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**Supporting paper**

**SOME DIFFICULTIES IN APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS 2000  
IN SERBIAN CENSUS 2002**

Submitted by Statistical Office of Republic of Serbia \*

1. Although methodological problems were not the most important that emerged in the time of census, here we will discuss only about them. We could mention only that those different units that constitute the country performed censuses at different times (Serbia at the end of March 2002 and Montenegro at the end of October 2003). Because of that we do not have comparable data for country as a whole. Also, in one part of the country - Kosovo and Metohija, the censuses have not been performed since 1981.

**I. PLACE OF USUAL RESIDENCE**

2. As it is known determination of the place of residence is the most significant for identification and differentiation of settlements, making distinction between present and absent population and division on migrant and native population.

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3. In some cases it was difficult to decide how to enumerate specific groups of population. Our primary concept was: persons belong to the place where their families live. But we used some complementary indices.

4. Recommendations offered and suggested to use few criterions for identification of the place of usual residence:

1. Place where person usually resides,
2. Place where person actually resides in the time of census,
3. Place of legal residence,
4. Spending most of daily night- rest,
5. Length of absence (one year and more),
6. Existing of specific family relations (spouse or children),
7. Subjective attitudes about place of residence

5. Obviously, suggested criterions could contradict each other, because some people can be legally declared as inhabitant of a settlement but be absent for a long time. Or, how someone can live with his spouse and children if he is absent because of work in other place, because of his military service, studying, etc. It is also a very vague position if we permit subjective opinions about place of residence or ask respondents how they feel in actual place of their residence, do they plan to move from actual place, etc.

6. From our point of view, it is necessary to give clear explanations for each category in question: how to treat persons maintaining more than one residence, students who live out of place of residence of their parents, or persons in compulsory military service, etc. Concerning stated categories a few important issues are necessary to include. It is very important how long persons are absent from their homes and how frequent they come back to their households. It is also important to define the reference period. If it is a year, what do we have to do with soldiers who serve nine months (like in our country); what to do with students whose studies last four years, but some of them come back to home once in a week and others once in a year?

7. We have the general attitude that persons who are absent more then one year have to be treated like migrants into the new place of their residence, but it is only one aspect of a problem. In earlier Serbian censuses, as in the last one, one of the greatest difficulties was covering the temporarily present population. If we ask members of households where are their absent members, we get correct information with all needed details. But if we want to find the same persons in places where they temporarily reside, the n such persons are under enumerated. Generally, we are sure that we achieve satisfactory covering of persons living in collective quarters (students or soldiers), but we have problem in covering lone persons in places where they actually live.

8. The basis for definition of the place of permanent residence in our census was the fact of person's belonging to the household. The household members were allowed to state their place of residence, and to name the members of the household. Belonging to the household was not based on formal or legal status of the household, but on the actual belonging to the household. Therefore, a person could have been officially registered in some other place, but, in the Census, it was not regarded as a resident of that place, but the place of residence of his/her household.

9. Exception from that rule was the elimination from the households persons who have been abroad longer than one year, although many of these persons are considered as legitimate members of their households. Actually, in order to have an insight into the total "domestic" population, and in order to secure a continuity and comparability with the data from previous

censuses, all household members were enumerated, whereas the question on length of stay abroad makes possible the elimination of the household members who stayed abroad in excess of one year.

10. In compliance with the mentioned approach, pupils and students at schools in other places, as well as the persons serving compulsory military service - the two most numerous categories of absent population - were enumerated within the households, that is, in the places from which they left. However, while the pupils and students were enumerated twice, once in the place of schooling, and the other time within their households, the persons serving compulsory military service were enumerated only within their households.

11. The same is valid for the persons who have a household in one place, but who spend preponderance of time in some other place on work, and who go home on weekends, or even less frequently.

12. Justification for such action could be found in the fact that, in our conditions, the data on absent household members are much more reliable if they are obtained from household members than in the places in which the absent members attend school or work. Namely, the absent household members are a more mobile segment of population, less accessible to enumerators, and, besides that, the owners of flats often fail to register boarders in order to evade renting taxes. Our calculations from previous censuses show that the coverage of persons based on statement of the household members is much bigger than the coverage based on enumeration in the place of temporary residence. Persons who stay (work or study) in some other place are enumerated in these other places as well as "temporarily present persons", so that, in processing of census data, the share of such persons could be established.

