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## **THE POPULATION OF THE BALKANS AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY**

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**SESSION: POPULATION AGEING AND FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLDS CHANGES IN THE BALKANS**

## *Paper*

# **AGEING OF BABY BOOM GENERATION IN SERBIA – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE TRENDS**

**Jelena Stojilković Gnjatović\*, Ljiljana Sekulić\*\***

## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to give contribution to the field of research of population ageing in Serbia (without data for Kosovo and Metohija), focusing on baby boom generation. The formation of baby boom generation started after World War II, when number of live births increased significantly. Paper addresses issues related to defining the start and the end of so-called “compensation” period. Delimitation of baby boom generation is defined on the basis of demographic indicators such as rate of fertility and total fertility rate, but also uses age structure from Censuses as additional source. Since fertility was so high in the decade after war was finished, the baby boom generation is quite numerous. Population ageing is (predictable) consequence of low fertility, and as such, it has been widely studied. Still, the need to point to the age structure has risen recently since baby boomers are getting closer to the old age. The paper analyses the share of baby boom generation in Serbia in last seven Censuses (from 1953 to 2011), showing their relative importance in overall population composition. The emphasis is on data from 2011 Census, because it will be the last one when Serbian baby boomers were not part of old population (65+). One of the biggest concerns followed by ageing of baby boomers is inadequate replacement of younger generations in terms not only of age distribution but also in economic context. Even though the future trends of population development are unknown, population projection gives us good sense of what is to come. Population ageing will persist in Serbia in the future and one of the drivers of its course is ageing of baby boom generation because of demographic momentum. Knowing demographic features of baby boom generation is thus important and relevant for political responses. The challenges created by this process are not negligible, because this will reflect to different societal aspects. The most feared one is connected to pension system and (in)ability of its functioning. Still, baby boomers changed some of predefined social consensuses since divorces, economic activity of women and education were not widespread before this generation. It is open question whether they will change “old age” as we know it.

Key words: population ageing, baby boom generation, population projection, demographic structures, Serbia

## **Introduction**

One of the oldest demographic questions is the one of responding to the idea of population optimum, followed by fear of excessive growth or population decline. Malthus, as one of the first theorists of the population wrote about the positive and preventive barriers to population growth, where positively obstacles included famine, epidemics, war etc. However, he did not take into account the occurrence of compensatory period, when after increased mortality as a result of wartime losses or epidemic (which are often developed in conditions of war and usually intensify negative tendencies when it comes to reproduction of the population), there is an increase in fertility to compensate for the population that has been lost. The past century was marked by the two world wars, accompanied by a large number of victims, but also followed by compensatory period, and after the Second World War came to the formation of a particular generation - the baby boom generation, with a special kind of social identity.

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\* University of Belgrade, Faculty of Geography, Belgrade (stojilkovic.gnjatovic@gmail.com)

\*\* Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade (ljiljana.sekulic@stat.gov.rs)

Generation is more than cohort. This is a cohort with cultural identity and as such has collective social significance. The decisive factor in the formation of generations is what is happening in society during certain years the observed group of the population, an idea that was first introduced by Karl Mannheim (1952), according to him the generational awareness is created by the common experience in the youth. Forming a generation is defined in time and in memory from two directions: the present is viewed from the perspective of the past, but the past is also reflected from the perspective of the present.

While “cohort” approach is well known and used in demography, the exploration of baby boomers required not only “cohort” but also “generational” perspective. The reason is the fact that they are authentic and unique, most likely unrepeatable demographic event, but also because they created common consciousness and sense of belonging to particular generation.

American demographer Richard Easterlin developed the thesis of "overcrowded generation", a theory which suggested that the large generations to experience negative consequences in terms of their well-being. Large cohorts suffer due to lack of opportunities in fields such as education, the labor market and services. However, boomers are "lucky generation" because they lived through the postwar economic boom, when the standard of living skyrocketed (Karisto, 2007).

Even though phenomenon of baby boom generation is visible on numerous age and sex pyramids in the countries that fought (and in most cases won) in WWII, some authors maintain that there is no excessive research on fertility change that led to formation of baby boom generation and that research is mostly focused on USA, with emphasize on Easterlin hypothesis and economic factors, and just later on Lestheage's ideational and cultural change. By far, the largest part of scholarly work addresses the consequences rather than the causes of the baby boom (Van Bavel and Reher, 2013).

