

Changes in the Number and Territorial Distribution of Religious Groups in Vojvodina During 20th Century According to the Results of Censuses

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Abstract *The goal of the paper is to point to the similarities and differences in the structure and development of unemployment after the 1990s. At the same time, in order to point to the possibilities and advantages of the international mobility of labour force as one of the possible ways to overcome unemployment, the data about the unemployment trends in the Vojvodina region will be compared with the data from the bordering regions in Hungary (Csongrad and Bacs-Kiskun) and Romania (Timis and Caras-Severin).*

Key words *human resources, employment, unemployment, Vojvodina, Serbia, Romania, Hungary*

Religious and ethnic structures are the only population structures that are based on subjective convictions, and not on any formal demographic criteria. These two structures are linked to each other, although it is not necessary for them to coincide. However, when the results of these two structures are combined, what we get is a more precise ethnic picture of a certain area. Moreover, there are cases when a separate entity developed out of one religious group (Muslims, i.e. Bosnians in former Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sikhs in India and other similar groups). Since Vojvodina is ethnically the most heterogeneous region in Europe, it is understandable that the religious structure of its population is very similar. For the analysis of this demographic characteristic (religious affiliation) on the territory of Vojvodina, we used the results of seven censuses, all of which had a question about the religion included in them. The first two censuses were conducted by Hungarian Federal Bureau of Statistics (1900. and 1910.), while the others were conducted by Bureaus of Statistics of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1921), Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1931), Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FNRJ) (1953), Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) (1991) and Yugoslav Federal Republic (SRJ) (2002). Although the chronological disposition does not offer an optimal continuity, their results can be used for one universal analysis, i.e. for noticing basic changes and trends during the period observed.

1900. census

Seven religious groups were distinguished in this census: Roman Catholics (or Catholics), Uniates, members of the Orthodox Church, three Protestant groups (Lutherans, Calvinists and Unitarians) and Israelites (or Judeans).

In 1900. Catholics were the most numerous religious element in Vojvodina with 679.533 members. This religious group mainly consisted of Hungarians, Croats, Bunjevatzes, Shokatzes and Germans. Members of this religion had a share of 47,4% in a total religious structure of population in Vojvodina. They had an absolute majority in 132 different places in Vojvodina (there were 342 places identified in this census), while they had a relative majority in 5 of them. It is interesting that Gakovo and Kolut belong to this group; they are the only two settlements in this census that have an absolute homogeneous religious structure (100% of Catholics). Both of these places were inhabited by Germans.

There were 15.022 Uniates, i.e. their share in the religious structure of Vojvodina was only 1%. This religious group is represented exclusively by Ruthenians. Uniates had an absolute majority in two towns: Ruski Krstur and Kucura, while there were no towns where they had a relative majority.

There were 556.128 members of the Orthodox Church and with a share of 38,8% they were second numerous religious group in Vojvodina. Members of this religious group are mainly Serbs and Romanians. Members of the Orthodox Church had an absolute majority in 164 places in Vojvodina, and relative majority in 7.

The census distinguished three communities of Protestants (or of Reformed Church, i.e. of Evangelists). The most numerous were Protestants of Augsburg Confession (Lutherans). There were 109.912 of them, and they represents 7,7% of the population in Vojvodina. Members of this group are almost all Slovaks from Vojvodina, and some Germans. They had an absolute majority in 23 different places, and relative in two. All Slovak settlements in Vojvodina

Table 1. *Changes in the religious structure of population in Vojvodina during 20th century (absolute numbers)*

	1900.	1910.	1921.	1931.	1953.	1991.	2002.
Orthodox	556.128	593.215	611.940	689.296	775.722	1,170.694	1,401.475
Catholics	679.533	719.471	724.958	727.213	561.617	458.683	388.313
Protestants	152.980	160.221	159.182	158.280	105.173	78.925	72.159
Judeans	23.510	22.218	19.528	-	651	284	329
Muslims	-	-	1.870	1.654	3.254	9.775	8.073
Other	20.597	20.179	18.316	47.715	266.202	295.528	161.643
TOTAL	1,432.748	1,515.304	1,535.794	1,624.158	1,712.619	2,013.889	2,031.992

Source: censuses for the following years

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Table 2: Changes in the religious structure of population in Vojvodina during 20th century (in %).

