



Urban and Demographic Development of Suburban Zones in Vojvodina

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Abstract

From beginning of industrial era in the development of humanity, towns have tendency toward incessantly widening. During the last one hundred years, and especially after the end of World War II, towns got big demographic, economic and social significance, so that sudden urbanization took place in the entire World.

A town is a complex social phenomenon, so it is not easy to define it. There are definitions of a town from geographical, sociological, economic and urban aspects. Complex definitions of towns, which take into consideration, beside functional, also morphologic and other characteristics, name four basic characteristics, name four basic characteristics: closure, that is the compactness of the settled place, the size of the settlement, the city way of life in the settlement and the minimal centrality, as well as polyfunctionality.

Another big problem is the way of differing town from village settlements, because different ways of dividing these two terms give different levels of urbanization. In the World the number of people is most often taken as the determiner for the town type of settlement, but also the way of life of its people, the central functions of the settlement, physiognomic criterion and different combined criterions.

The problem of suburbs zone of large towns is connected with bad ecological condition that are result of dislocation "dirty technology" from towns centre's. This paper examines the development of settlements in the suburban zones on the territory of Vojvodina Province with the parameters "growth of

the number of inhabitants" and "share of the non agrarian population".

The secondary urbanization represents one of the phases in urbanization and is characterized by the process of divergent influence of the city and territorial expanding of urban forms, which create new urban regions - the suburbs. These areas form the boundaries between urban and rural environment. The size of the suburban zone is a direct result of the size and functions of the city. The intensive communication of the modern city with its surrounding resulted in significant changes in the suburban zone, above all in land use, in increasing number of settlements on a smaller territory, forming of weekend settlements, etc. the changes in land use include: reduction of agricultural areas, dividing land properties and creating construction lots, unlawful building and the environmental damages caused by urbanization of suburbs (for e.g. the allocation of industrial zones and bypasses in the suburbs). These changes first occur in settlements nearest to the city and along main roads. The best indicators for the extent of urban transformations are the demographic parameters: decrease in the number of inhabitants employed in agriculture, and the growth in number of daily migrants. In the further phases of transformation these settlements loose their primary function (agricultural production) and obtain residential function. Except these demographic and economic changes the suburban settlements go through certain morphological transformation: the dominant type of house changes, buildings and other objects related to agricultural production are being modified or replaced with other objects, etc. At the same time suburbs are gradually merging with the city, which

forms the "regions of the city". The basic problem in studying the process of secondary urbanization is to determine the adequate parameters for differentiation of these zones. The most appropriate indicators of urban transformation would be the economic and morphological parameters, but the records which refer to these parameters, are rare and incomplete in our statistics, so the choice is nearly entirely limited to demographic data. The optimal solution to this problem is to analyze the population growth (above all, the immigration), the changes in professional orientation of the population, more precisely the rate and level of de-agricarisation.

The first census after World War II was conducted in 1948. The method, which was used to distinguish urban from rural settlements, was the administrative legal method, and in this way only 9 towns were recognized in Vojvodina. Such a small number of towns was the result of the applied criterion, although in fact about 20 towns existed in the province (if M. Macura's method was applied, which analyses the percentage of non-agricultural

population in the entire population). However that period was characterized by decrease in urban population and rapid growth of rural population. The urban depopulation was caused by the previous war-time events, above all the expatriation of Germans and the post war colonization (1945-1948), which was entirely directed to rural areas and led to increase in rural population.

Only the next census in 1953 registered the first signs of intensifying urban concentration. This time a different method, the method of M. Macura was applied and it gave the result 23 urban settlements in Vojvodina, with 380,735 inhabitants (or 31% of the province's population). For the first time a new category, the combined type of settlement was established (20 settlements with 126,412 inhabitants), although it wasn't related to the process of secondary urbanization. Namely, in that period the urban functions and processes were not developed, so the cases of suburban growth around cities were rare. One example is the rapid growth of villages in the vicinity of Novi Sad.

Table 1. Changes in number of combined type of settlements and the number of inhabitants in Vojvodina in the period 1953-1971

Year	Number of combined types of settlements	Number of inhabitants
1953	20	126,412
1961	46	260,926
1971	84	396,249