When Serbia is in question, existence of baby boom generation had been noted as soon as data allowed it. Tasić (1963) when analyzing age and sex structure of Yugoslavia from census 1961 is clearly stating that school contingent is quite numerous, as it is consist of members of cohort born after WWII during compensation period. Nowadays this cohort is known as baby boomers (Penev, 2006; Nikitović, 2010).

In this paper, we are dealing with demographic features of baby boomers in Serbia, starting from the formation of this unique generation until present time, with some reflection on possible future. Still, the emphasize is put on most recent period since baby boom generation is on crossroad, between middle and old age, so it is important to thoroughly investigate demographic features of baby boomers in Serbia.

### **Methodological remarks**

In order to investigate demographic of baby boomers in Serbia, vital and census statistics as data sources are used. Constrains regarding vital statistics immediately after WWII exist, but data for following period can give insight into natural movement of population. For 1947-149 only previous result are available, and after 1950 every birth has been registered with separate leaflet. We are using data on total number of births, crude birth rate, total fertility rate and total number of infant mortality from vital statistics. The last year of analysis is 2010 because afterwards new administrative division (NUTS) is being in use and data are not comparable with Serbia Proper and Vojvodina.

All censuses after WWII in Serbia are used as another source of data, namely those held in 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2002 and 2011. Also, estimated data on age and sex structure between censuses is helping to highlight changes that baby boom generation went through. The stress is on last census since more demographic structures of baby boomers are presented from this period. Analysis is limited on Serbia Proper and Vojvodina because data on vital events for Kosovo and Metohija are not available after 1998, and last census that fully enumerated population in Kosovo and Metohija was in 1981. Also, population projection data (medium variant with migration) are used to access future movement of baby boomers.

## **Past - When did baby boom start in Serbia? When did it end? Why are baby boomers so important?**

As prevailing reason for occurrence of baby boom is often mention after war optimism, and we can suppose that postwar enthusiasm was strong factor that influenced recuperation of fertility, and rebuilt of the country was happening not only in terms of reconstruction and economy, but also in the field of demography. But unfortunately, in case of Serbia, there is no tangible proof that we can use to prove this hypothesis. In fact, some other research are questioning role of economy and post war enthusiasm in relation to fertility increase. Explanation for peak in fertility in Western European countries is that women old enough to work during war gathered work experience, but those young who were schooling had double competition from older women already experienced and men who returned after war. Assumption is that these women are those who decided to have more children (Van Bavel and Reher, 2013, Doepke et al., 2007). Unlike other Western countries, Serbia in that time was country with quite high share of agriculture population and without developed industry so it is questionable would this hypothesis work in Serbian conditions.

In some European countries, fertility peaked before war, and in some had two peaks, first before and during the war and reached a first maximum just after the end of the war, and then after some decline, second peak in the late 1950s or in the 1960s. For analysis of fertility peaks, two indicators are usually used. Crude birth rate is considered to be the closest to the literal meaning of “baby boom” and it is more suitable for investigation of consequence of the baby boom or its effect on the population age structure. Total fertility rate standardizes for age structure and thus better reflects the reproductive behavior underlying the number of births (Van Bavel and Reher, 2013). In case of Serbia, since we are interested in research of baby boom generation, the scope of analysis is limited on post-war fertility. Also, development of Serbian statistics is factor, because only after 1950 every demographic event was followed by individual register. Since there is no valid statistics on vital events in the first years after Second World War, it is very hard to delimit when formation of baby boom generation started. Still, there are some factors that seem to be reasonable to include when analyzing the rise of fertility immediately after WWII. One is connected with widespread marriage as a social institution which almost exclusively encompassed childbearing at that time so that mobilization of great numbers of (young) soldiers surely led to birth postponement. Additional to separated spouses, everyday hardship, great number of war victims and unpredictable future surely created unfavorable condition for fertility realization. After the end of the war in 1945, unification of previously married and new marriages happened. It should be added that contraception was almost nonexistent. Another factor that needs to be mentioned is connected to pure biological preconditions of child birth, or the fact that natural duration of pregnancy is nine months.