	1900.	1910.	1921.	1931.	1953.	1991.	2002.
Orthodox	38,8	39,1	39,8	42,4	45,3	58,1	69,0
Catholics	47,4	47,5	47,2	44,8	32,8	22,8	19,1
Protestants	10,7	10,6	10,4	9,8	6,2	3,9	3,6
Judeans	1,7	1,5	1,3	-	0,0	0,0	0,0
Muslims	-	-	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,5	0,4
Other	1,4	1,3	1,2	2,9	15,5	14,7	7,9
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: censuses for the following years

belong to this group of settlements, as well as some places where Germans used to live at that time, and those are: Bački Jarak, Maglič, Bačko Dobro Polje, Nova Pazova, Lovćenac, Kačarevo, Crvenka, Novi Banovci, Zmajevo, Vojlovica etc.

The second group are Protestants of Helvetic religion (Calvinists). There were 43.068 of them, and their share was 3,0%. This religious group consists mainly of Hungarians, as well as of one smaller part of Germans. They had an absolute majority in 5 places: Debeljača, Novi Itebej, Stara Moravica, Feketić and Pačir (all of those are Hungarian places), and relative majority in two places: Sivac and Ravno Selo (at the time of the census those were German places).

The third and the smallest Protestant community that was distinguished in the census are Unitarians. This religious community was to be found in Transylvania (Erdelj), and in Vojvodina. Their number is symbolic, only 122. They were concentrated mainly in bigger towns, and their members are Hungarians.

There were 23.510 of Judeans (or Israelites), and their share was 1,7%. Members of this religion are Jews. The greatest number of them lived in bigger towns: Subotica (3.026), Novi Sad (2.079), Zrenjanin (1.335), Senta (1.264), Sombor (882) etc.

The census did not distinguish other religious communities, but put all of them under one common title "other". There were 5.453 members of those smaller religious communities. We talk here mainly about newly founded religious sects, which, at those times, begin to find their way to this region. These believers are most common in Padina (6,7%), Lok (4,2%), Despotovo (3,6%), Feketić (3,6%) etc.

1910. census

1910. census was conducted according to same principles and methods, which means that same religious groups were identified.

This time also, Catholics were the most numerous religious group. Compared to the previous census, their number grew for 5,9%. Since the growth of the total population grew for 5,8% between two censuses, that means that the share of Catholics in the religious structure of Vojvodina also somewhat grew. They had an absolute majority in 132 places in Vojvodina (there

were 348 places identified in this census), and relative majority in 8 of them. Hungarian place Busenje had a completely pure Catholic structure (100%).

Uniates were the only one among all important religious groups that experienced a relative growth (10,6%) in the decade between two censuses. This growth is the result of the population growth or, even more, of converting from Catholicism. They had an absolute majority in two Ruthenian places: Ruski Krstur and Kucura.

Orthodox experienced mighty growth of their absolute and relative number (6,7%) between 1900. and 1910. They had an absolute majority in 168, and relative in 7 places.

Protestants experienced the growth of their absolute number and also the fall of the relative one. Lutherans had a relative growth of 5,6%. Absolute majority was registered in 23 places, and relative in 2. Calvinists experienced a much smaller relative growth - only 2,6%. They had an absolute majority in four places: Novi Itebej, Debeljača, Feketić and Stara Moravica, and relative in two: Pačir i Sivac. Unitarians had a huge relative growth of even 18,9%. However, their absolute number grew from 122 to 145, which means that their huge relative growth does not have any significance for the development of the religious structure of the population in Vojvodina.