More noticeable differences in demographic development of towns and villages can be recognized by analyzing the results of census in year 1961, when nearly every town had a significant population growth, while the majority of villages stagnated or gone through the process of depopulation. (Curcic, 1993). According to M. Macura's method the number of urban settlements was 34, with 710,819 inhabitants, in other words the level of urbanization was 38.8% (Kicošev, 1996). The number of combined type of settlements was 46, with 260,926 inhabitants. In this period the unplanned migration from other parts of former Yugoslavia to Vojvodina has ended and a new process of migration from rural areas to urban settlements began. These migrations were not always directed to the central zones of the cities, but they were often directed to the neighbouring settlements around them. This was the beginning of the forming of suburban zones around larger cities like Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica, Zrenjanin, Pancevo, as well as the part of the Srem region near Belgrade. The most significant changes

took place in the period between 1961 and 1971, when an explicit polarization occurred in the development of urban and rural settlements. In this period the number of inhabitants in nearly every city increased, while only the fifth of rural settlements had a population growth (Curcic, 1993). According to M. Macura's criterion, which was used in the 1971 census for the last time, the number of urban settlements in Vojvodina was 47, and the number of urban population reached the number of 925,261 (or the 48.7% of the province's population). The number of combined type of settlements was 84 with 369,249 inhabitants (Kicošev, 1996). During this period the population growth and also the process of secondary urbanization of suburban regions, neighboring villages and the peripheral settlements around the cities intensified, as a result of the strengthening industrialization, as well as the migration flow from villages towards the cities. These processes caused changes in the professional orientation of the suburban population (transition from agricultural production to non-agricultural employment, in other

words-deagrarization), but the morphologic and economic characteristics of the settlements remained unchanged. That means that the peripheral settlements modified their agricultural functions to residential function, they became the so-called "sleeping quarters" of the urban industrial workers. The main reasons for the concentration of industrial workers in these areas are above all the lower land prices and the more convenient conditions of dwelling.

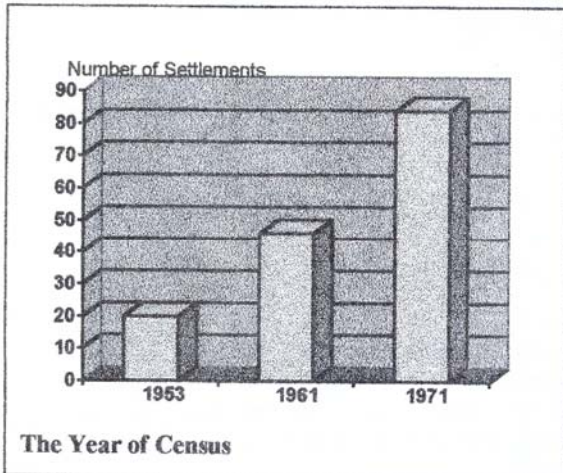


Figure 1. Changes in number of combined type of settlements in Vojvodina in the period 1953-1971.

The next census in 1981 registered the same tendencies as in the previous period, but with some decrease in their intensity. This was the period when the process of depopulation intensified in Vojvodina, as a result of negative migration balance and negative natural growth rate. The migration from rural areas to towns within the province continued, the number of urban population reached 1,110,356 with the level of urbanization rising to 54.4% (Kicošev, 1996). The peripheral settlements around larger cities (Novi Sad, Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica, Zrenjanin, Pancevo and others) grew caused by incoming flow of migrants, which also resulted in forming of smaller regional centres (Somdor, Kikinda, Vrbas, Backa Palanka, Indija, Senta, etc.).

The latest census from 1991 hasn't showed any significant changes. The process of depopulation continued and intensified, so the number of the province's inhabitants decreased in comparison to the census in 1981. However, the number of urban population increased to 1,121,594 inhabitants, and the level of urbanization reached the figure of 55.7% (Kicošev, 1996). This illustrates the fact that the process of depopulation is more related to rural than to urban or suburban areas. The changes in the spatial distribution of suburban zones were not significant,

since the majority of those settlements retained or increased the number of inhabitants and the percentage of non-agricultural population.

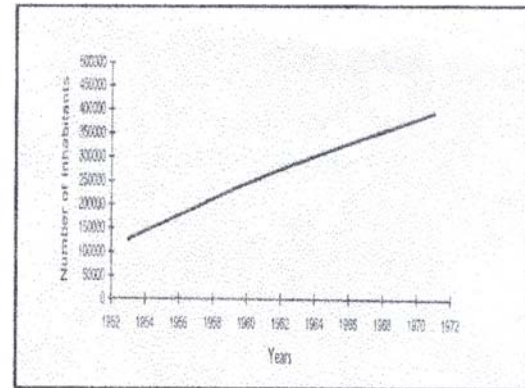


Figure 2. Changes in number of inhabitants in combined type of settlements.

Since the war broke out in former Yugoslavia the great number of refugees led to deterioration in the situation in urban and suburban areas. Although, the great inflow of population created good chances for the demographic recovery of the province, on the other hand, it had very negative influence on the development of urban and suburban zones. Problems which were already present before the war, like the unplanned and unlawful building are intensified, putting a further strain on the decaying infrastructure. This caused certain environmental hazards and damages in the suburban zones.

References

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