

*Sreten JELIĆ, Mersida JANDRIĆ,  
Dragić ŽIVKOVIĆ, Zoran MILOVANČEVIĆ<sup>1</sup>*

## **DETERMINANTS OF HOUSEHOLD AND REGIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The first part of the paper, regards to some socio-demographic determinants of households. They represent substantial indicators of the overall condition of a community. As a social element, are determined by the characteristics of the population that is the basic entity of observation in them. Status and trends of socio-demographic characteristics of households in Serbia in recent decades is the result of numerous factors. General decline in population - depopulation, migration to the city, crumbling of properties, decrease of family and marriage importance, marriage in later years, changes in structure of the households in terms of division on agricultural, non-agricultural, mixed, etc. are just a few of the causes that determine the current state and movement of socio-demographic characteristics of households in Serbia.

In second part of the paper the authors point to potentials of rural areas as important factors for rural development are present. Potentials in regions and some areas are unfavourable which slows down the development of rural areas. In the previous period, trends of uneven and unbalanced rural development are present. The differences in the rural development of the region and the country are obvious. It is therefore necessary to reduce of differences in the level of development in which a special role is played by the household.

**Keywords:** household, determinants, rural development, rural areas, development

### **INTRODUCTION**

Socio-demographic characteristics of households, number, size, type, structure and demographic characteristics (gender, age, education) point to changes. General decrease in number of population-depopulation, migrations to the city, crumbling of properties, changes in structure of the household in terms of division to agricultural, non-agricultural and mixed, etc. are just a few of the causes that determine current state and movement of socio-demographic characteristics of households in Serbia.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sreten JELIĆ (corresponding author: sjelic@agrif.bg.ac.rs), Mersida JANDRIĆ, Dragić ŽIVKOVIĆ, Zoran MILOVANČEVIĆ, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Belgrade-Zemun, Serbia.

The first part of the paper indicates socio-demographic characteristics of households in Serbia. The second part indicates the potentials of rural areas and their role in rural development. Potentials in rural regions and areas are unfavorable which slows down the development of rural areas. In previous decades, trends of uneven and unbalanced rural development are present, which resulted in significant differences in development of rural regions and country. Households have a special role in rural development.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The research was performed based on the latest census of population, households and dwellings in 2011 in Republic of Serbia, and analysis of available published statistics data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Also were used and analyzed relevant documents and available literature.

Methods used for research of observed phenomena are content descriptive statistics, analysis of public documents. Using these methods tend to present the socio-demographic characteristics of households and potentials of rural areas as important factors of balanced regional rural development.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Socio-demographic characteristics of households have changed under the influence of a variety of historical, political and social factors. The data indicate an increase in households as a consequence of changes that took place in Serbia in mid of last century. Also, increase in the number of household members was influenced by the process of industrialization and urbanization, intensive post-war immigrations from less developed republics of the former common state, but also for shorter distances from villages to towns, followed by crushing families, i.e. division of traditional extended families into smaller units.

Size and number of households represent significant socio-demographic characteristics of household. The process of household narrowing was conducted intensively, which could be understood in the context of pronounced processes of land reclamation and urbanization, accompanied by intense internal migration from villages to city and all were accompanied by accelerated kinship transformation. In the past fifty years there was a decrease in the universality of marriage, disposal of giving birth at older age, fertility decline and an increase in the average age of population. In accordance with those processes the average number of household members was reduced. The differences in the average household size in Serbia are the result of differential fertility by ethnicity, as well as various social development levels of individual regions, which initiated the mass migrations from underdeveloped to developed areas (Đorđević *et al.*, 2008: 57-60).

According to the census from 2011. households in Serbia are 2,487,886 inhabited households with a total of 7,120,666 inhabitants. Since 1948 till 2011, the number of households in Serbia is constantly increasing and the number of members recorded a decrease. (Table 1)

Table 1. The overall number of households and the average number of members in Serbia in period from 1948 to 2011.

