

SUMMARY

**Changes of Ethnic Structure of Boka Kotorska (1910-2003) with
Consideration of Huge Decrease of Croatian Population**

Ivan Crkvenčić, Antun Schaller

The ethnic structure of Boka kotorska is the consequence of a long history of the area. Different political and social circumstances were of big importance for the development, i.e. changes of ethnic structure. Basically, this development was characterised by significant changes of the ethnic structure of Boka kotorska. Numerous architectonic monuments are

remarkable witnesses of immigration of Orthodox population from the inland territories into the maritime area of Boka kotorska. For this, it is possible to presume that: (a) Catholic population in Boka kotorska, prevailed by Croats, is the native ethnic group in the area, and (b) most of Orthodox inhabitants in Boka kotorska populated the area subsequently, during a few of immigration waves.

Changes of ethnic structure in history of an area are not specific only for Boka kotorska; they are common also in other regions of abundant and turbulent historic development. However, Boka kotorska is specific also for its recent ethnic turbulences which took place during a few periods of time. These turbulences get obvious through the change of different national groups having for some time the ethnic majority in the area. The analysis of ethnic features in Boka kotorska begins with the second half of 19th century for two reasons: firstly, that is the period of first complete and well-organised censuses in the area which are relevant for consideration of ethnic composition in the area, and secondly, the mentioned period remarks the start of considerable ethnic turbulences in Boka kotorska. Nevertheless, before any comment two facts should be emphasised: (a) the subject of this essay is the maritime zone of Boka kotorska consisting of 41 settlements, (b) there are only a few censuses in the past that could be mutually compared: unfortunately, the censuses organised only in years 1910, 1981, 1991 and 2003 were based on settlements as the basic territorial units. All other censuses were based on wider territorial units – communities and/or districts – that had been subdued by time to changes of their territorial extent and therefore were not convenient for any justified comparison. Nevertheless, these censuses were valuable because they gave some information on the number of resident population in respective periods of time.

During the time of *Austrian rule* (1814-1918) the national structure of population in Boka kotorska was complex, but ethnically predominant group were Croats, having even more than 50 % of total population in 1910. Montenegrins and/or Serbs made the most of remaining population, but ethnic group of foreign population was then also numerous in the area – majority of them was employed in services related to Austrian military naval base.

After the fall of Austrian monarchy in 1918, the most of foreign population abandoned Boka kotorska, so that the rate of foreigners decreased in short time. The rate of domestic population started then to increase. In spite of that, the share of native Croats also decreased while both Montenegrins and Serbs were rapidly increasing in number. There were two periods of post-Austrian ethnic turbulences in Boka kotorska. Both of them were influenced by significant political changes in immediate hinterland of Boka kotorska. The first one is related to era of royal Yugoslavia (1918-1945) and the second to the period of federal Yugoslavia (1945-1991). Creation of both 'first' and 'second' Yugoslavia had remarkable influence to political status of Boka kotorska, which was a part of federal unit of Montenegro during the time of federal Yugoslavia.

Ethnic composition of the population in Boka kotorska during the era of *the Kingdom of Yugoslavia* has been revealed from the censuses in 1921 and 1931. It is true that these censuses were related to territorially wider units than settlements themselves, i.e. to communities and/or districts. The number of Catholic population was increasing in that time, but

Orthodox population was increasing much more intensive. By «crossing-calculation» of census data related to number of members of certain religion with number of population speaking «Croatian or Serbian languages», it was found out that some 9,300 Croats and about 15,300 Montenegrins and/or Serbs lived in Boka kotorska (i.e. in the frames of the District of Kotor) in 1921. However, by calculating the number of residents belonging to different ethnic groups from known shares of these groups in total population in 1931, it was revealed that some 13,000 Croats and 17,500 Montenegrins and/or Serbs lived in the area of Boka kotorska. Meanwhile, the share of Croatian population started to decrease so that Croats ceased to be ethnic majority in Boka kotorska. Since then Montenegrins and/or Serbs represent the most numerous nationality in the area.

Ethnic composition of Boka kotorska faced much more significant changes in the period of *federal Yugoslavia*. In the period 1953-2003, the number of total population in Boka kotorska was doubled, but share of Croats decreased in the same time from 26.2 % to only 7.5 % of total population in the District of Kotor (i.e. in entire maritime zone of Boka kotorska). In the same period the share of Montenegrins and/or Serbs continues to increase significantly. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that some remarkable changes in the number of these two nationalities were noticed in the period, particularly due to reason of newly introduced national category of «Yugoslavs» that was attractive for a number of population of Boka kotorska in censuses 1971, 1981 and even 1991. Although among «Yugoslavs» were inhabitants of all three main nationalities, it seems that majority of them were Serbs. This conclusion is derived from the fact that by decrease of number of «Yugoslavs» since 1991 onward, the number of Serbs abruptly increased, so that Serbs were represented by the share of even by 42.2 %, while the share of Montenegrins relatively decreased to 34.9 % of total population of Boka kotorska in the census 2003. Thus, the new change of nationalities share rank occurred in Boka kotorska. The share of Croatian population meanwhile decreased to a very low value so that, consequently, residents from the category of «not declared population» became even more numerous in Boka kotorska than Croats.

This essay is an attempt to show through the analysis of censuses 1981, 1991 and 2003 the recent changes in number and share of resident population in 41 settlements of Boka kotorska (the settlements considered lie approximately in the zone described in the previously published paper), but – above all – in 20 settlements characterised by Catholic, i.e. Croatian majority in 1910. In this way both the magnitude and character of occurred demographic changes in Boka kotorska were shown, as well as the fact that resident Croatian population in Boka kotorska is dying away.

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dr. sc. Ivan Crkvenčić, profesor emeritus,
Geografski odsjek PMF-a, Zagreb
e-mail: icrkven@geog.pmf.hr

mr. sc. Antun Schaller, dipl. ing.,
APO d.o.o., Zagreb
e-mail: antun.schaller@apo.hr