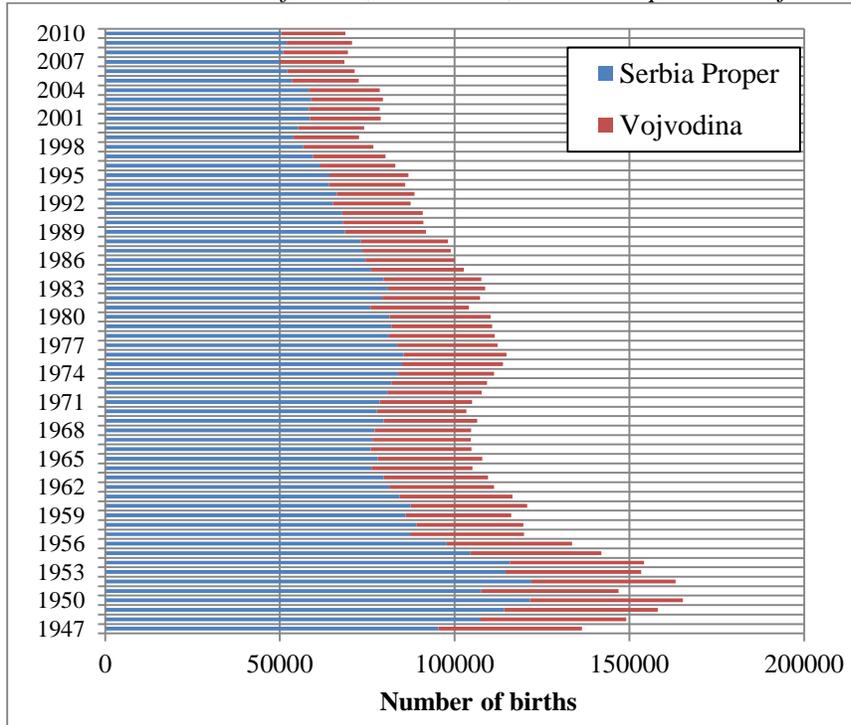
Given all mentioned above, return of the soldiers, some period that proceeds to formation of new marriage union, time needed to conceive a child and duration of pregnancy, looks like likely combination that defined starting year of baby boom in Serbia. If we take into account that war ended in 1945 and months were needed for normalization of everyday life, at least a year (and probably more) for child to be conceived and born, it would be hard to expect that first cohort of baby boom generation was born before 1947. Deeper look on available data on fertility from this period should shed some light on demography of first born baby boomers.

### *Vital statistics – total number of births, crude birth rate, total fertility rate and infant mortality*

The main feature of baby boom is the fact that number of births rise. Even though it is important to investigate what the reasons are for this increase, we are not dealing with these causes in this paper. It has been mentioned that several factors defined starting year of baby boom in Serbia and that it is not likely that before 1947 fertility skyrocketed, since even in this year number of births is not as high as in following years (Chart 1). Number of births has been fluctuating on quite high level for almost a decade afterwards, not including sporadic fall in overall numbers in some years. Actually, as last year of the baby boom can be considered 1956, since number of births fell in just one year (1956/1957) for 13 686 (from 133 563 to 119 877) and stayed on that level in the following period.

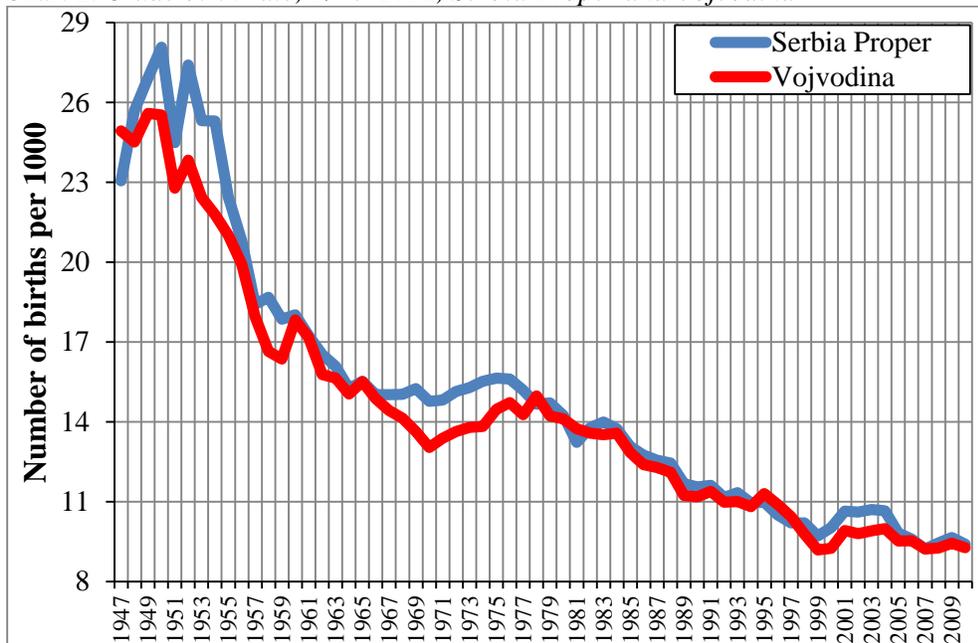
In short, the first glance at total number of births is showing that baby boom in Serbia started in 1947 and ended in 1956. This decade is marked as period with greatest number of births and most importantly, it had consequences on future natural movement. Namely, when baby boomers entered their reproductive age in 70s, number of births rose again. This period of higher births numbers lasted from 1972 to 1984, which is also known as echo generation, or children of baby boomers. It is possible that last mini-baby boom Serbia encountered in 2001-2004 is partly due to the fact that, generationally, these babies could be grandchildren of baby boomers.