13. Persons in compulsory military service (of which duration is 9 months), inmates of hospitals, prisons and other persons who have a strong bond with their households, and who the households consider as their legitimate members, are enumerated as inhabitants of the places in which their household is resident.

14. If we observe the problems of migration and composition of households in contexts of present/absent population, concerning Recommendations, we should exclude all absent groups of population mentioned in para 36 (from a to D). In that case all groups become separate households and migrants from previous places or places where are leaving their families. And, also, they should lose the position of absent members of household. We are free to remark that it is not sufficiently clear whom we have to treat like absent members of households. These mentioned rules are established so liberally that it allows great liberty in the treatment of different population groups. One observing aspect is when through a household we identify members absent longer than a year, and other aspect is where absent members spend their daily nights rest.

## **II. MIGRATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE CENSUS**

15. In compliance with the adopted solutions for determination of the place of usual residence we defined the categories that should be considered native, and the ones that should be considered as migrant population. In line with Recommendations, the migrant population is one that changed the place of usual residence. From the very moment when a household has moved to a place of permanent residence, its members are considered as inhabitants of these places, regardless of the time length that passed since their arrival.

16. Persons, who work, get education, or who stay abroad for some other reasons, take part in external migrations and they could be observed by countries and length of stay. Exceptionally, persons who work in diplomatic -consular services, and those employed in Yugoslav companies abroad (both in representations and contracted work), together with the members of their families - all these persons are considered as permanent residents of Yugoslavia. Considering that all these persons are registered as absent persons, that the reasons for their stay abroad are known, that the country of their residence is known, as well as other data, from analytical aspect these persons could be treated as some kind of temporary migrants.

17. As regards the persons in compulsory military service, persons at schooling or work in some other place, prison inmates, permanently hospitalised persons etc. - they are not considered as persons who have changed the residence, and they were not requested to answer the migration questions.

18. Significant and the most recent part of migrant population appeared with the commencement of cross-national conflicts and warfare in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991). This migrant population consists of refugees and internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohia. The refugees were enumerated as permanent residents of Yugoslavia, and also as population who migrated, under threat and pressure, from the (presently) foreign countries that were formed on the territory of former Yugoslavia. A significant part of this population migrated to Yugoslavia first, and then to some foreign countries. If some members of their families and households have stayed in the country, it is possible to obtain information about their absent members staying abroad as well. However, in cases of complete households left abroad, information on these households were inaccessible.

19. The situation with internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohia is a very specific one. In this territory, predominantly populated with Albanians, the 2002 Census was not carried out (while the 1991 Census was boycotted by Albanians). This region is a constituent part of Serbia and Yugoslavia, and the population that fled to other parts of Serbia and Montenegro under pressure and threat, could not be considered as refugees in their own country. However, in order to secure all relevant data on these persons, they were conditionally treated as migrants, and they were obliged to furnish data on place of permanent residence in Kosovo and Metohia, and the time of arrival to present residence place.

20. In processing of census data these persons will also have special treatment. Although they are legitimate residents of Kosovo and Metohia, the Census did not cover this territory, and there is no sense in presenting them within the territory that was excluded from the Census. Preponderance of population cherishes hope that, after pacification of situation they will be able to return to their homes, which some groups actually do. Undeniably, the solution according to which these persons would be treated as residents of places in which they presently live is not satisfactory either. In any case, the total number of such persons, according to places in which they resided at the moment of enumeration, was registered, and this was one of the Census goals.

### **III. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

21. Monitoring of economic activity is directed towards current activity. Stability of jobs in the dominant state sector of ownership characterized the previous period (until 1990); minor fluctuation of labour force; low rates of the formally unemployed etc., made almost irrelevant the differences between the concepts of usual and current activity.

22. The abrupt switch to private ownership and disappearance of the majority of state-owned enterprises, the process that particularly gained momentum in the 1990-ties, as well as the economic crisis which resulted from warfare in the neighbourhood, gave rise to radical changes in economic life of the country.

