, around one third of the male population over 15 years are bachelors, while at the opposite sex the ratio is about one fifth. The ratio of widows is in average three times higher then of widowers. The Roma population has the largest bachelor ratio, followed by persons who declared themselves as Yugoslavs. The ratio of Hungarian and Croatian widows is higher than at other ethnicities, in more communes even around 30%. In the more urban communes the divorce ratio is higher. In most of the cases, a strict regionalisation is possible.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was supported by the Ministry of Science of the Republic of Serbia (project no. 146017)

REFERENCES


Microsoft Encarta, CD-ROM.