Chart 1. *Total number of births, 1947-2010, Serbia Proper and Vojvodina*



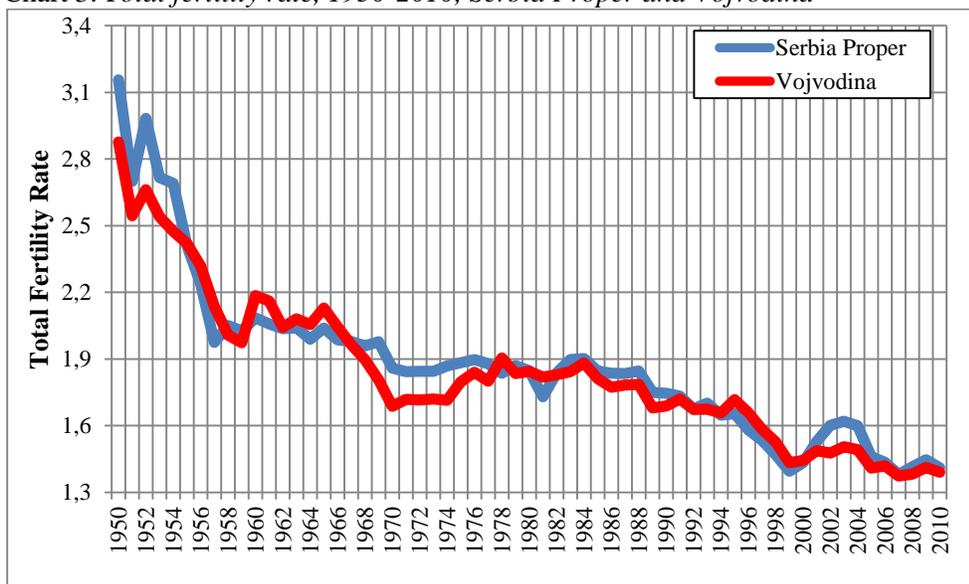
As already mention, there are two indices of fertility usually used for investigation of “creation” of baby boom generation – crude birth rate and total fertility rate. First indicator that is reflecting trend in fertility in after WWII period is showing quite high values in the beginning of the 1950s (Chart 2). In Serbia Proper and Vojvodina, during period 1947-1956, crude birth rate was constantly above 20‰ (only in Vojvodina in 1956 this indicator was 19.9‰). The year with record value is 1950 in Serbia Proper, when crude birth rate was 28‰. Sharp decline of this indicator followed, so that baby boom generation is the last one born under such high fertility.

Chart 2. Crude birth rate, 1947-2010, Serbia Proper and Vojvodina



The second indicator of fertility that we are discussing is total fertility rate, which is showing the same trend as previous indices or very high fertility until mid 1950s (Chart 3). Limitation is the fact that time series are starting from 1950, since there are no data on earlier period. One important moment has to be specially highlighted, since the year we marked as the end on baby boom is the year when TFR in Serbia Proper was last time above 2,1, and in Vojvodina one year after. So, baby boom is connected to the last moment when Serbia had replacement fertility.