Judeans experienced the fall of both the absolute (-5,5%) and relative number between two censuses. Judging by the facts, this is the result of transferring one number of believers into other religions, i.e. of converting and assimilation of Jews.

The category "other" experienced the biggest fall. Their relative number decreased for 37,4%. This fall can also be explained by converting of believers from smaller religions and sects into more traditional religions that are accepted by the state.

1921. census

This census was conducted after the World War I and after the state borders were changed. The war itself, as well as the creation of a new country in this region, did not have a significant influence on the changes in the religious structure of the population in Vojvodina. However, this census was conducted according to some new prin-

ciples, which means that a different classification of the population and its religions was conducted. Six confessional groups were identified: Orthodox, Catholics, Uniates, Evangelists (Protestants), Muslims and Israelites (Judeans), while the category "others" was divided into two groups: members of other religions and those people declared as not being religious of unknown religion.

Catholics were the most numerous religious group also in this census. However, their number experienced a slight loss compared to the previous census, i.e. their relative number grew for only 0,8%, while the increase of the whole population was 1,4%. They had an absolute majority in 131 places (360 places were identified in this census), and relative in 4 places. In Hungarian place Tobi Catholics represented 100% of the population.

Uniates are interesting to mention here since their number in 1921. census is identical to the number in 1910. census. Uniates had an absolute majority in two their traditional places: Ruski Krstur and Kucura.

Orthodox experienced the greatest growth of all religious groups in Vojvodina, which is understandable when we consider the change of the national government. Their number grew for 3,2%. Orthodox had an absolute majority in 185 places, and relative in 3. Orthodox represented 100% of the population in Orešac and Zasavica.

In this census, Protestants were not categorized more detailedly, but were shown collectively. Their absolute number slightly decreased, i.e. the fall was only -0,7%. They had an absolute majority in 31 places, and relative in 4. Naturally, those are same Slovak, German and Hungarian places, that were also earlier dominated by Lutherans and Calvinists.

In 1921. census, Muslims are mentioned for the first time in 20th century, although their number is symbolical.

Judeans experienced fall in this census also, which was as high as -12%. This can be again explained by further assimilation of Jews and their conversion into other religions, as well as with emigration of certain number of Jews.

Category "others" was, considering a very detailed confession classification, relatively numerously small. There were 1.695 of them. 893 declared themselves as members of other religions while 802 were atheists or of unknown religions.

1931. census

This is the second census that was conducted between two world wars. Although it was conducted by the same Federal Bureau of Statistics, it greatly differed from the previous one, especially when its methodological concept is concerned. This time, religions were tabularly shown rather poorly, since only four religions were identified:

Orthodox, Catholicism, Evangelism (Protestantism) and Islam, while all the other religions were put under one common category "others".

When this census is concerned, Catholics were the most numerous group in Vojvodina. However, their absolute number compared to the previous census grew only slightly, for 0,3% (the growth of the whole population was 5,8%), while their share decreased. They had an absolute majority in 127 places in Vojvodina (of 368), and relative in 9.

Between censuses in 1921. and 1931., Orthodox experiences a rather dynamic growth (12,6%), which is the result of their population growth and colonization of Serbian population, and also of assimilation, but to a smaller extent. They had an absolute majority in 189 places, and relative in 7. The only village that had a monolith religious structure was Sremski Mihaljevci (100% of Orthodox population).

Protestants still were the third religious group in Vojvodina. However, their number between two censuses decreased for 0,6%, so this was a period of stagnation for them. They had an absolute majority in 31 places, and relative in 3.

Compared to the previous census, Muslims experienced a noticeable fall of 11,6%. That is result, of their return migrations into domicile areas.

Because a small number of religious groups was identified in this census, the group "others" was very numerous. Their greatest part are Uniates. "Others" have an absolute majority in two places: Ruski Krstur and Kucura, Ruthenian places dominated by Uniates.