23. Suddenly there were a lot of persons who were formally employed, although actually without work, and who received minimal wages just for the reasons of social security and solidarity. All varieties of actual and formal unemployment existed - from persons who were just listed on personnel lists, and who, eventually had social insurance (with paid contributions for years of work service, health insurance etc.) to persons who lost their jobs altogether, and who were registered with employment bureaus. A part of employees work for several months a year, and the rest of time is spent in doing supplementary activities, in the field of the shadow economy, that is, in the private sector, without any insurance whatsoever. The existence of enterprises is not guaranteed either. Some of them are closing, and the others are opening. Their destiny is affecting the world of labourers, who are occasionally employed or partially employed, waiting for a better-paid job.

24. All these changes necessitated monitoring of the economic situation and employment in a shorter sequence of time. The period of one year, which is typical for the approach of usual activity, cannot express the wide variety of work curricula of many employees in Yugoslavia. At present, a considerable portion of the economically active population in Yugoslavia has doubled, or even tripled status from the aspect of economic activity. A certain number of the employees are registered with the employment bureau, while working in the meantime independently, or for some other employer. Others have two or three jobs at the same time, none of which procure enough means to survive. Unemployed persons or underemployed persons, who, by definition, are included in the economically active population, can actually appear as predominantly supported persons, since the major part of financial means comes from other household members. For some categories of persons, such as students, housewives, pensioners, and some other persons who sometimes perform some work, it is often very difficult to distinguish whether they are economically active, supported persons or persons with their own income.

25. In such conditions it would be desirable to include in the questionnaire, besides the question on main occupation, one other question concerning secondary occupation. This question was asked in 1981 Census of population; however, the obtained results were not satisfactory. At that time people still hesitated in furnishing the correct answers. At that time, which was characterized by relative prosperity, secondary occupation was the issue of prestige, and upgrading of the living standard. People hesitated to give honest answers, in fear that their work could be taxed. Today, such activities are the question of survival, and it is possible that the quality of answers would be higher. However, burdening the questionnaire with bulky contents made impossible shedding of light on economic activity of economically active population.

26. From a question on economic activity related to the week preceding the census, two basic categories could be distinguished: (a) persons who perform an occupation and (b) persons who do not perform an occupation. In case of the first group of persons it was necessary to decide, if the person performs an occupation, the status of this person is work: whether this is legal employment or not, whether the person performs independent work, etc. In case of the second group of persons, it was also necessary to state the status of this person, that is, the reason of unemployment (unemployed, pensioners, housewives, etc.).

27. In defining the status of activity in 2002 Census, similar to previous censuses, in all cases where it was questionable whether the person is economically active or not (in case of pensioners,

students, housewives and other persons who perform some occupation permanently or occasionally), the advantage was given to occupation performing. In such cases the answers on double statuses of persons were obtained, because, in the case of students, for example, the question on school attending indicated that they were the students, and in case of pensioners, for example, the answer to the question on income sources indicated that the source of their income was pension, renting, etc. Persons in compulsory military service, as well as the prison inmates, were not considered as economically active persons; they do not get any compensation for their "work". Therefore, from that aspect, they do not satisfy the criteria set for employed persons. Only the persons who interrupted work due to serving the sentence or serving the compulsory military term were considered as economically active persons. From census results it will be possible to provide total number of these persons, but it is not possible to single out the total number of persons in compulsory military service or serving sentence in prisons. This is one of the points that deviate from the valid recommendations.

28. From our point of view, having in mind the minimal wages for some kinds of work, criterion of one hour (for the person to be considered as employed), seems a bit too strict to us. With view to getting a realistic insight into the volume of engagement of certain categories of persons, the question on time usually worked was asked, which will supply a complete distribution of the employed according to length of work in one week.

29. The basic problem regarding the data on time usually worked is linked with a certain discrepancy between two approaches. Namely, in case of data on activity, occupation, economic activity, etc., the reference frame is the preceding week, while the data on time usually worked relate to typical week during a period of one year. Due to that, the length of work cannot be linked with a certain occupation or economic activity.

30. A more precise measurement of various activities, that is, the occupations, which the Recommendations allow, would require a special registration of the time length on each work performed during the year, which would take too much space on enumeration forms. Another problem is related to working abroad persons absent less than one year. We didn't find explanation how to treat their activity. We excluded them from groups of active population in a country, but it is necessary to give general explanation concerning other aspects (education, attending a school, profession, etc.).