Chart 3. Total fertility rate, 1950-2010, Serbia Proper and Vojvodina



Summarized, according to vital statistics it is harder to define when did baby boom start than when did it end due to data limitation. The end of baby boom in Serbia is much clearer since data unambiguously show that total number of births, crude birth rate and total fertility rate had abrupt fall after 1956, when we can consider that baby boom ended.

In period 1947-1956, baby boom generation was born, and in total number that is 1 502 148 children. Still, mortality as negative demographic force led to significant reduction of this generation during its formation. Unfortunately, this is expected, given that medical attention and spread of medical services at that time were not at high level. Out of all births, around 1% were stillbirths, or 17 297. When it comes to infant mortality, 156 891 children died during first year of life or 10% of total number of births. When we add mortality of children in different ages belonging to baby boomer generation<sup>1</sup>, this number rises to 183 466 deaths or 12% of all births. As stated in Table 2, if we subtract total number of death out of total number of births, the baby boom generation in 1957 most possibly had 1 301 385 members<sup>2</sup>.

Table1. *Mortality of baby boomers, 1947-1956*

Year	1947	1948*	1949*	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Age										
0	17107	18349	18336	18470	18125	15092	14187	13229	13028	10968
1		na	na	2211	2715	1696	1782	1810	1596	1503
2			na	1000	1257	762	758	683	770	646
3				567	694	439	448	402	347	384
4					434	312	272	290	286	241
5						196	216	213	218	177
6							155	157	126	174
7								116	114	131
8									95	92
9										94
Sum	17107	18349	18336	22248	23225	18493	17818	16900	16580	14410

Table 2. *Estimation of number of baby boomers based on vital statistics in 1957*

Vital events	Total
Total number of births, 1947-1956	1502148
Stillbirths, 1947-1956	17297
Infant mortality, 1947-1956	156891
Total mortality in all ages, 1947-1956	183466
Baby boomers in 1957 (without migration)	1301385

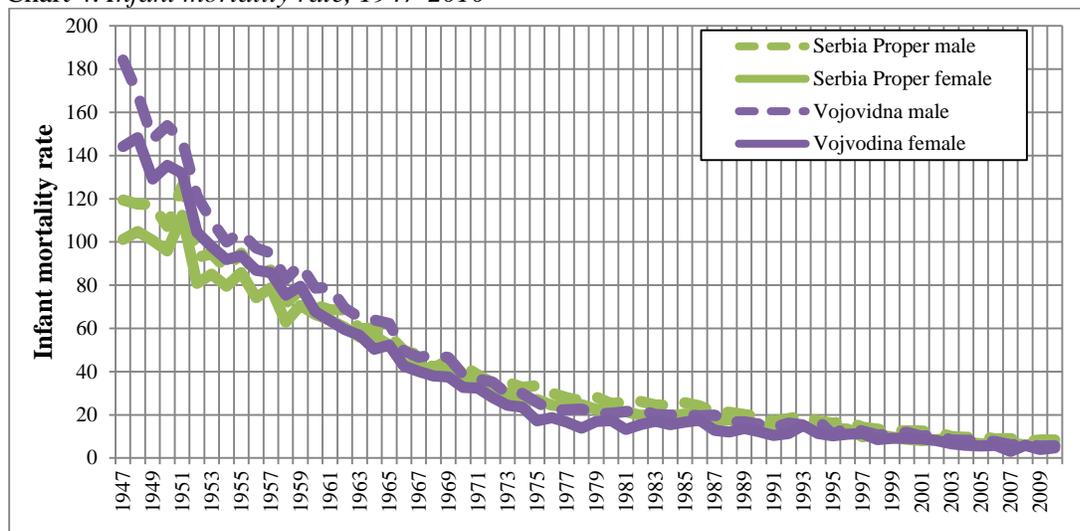
Terrible burden of infant mortality posed on baby boom generation in Serbia is also reflected by infant mortality rate displayed on Chart 4. Exceptionally high rate of children that did not lived through first year of life was characteristics of Vojvodina's male infants during baby boom. This also holds for Serbia Proper, but with lower rates. Only after baby boom, infant mortality has been gradually declining, but it had great impact on first baby boomers.

Analysis of baby boom generation using vital statistics is calling for caution for few reason, one of which being the fact that there is reasonable doubt that not all vital events were reported. This is especially related to the fact that lot of births took place in remote areas in villages. Thus, it is possible that total number of reported stillbirths and to some extent infant mortality was not final, which could hold also for total number of births.