1953. census

The next census that examined the religious structure of the population was conducted not earlier than 1953. It registered huge demographic changes that happened during, and after World War II. This census differed a lot from the previous ones. Data for religious structure were tabled only on the level of administrative districts, so the analysis according to different places is impossible. However, this census offers crossed analyses of data for the religious and ethnic structure, which actually enables a much more quality analysis of these characteristics.

For the first time, Orthodox became the most numerous religious group in Vojvodina. Their growth was 12,5%, whereas the total population increased for 5,4%. Colonisation of mainly Serbian population, as well as expelling of Germans and lessening of other religious groups contributed to that. Catholics recorded a decrease of 22,8% and the number of Protestants fell for the whole 33,6%. Both are the results of the expelling of Germans from Vojvodina, since they were the members of these two

■ **Table 3.** Distribution of ethnic groups according to the religious structure of population in Vojvodina in 1953. (in %)

	Orthodox	Catholics	Protestants	Muslims	Judeans	Atheists
Serbs	79,0	0,2	0,3	0,1	0,0	19,7
Croats	0,7	88,8	0,4	0,1	0,0	9,5
Slovenes	3,2	70,2	2,9	0,0	0,0	23,0
Macedonians	72,0	0,2	0,1	2,0	0,0	24,5
Montenegrins	30,2	0,2	0,0	0,3	0,0	69,0
Yugoslavs	2,4	76,6	0,5	10,4	0,2	9,3
Slovaks	0,3	5,8	87,1	0,0	0,0	3,4
Hungarians	0,2	89,8	7,1	0,0	0,0	2,5
Romanians	87,9	3,4	0,7	0,0	0,0	4,5
Ruthenians	4,5	1,9	0,8	0,0	0,0	4,8

Source: 1953. census

confessions. The number of Muslims almost doubled, i.e. their growth was as high as 96,7%, whereas the number of Judeans, because of the Jews' sufferings in the World War II, fell for that same number. Moreover, this census recorded a heterogeneous group that was named "others". There were 32.004 people identified as "other Christians", most of them were Uniates, who are manly Ruthenians. There were only 24 of "other non-Christians", 633 of "undefined", and 2.621 of "unknown". Because of the ideological moment when this census was conducted, one more category was fully expressed and that is "atheists" (or people with no faith). In Vojvodina, there were 230.921 of them, or 13,5% of the population. They represented the third most numerous group, right behind Orthodox and Catholics. The ethnic analysis of atheists is very interesting. This group mostly comprised of the colonist population, especially of Montenegrins (69% of them declared as atheist). They are followed by Macedonians, Slovenes and Serbs. All four nations had a larger share in atheists than their share was in the ethnic structure of Vojvodina, while all the other nations had that share smaller, especially Hungarians.

Table 3 and 4 show ethnic crossing in Vojvodina. Table 3 shows religious structure according to ethnic groups. From this table we can conclude that Serbs are mostly Orthodox (79,0%) and atheists (19,7%), Croats are Catholics (88,8%), Slovenes are Catholics (70,2%) and atheists (23,0%), Macedonians

are Orthodox (72,8%) and atheists (24,5%), Montenegrins are atheists (69,0%) and Orthodox (30,2%), Yugoslavs, in this case mostly represented by Germans and Muslims in ethnic sense, declared themselves as Catholics (76,6%) and Muslims (10,4%), Slovaks are Protestants (87,1%), Hungarians are Catholics (89,8%) and Protestants (7,1%), Romanians are Orthodox (87,9%) and Ruthenians are Uniates. Table 4 shows ethnic structure of members of each of these religions. Concluding from these data, we see that Orthodox were represented mainly by Serbs (89,0%) and Romanians (6,5%), Catholics were represented by Hungarians (69,6%) and Croats (20,3%), and Protestants were represented by Slovaks (60,8%) and Hungarians (29,3%) etc.

1991. census

After a pause of 40 years, 1991. census again gives data for the religious structure of the population. Naturally, compared to the previous one, its methodology differs greatly.