31. It is, also, unusual treatment of non-professional military service like professional activity. The greatest part of the time military staff is trained to some military skills and it is questionable whether they perform a real job or not. Nevertheless, these persons, in our conditions are not paid for their activity.

32. Missing of some commonly accepted classifications was felt as defect for the results of economically active population shown in table programs. For example, every country in its statistical system uses some kind of national socio-professional classification that should point on existing and studying of social lamination. It is desirable that countries included in EUROSTAT also have such standard classification. Or, there is no general accepted explanation for farm and agricultural population distinction, then urban and rural population distinction, or between rural and urban settlement.

#### **IV. HOUSEHOLDS**

33. Quality of a considerable number of census data heavily depends on accurate identification of households and household members. 'Household' represents a frame for

enumeration of single-member, family, and collective households, and, at the same time, the entity according to which the lists of household members who stay elsewhere were made (persons who work or attend school elsewhere, refugees and internally displaced persons, foreign citizens, etc.).

34. Data on agricultural holdings and agricultural production were also collected over households, as well as data on flats and family composition of the households.

35. Exclusion of the household members, who stay abroad in excess of one year, will certainly confuse composition and real status of the families. First of all, we got the increased number of non-family households, and the number of incomplete families. Some families whose children are abroad will become families without children, while some other families will become families without one or both parents. This will also result in reduction of the number of active family members, and breadwinners in the family.

36. On the other hand, even when the entire households live abroad, their flats and agricultural holdings remain in the country. Our attitude is that these enumeration units must be fully shown, while the flats and agricultural holdings whose members live abroad will be specially evidenced. In order to make possible comparisons with the results of previous censuses, a number of tables will be done according to the previous concept, which includes the absent household members. If we exclude absent pupils and students, persons in compulsory military service and other absent persons mentioned persons from a household composition, we would get an unreal picture on households and families.

37. Besides that, in Recommendations we cannot see whether persons in compulsory military service and students in boarding schools and dormitories should be treated as collective households or each of them separately as individual households.

38. In our table programs we predicted a complicated way of showing the household structure. Although household is, itself, a complex community composed on individuals with different individual characteristics, in previous table programs (Recommendations, 1990) emphasize was on features of the person who represents a household (head of household), and now on family composition and living conditions.

39. In the last two censuses we have shown households by age groups, number of active, economically independent (employed and persons with personal income), number of persons with personal income and dependants. Those tables are complex, with more crossed characteristics and on their basis an interesting typology of households could be done.

## **V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

40. In 2002 Census of Population a considerable effort was made on harmonizing both, methodological aspects of the census and definitions of certain characteristics, and the other instruments used in the censuses. For example, in the pre-census period we have utilized international classifications of activities and occupations, which will facilitate more successful international comparisons of economic characteristics. Prior to 2002 Census of Population we used national classifications, which made difficult the uniform publishing of results in international publications.

41. Fortunately, although there are some deviations from Recommendations in the 2002 Census, regrouping of some categories of population mainly secures data comparable with the

usual international standards. For instance, for persons absent from the household seven basic reasons for absence are offered, on the basis of which certain categories of population can be included or excluded from total population, if needed. Similarly, in case of persons who work or attend school in some other place, the data were collected on the place where the person attends school or works, so that, within some other analytical concept, these persons can be included in the population of places in which they stay temporarily.

42. Therefore, in a critical analysis of the 2002 Census of Population, we could firstly point to the bulkiness of the census and census forms resulting from the exaggerated dimension of the observed aspects. We are convinced that this bulkiness must have affected the quality of the obtained data.

43. With regards to the obtained results, we are the most reserved about data on agricultural holdings. We noticed that farmers frequently tried to decrease the size of their agricultural holding, number of livestock, etc., connecting the possible accuracy of data to possible taxation burden. This indicates the existence of distrust towards official statistics and possible abuse of data. Besides the decades long practice of anonymity in Yugoslav censuses, it is obvious that the population still doubts the full guaranteed discretion of individual census data. One of the shortcomings regarding the possibility of identification is the citizens' personal identification number, which jeopardizes the citizens' trust to the highest extent.

44. The existing registers of population were not used in the census because of their insufficient accuracy, although they could have made certain phases of the census much easier.

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