<sup>1</sup> Data on mortality of children age 1 in 1948 and age 1 and 2 in 1949 are not available. This is marked with na in Table1.

<sup>2</sup> Migration not included.

Chart 4. *Infant mortality rate, 1947-2010*



*Censuses – age structure of baby boomers*

Another source that can be used to approximately delimit when formation of baby boom generation started is population censuses. The first census that included baby boomers is the one from 1948, second is next one, held in 1953. All following censuses included already formed baby boom generation. Still, before actual analysis, some limitations have to be noted regarding 1948 census or methodology regarding age of enumerated population. While all following censuses used completed years of age, the first one after WWII (1948) used calendar age, but since only two age groups (0 and 1) belong to baby boomers, this is not affecting analysis at greater extent. Next census from 1953 enumerated part of baby boom generation, or those aged 0 to 6 years. All next censuses until 1991 had regular cohort shift when baby boomers are at question (in 1961 baby boomers were 5-14, in 1971 they were age 15-24 etc). But, change in census dynamic occurred in the beginning of the millennium, when after 1991, census was held in 2002, so that baby boomers in this census were old between 46 and 55. Last census from 2011 recorded baby boomers as population between 55 and 64 years old. This cohort “flow” of baby boomers trough censuses is shown on Chart 5.

When baby boomers are followed trough censuses, it is possible to calculate share of this generation in total population in different periods. The greatest percentage of boomers was recorded 1961, when every fifth inhabitant of Serbia Proper and Vojvodina was born between 1947 and 1956. In next two censuses, this share has been falling because overall population has been rising, and in the last three it has been stable at around 15%. To illustrate how great this share is, it is enough to mention that in 2011 share of population younger than 15 years is smaller than share of baby boomers (15% : 14%).

Chart 5. *Baby boom generation trough censuses, 1948-2011*

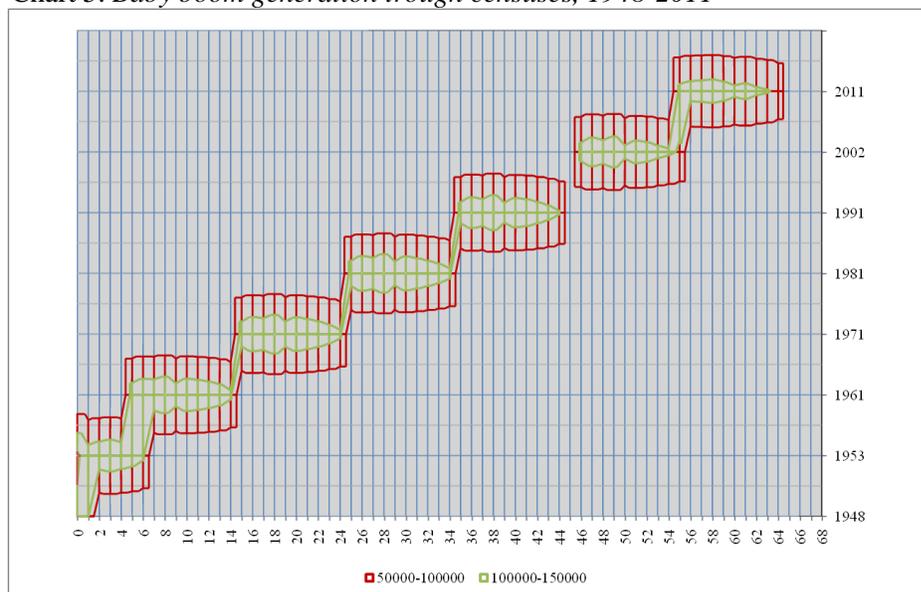


Table 3. *Share of baby boomers in total population, census years*

Census year	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1991	2002	2011
Age of baby boomers	0-1	0-6	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	46-55	55-64
Republic of Serbia, total	5800146	6163246	6678239	7202898	7729236	7822795	7498001	7186862
Number of baby boomers	241192	902734	1285507	1293980	1295623	1239808	1174921	1124693
Share of baby boomers	4.16	14.65	19.25	17.96	16.76	15.85	15.67	15.65

Baby boomers demanded increased resources in terms of children's food and clothing during the fifties, the school inventory during the sixties resulted in an increased labor supply and increased demand for apartments in the seventies, and today their generation was marked as a challenge to the sustainability of the pension system in the world, including Serbia (Stojilković, 2010). It can be concluded that baby boomers had prominent mark on societal events and relations in every moment of their life cycle.