The number of Orthodox increased significantly in this long time period. Their growth was 50,9%, whereas the growth of the whole population was 17,6%. With this numerical growth, Orthodox became absolutely dominating religion in the Province, i.e. their number was larger than the number of the members of all the other religions. That is the result of the immigration of the Orthodox population, population growth and assimilation. They had an

■ **Table 4.** Ethnic structure of members of the most important religions in Vojvodina in 1953. (in %).

	Orthodox	Catholics	Protestants	Muslims	Judeans	Atheists
Serbs	89,0	0,3	2,7	14,0	1,2	74,4
Croats	0,1	20,3	0,5	2,8	1,4	5,3
Slovenes	0,0	0,8	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,6
Macedonians	1,1	0,0	0,0	7,2	0,2	1,2
Montenegrins	1,2	0,0	0,0	3,3	0,2	9,1
Yugoslavs	0,0	1,4	0,0	33,7	3,1	0,4
Slovaks	0,0	0,8	60,8	0,1	0,8	1,1
Hungarians	0,1	69,6	29,3	0,3	5,5	4,8
Romanians	6,5	0,3	0,4	0,0	0,0	1,1
Ruthenians	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,5

Source: 1953. census

Table 5. Distribution of ethnic groups according to the religious structure of population in Vojvodina in 1991. (in %)

	Orthodox	Catholics	Protestants	Muslims	Judeans	Atheists
Serbs	88,9	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	3,3
Croats	1,3	88,3	0,4	0,0	0,0	2,2
Macedonians	84,0	0,5	0,4	0,6	0,0	3,4
Montenegrins	74,2	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	7,7
Yugoslavs	25,7	22,4	2,0	0,7	0,0	13,9
Slovaks	0,9	6,7	81,4	0,0	0,0	2,2
Hungarians	0,4	87,7	5,9	0,0	0,0	1,5
Romanians	81,6	6,6	2,8	0,0	0,0	1,7
Ruthenians	13,5	74,2	1,1	0,1	0,0	1,7
Gypsies	70,7	5,8	0,2	6,6	0,0	4,3
Bunjevatzes	0,6	89,6	0,3	0,0	0,0	2,3
Bulgarians	37,7	50,7	1,2	0,4	0,1	3,0

Source: Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Serbia, Population and households in Serbia, according to the 1991 census, Belgrade, 1995.

absolute majority in 320 places (the whole number of places was 464), and relative majority in 16.

Catholic experienced further fall of - 18,3% in the number of believers. They had an absolute majority in 99 places and relative in 8. Uniates were treated as Catholic, which means that the great number of Ruthenians found their place in this group.

Protestants also experienced fall of 25,0%. They had an absolute majority in 13, and relative in 7 places, mostly in Slovak and in some Hungarian villages.

Muslims recorded enormous growth, since their number tripled, which is the result of their immigration and high population growth.

Judeans again recorded fall of 65,7%. At that time, there were only 284 of them in the Province.

Atheists, who were an important group in 1953. census, now record fall of 65,7%. The reason is the change of the official ideology.

1991. census, for the first time, singled out the group of pro-Oriental religions (different sects, Buddhist, Hindu and other provenances). There were only 226 believers. There were 800 members of other religions and 4.029 of people with undefined religion.

This census also recorded a large group of those people whose religion is unknown. There were 211.345 of them, or 10,5% of the whole population of Vojvodina. We talk here about people who refused to religiously declare themselves from purely subjective reasons, about which we can only speculate (fear due to war psychosis, opposition to a growing nationalism). In ethnic sense, those people mostly belonged to so-called anational corpus, where 85,4% of ethnically unknown people declared themselves in the same way in a religious sense. There are also 51,7% of "undeclared and undefined" and 21,4% with certain regional affiliation. In a religious sense, the greatest share of the unknown was to be found with Yugoslavs (34,2%), and then with Muslims (22,7%), Montenegrins (17,8%), Albanians (13,6%), Gypsies (12,3%), Macedonians (11,0%), Ruthenians (9,2%), Slovaks (8,4%), Croats (7,6%), Serbs (7,6%), Romanians (7,1%), Bulgarians (6,9%), Bunjevatzes (6,8%), Vlachs (6,1%) and Hungarians (4,3%).