<b>Year</b>	<b>The overall number of households</b>	<b>The size of households</b>
1948	1,485,591	4.05
1953	1,616,349	3.95
1961	1,929,175	3.65
1971	2,248,172	3.40
1981	2,568,775	3.20
1991	2,418,156	3.15
2002	2,521,190	2.97
2011	2,487,886	2.86

*Source:* National Statistical Office (2014)

The latest trend indicates increase in the number of households, decline in the number of household members, decline of agricultural households and an increase in non-agricultural and mixed households. Census data from 2011 shows that the most represented are single-family households married / common-law couples with children (every third household, or 36.4%), these followed by single-person households, which make 22.3% of total number of households, followed by households married / common-law couples without children (18.5%) (Bobić et al., 2004: 353). Therefore, the number of single-person households increased the most, and those with five or more members decreased.

By analyzing the age structure of households, can be noticed that is unfavorable. The number of households where a person aged under 14 years runs the household is 683, from 15 to 29 years is 100,602, from 30 to 49 years is 708,991, from 50 to 64 years is 906,404 and the number of households where a person aged 75 years or more runs the household is 342,250 (National Statistical Office). The largest number of households is maintained by persons between the ages of 50 and 64 years, and the lowest number of households is by people age less than 14 years. In Serbia, the decreasing trend of the total population as well as aging of population and households is present.

According to the gender structure, 1,736,252 households are runs by men and 751,634 are headed by women (National Statistical Office). Such division is expected, considering that Serbia is characterized by the presence of patriarchy, which states that the man is the head of the family (households). The reasons for the emergence of women-headed households should be sought in greater mortality of men, frequent wars, where men additionally lost lives in early age etc.

Data on the educational structure of households refer to household members with the highest completed school, or on the type of school by which the person has obtained the highest level of education. Thus without schooling is 2.68% of households, with maximum primary school qualifications 31.76% of households, with secondary education 48.93% of households, and individuals

with college or university education represent 16.24% of households of all households in the Republic of Serbia territory (National Statistical Office).

### **Balanced regional and rural development**

Rural development is a process of sustainable economic, social, political, cultural and environmental changes, initiated in order to improve the quality of inhabitants lives in rural areas. The increasing emphasis is on an integrated approach to rural development. Rural development should be based on interests and realized with the support of people living in a given area. They are the basis for sustainable development of rural areas for they know best what problems plague them and what their needs are, they control many resources - land, buildings, local production on which depends the development, they have skills, tradition, knowledge and energy and therefore are capital resource in this whole process well as their preference is crucial.

Resources available to Serbia such as: agricultural land, natural conditions, population, households, farms... have a chance to increase agricultural production and stable rural development. Agriculture and other economic sectors may represent significant activities for households in rural areas where the population would be actively engaged, which would affect the development of rural areas (Keca *et al.*, 2012).

Households that possess the agricultural land as natural resource represent significant potential for food production. Estate size is very heterogeneous and dominated by agricultural holdings with small estates of 1-3 hectares. Available agricultural land of households in rural areas shows that the estates were fragmented, segmented, low level of regulation for processing, irrigation and drainage systems, monoculture agriculture production and oversized use of synthetic fertilizers in comparison to natural ones, which affects more balanced rural development.

Having in mind that the land is a limited resource, it is necessary to its protection from degradation and intended use. Landscaping, enlarging the average size of holdings and an increase in properties is time-consuming and complex process whose solution requires a number of activities of institutions and property owners. It is necessary to create conditions for agricultural production increase through optimal use of land trusts and balanced rural development.

Changes in holding structure are evident. In the period 1991-2011, total number of agricultural holdings in Serbia has decreased from 997,235 as it was in 1991 to 631,552 in 2011. For agricultural holdings in Serbia, which are small, economically weak and incoherent, to pass the inevitable changes as painless as possible, institutional support is needed.

Creating a new concept of regionalization should lead to a redistribution of responsibilities of state and regional development institutions. Therefore, the responsibility for development on higher levels is necessary to transfer on subjects of local communities (Vojnovic *et al.*, 2013).