Tables 5 and 6 show crossed ethnic and religious structure of the population in Vojvodina in 1991. Compared to the same analysis from 1953. census, there are no significant changes, except from the fact, as it was previously mentioned, that the number

Table 6. Ethnic structure of members of the most important religions in Vojvodina in 1991. (in %).

	Orthodox	Catholics	Protestants	Muslims	Judeans	Atheists
Serbs	86,8	0,1	0,8	0,1	0,4	47,5
Croats	0,1	14,4	0,4	0,2	8,5	2,0
Macedonians	1,3	0,0	0,1	1,0	0,7	0,7
Montenegrins	2,8	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	4,4
Yugoslavs	3,8	8,5	4,3	12,9	19,0	30,7
Slovaks	0,1	0,9	65,5	0,1	2,8	1,8
Hungarians	0,2	64,9	25,4	0,6	16,5	6,4
Romanians	2,7	0,6	1,4	0,2	1,1	0,8
Ruthenians	0,2	2,9	0,2	0,1	1,8	0,4
Gypsies	1,5	0,3	0,1	16,4	0,0	1,3
Bunjevatzes	0,0	4,2	0,1	0,0	1,1	0,6
Bulgarians	0,1	0,3	0,0	0,1	1,1	0,1

Source: Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Serbia, Population and households in Serbia, according to the 1991 census, Belgrade, 1995.

of atheists greatly decreased, whereas the number of the unknown in a religious sense greatly increased, which in a certain way, compensated the number of atheists.

2002. census

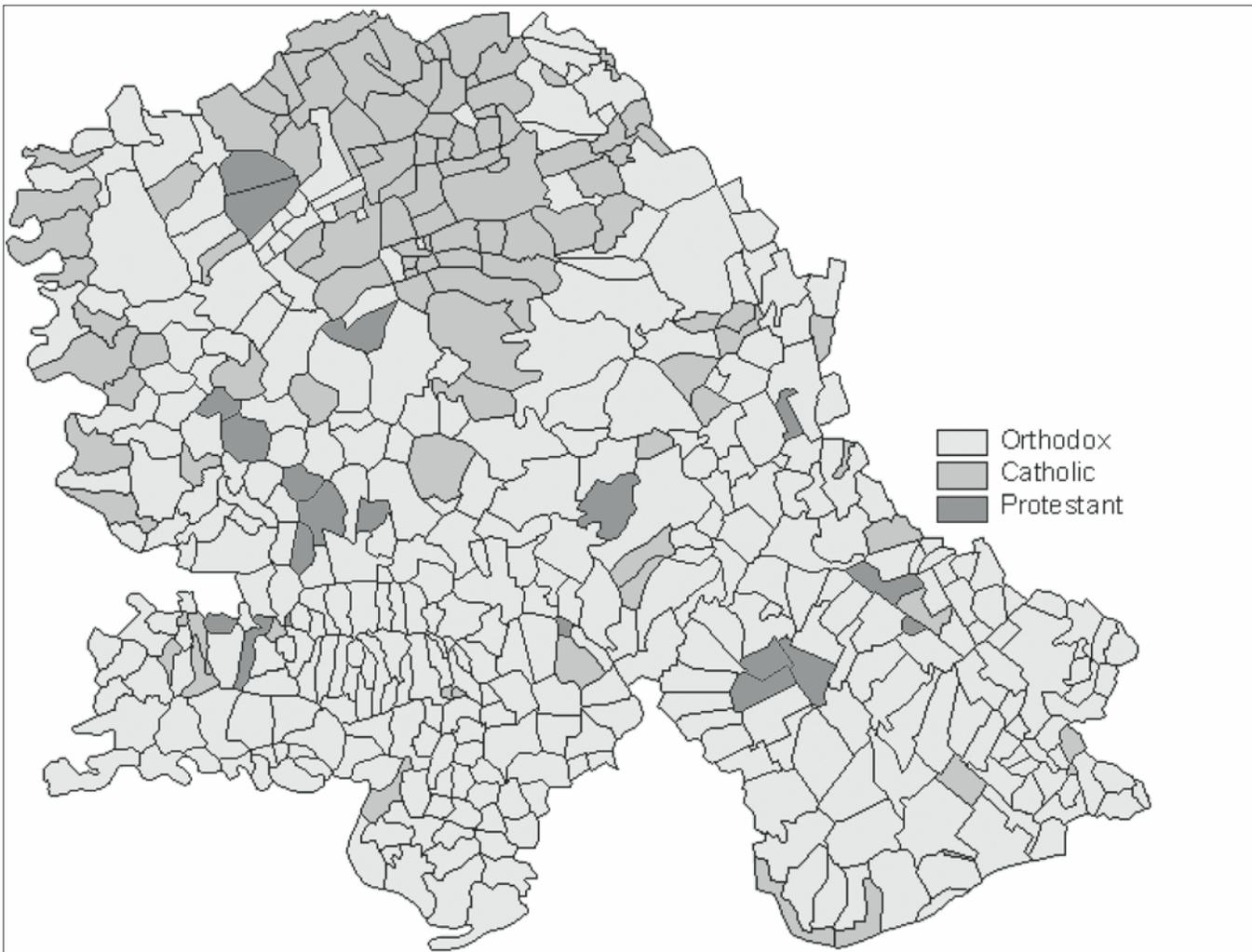
Although this census does not chronologically belong to 20th century, it is mentioned here because it includes all demographic changes that are the result of tumultuous events during 1990s on the territory of former Yugoslavia, and Vojvodina as well. Its results connected to the confessional structure can, in the sense of space, be somewhat limitedly observed, since the results are shown on the level of municipalities and not towns and villages.

Compared to the 1991. census, the number of the Orthodox grew for 230.781 members, i.e. for 10,9% in the whole population of Vojvodina. In the same period, the number of Catholics fell for 70.370 people, i.e. for 3,7% in the whole population of Vojvodina. The number of Protestants also fell (for 6.766 people), whereas the share in the total population of the Province fell for 0,3%. The number of Muslims also decreased in the same period (1.702 believers), whereas their share in the total population fell for 0,1%. It is interesting that, out of the mentioned religions, only the absolute number of Judeans (Jews) grew from 284 (1991) to 329 (2002). Group "others" recorded a great fall, for 133.885 people or for 6,8% in the total population of Vojvodina. As part of this group, there were 166 members of pro-Oriental cults, 4.456 people of some other religions, 418 people with no religion, 101.144 of undeclared, 12.583 of atheists and 42.876 of unknown.

On the basis of these facts, it is easy to conclude that, apart from the immigration of the expelled and exiled Serbian population from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, a great growth of the members of the Orthodox Church is a consequence of a great transfer of former atheists into believers, i.e. into Orthodox.

Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis of these 6 censuses, it can be concluded that the religious structure of the population in Vojvodina is very heterogeneous. During 20th century it did not develop evenly, since some religions, experienced expansion, and others regression. The number of the members of the Orthodox Church grew during the whole period observed, while the number of Catholics only until the end of the World War II. The number of Protestants started to fall between two world wars, while the number of Judeans decreased during the whole period. A strong process of religious homogenization begun after the World War II, and thus Orthodox became the absolutely major religious group in the Province at the end of the period observed.



■ **Figure 1.** Religious domination in places across Vojvodina according to the 1991. census

Ethnic and religious structures are quite complementary. Most ethnic groups are concentrated in one religion. The only greater dispersion is to be found with Hungarians.

Atheists have a significant share in the religious structure of Vojvodina.

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