A Strategy for agriculture and rural development of the Republic of Serbia, among other things, in agricultural and rural areas Vision in Serbia involves recognition of several key principles such as: Sustainable agriculture is the main focus of strategic agricultural policy activities that sees multifunctional agriculture as one of the most important industries in rural areas. In this context, the principles of sustainable development of the sector *include*:

- Increase of economic sector efficiency , based on technical and technological progress and innovative products and solutions;
- responsible resources management and their preservation for future generations, with better long term preservation of biodiversity;
- achieving the welfare of rural population in order to stop further deterioration of demographic trends; full appreciation of young people and women vulnerable position in rural labor as markets well as the social status of other vulnerable groups.
- Polycentric development, based on respect for the diversity of production systems and types of holdings, resulting from heterogeneous geographic, natural, socio-economic and other characteristics of rural areas in Serbia. The same attention will be paid to all producers and stakeholders involved in production chain, who see their future in agriculture and related activities around it. Special attention will be paid to respect of specific needs of agricultural producers in areas with difficult agriculture working conditions, holdings with potential for further growth of market production and to young farmers.

## CONCLUSIONS

Socio-demographic characteristics of households in Serbia are in process of change. We note that the smallest number of households, Serbia had in mid of the past century, when it had 1,485,591 households, after that recorded an increase, in order to reach the largest number of households at the beginning of this century, 2,521,190 households. During that period there was a decrease in household size by more than one member. Also, there was an increase in households with one or two members and a decline in the number of households with three or four members. Number of households with five to six or more members remained unchanged. Census data from 2011. indicates the loss of seven or more members category.

The highest number of households is led by persons between the ages of 50 and 64 years, and the lowest number of households is led by people aged under 14 years. As for gender number of households led by men is 1,736,252, while 751,634 of households are led by women. The educational structure of household members is unfavourable, particularly in rural areas.

To what extent the conditions will improve and infrastructure develop in rural areas, will largely depend on the development of agricultural production and other activities as well as the development of rural areas.

Households in rural areas as the main carriers of agriculture and rural development are facing new challenges in the process of changes and adaptation to new conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to create conditions for the development of comparative advantages of agriculture in rural areas, and more balanced regional rural development.

### REFERENCES

- Bobić, M., (1999): Modern rural family and household in Yugoslavia, *Population*, Vol. 37, no. 1-4, p. 93-118
- Bobić, M., (2004): Household of Serbia at the beginning of the third millennium, Socio-demographic analysis, *Sociology*, Vol. XLVI, no. 4, p. 349-372
- Bogdanov, N., (2007): Small rural households in Serbia and rural non-farm economy, Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management.
- Vojnović, B., Cvijanović, D., Rodica, B. (2013): Monograph, Factors of regional and local economic development, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Belgrade.
- Dorđević, Lj., (2008): Changes in the average size of household in Serbia in the second half of the 20th century, *The population*, Vol. 46, no. 1.
- Jelić, S., Živković, D., Jovanović, T., (2011): Monograph, Holding and household changes, Faculty of Agriculture, Zemun.
- Keča, L.J., Bogojević, M., Marčeta, M., Jelić, S., (2012): Non-wood forest products as generator of development of rural areas of Serbia, *Agriculture and Forestry*, Vol. 57, (11) Issue 3:p.21-37.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, National Statistical Office, Strategy for agriculture and rural development of the Republic of Serbia, in 2014.
- National Statistical Office, Census of population and dwellings in 2011 in the Republic of Serbia, Book 13: The basic characteristics of households, Press Release, [Available at: [http://media.popis2011.stat.rs/2013/publikacije/Saopstenje\\_Osnovne%20karakteristike%20domacinstava.pdf](http://media.popis2011.stat.rs/2013/publikacije/Saopstenje_Osnovne%20karakteristike%20domacinstava.pdf)].
- National Statistical Office, Census of population, households and dwellings in 2011 in the Republic of Serbia, Population, Education, literacy and computer literacy, Data per towns and municipalities, National Statistical Office, Belgrade, 2013.
- National Statistical Office, Census of population, households and dwellings in 2011 in Republic of Serbia (2013), Book 13, p. 45
- National Statistical Office, Census of Population, households and dwellings in the Republic of Serbia (2014), Book 21, p. 26