Economic importance of baby boom generation in Serbia is especially due to demographic dividend they created during 70s and 80s because of their large numbers. Namely, after baby boom generation got into labor market, fertility dropped and number of older population was not significant. This made “window of opportunity” which enabled that numerous age groups that consisted of baby boomers are working, while numbers of dependent population were quite small. This effect is still lasting, as Radivojevic and Nikitovic (2010) stated, since baby boomers are still part of working population. Still, it is a question what will occur as baby boomers move through working age and start their retirement which is happening just after last census of 2011. This is why it is important to analyze more closely baby boomers structures in the most recent period, since any viable population politics that is targeting population ageing has to address demographic features of this generation.

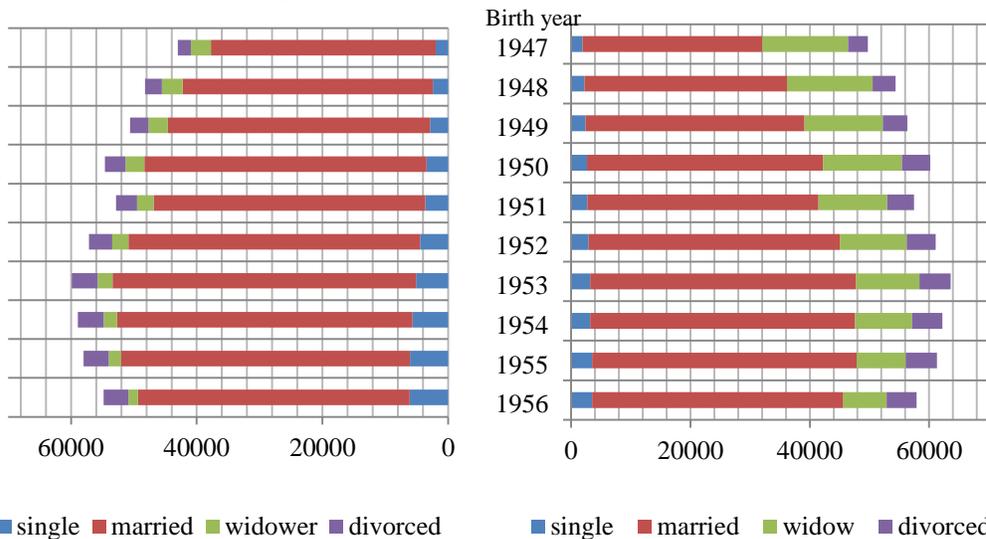
### **The present –structures of baby boomers on the verge of old age**

Baby boom generation in Serbia is at very important cross road since its stage in ageing cycle is now passing threshold of demographic old age, or age of 65. In 2011, there were 1 250 316 inhabitants older than 65 and 1 124 693 baby boomers aged 55-64. This fact alone is showing that future of population ageing in Serbia is going to be largely driven by inherited age and sex structure. Also, demographic regularity that women

are living longer than men is predefining some demographic profile of future elderly. Last census enumerate 723 249 women and 527 067 men older than 65, while there were 585 342 women and 539 351 men that belonged to baby boom generation. Age and sex specific mortality rate in older ages are demographic pattern reflecting greater mortality of male population. This can be clearly observed in nowadays older population where coefficient of masculinity is quite low after 65, and very low in contingent of oldest old (Devedzic, Stojilkovic Gnjatovic, 2015).

Alongside with age and sex structure of baby boomers, other socio-economic features of this generation seem to be important to highlight because of their predicted impact o future population ageing in Serbia. Analysis of marital structure of baby boomers is partially giving insight into living arrangements, for example most of married are living together. Also, shape of this structure of baby boomers in 2011 can to some extent determine marital structure of “young-old” boomers in 2021. As displayed on Chart 6, marital structure of baby boomers shows that there is overbalance on the male side noticeable when it comes to married and single compared to female boomers. Another important feature is the fact that number of widows is considerably greater than number of widowers, especially with older segment of this generation, which also holds for divorced.

Chart 6. *Marital structure of baby boomers, 2011*

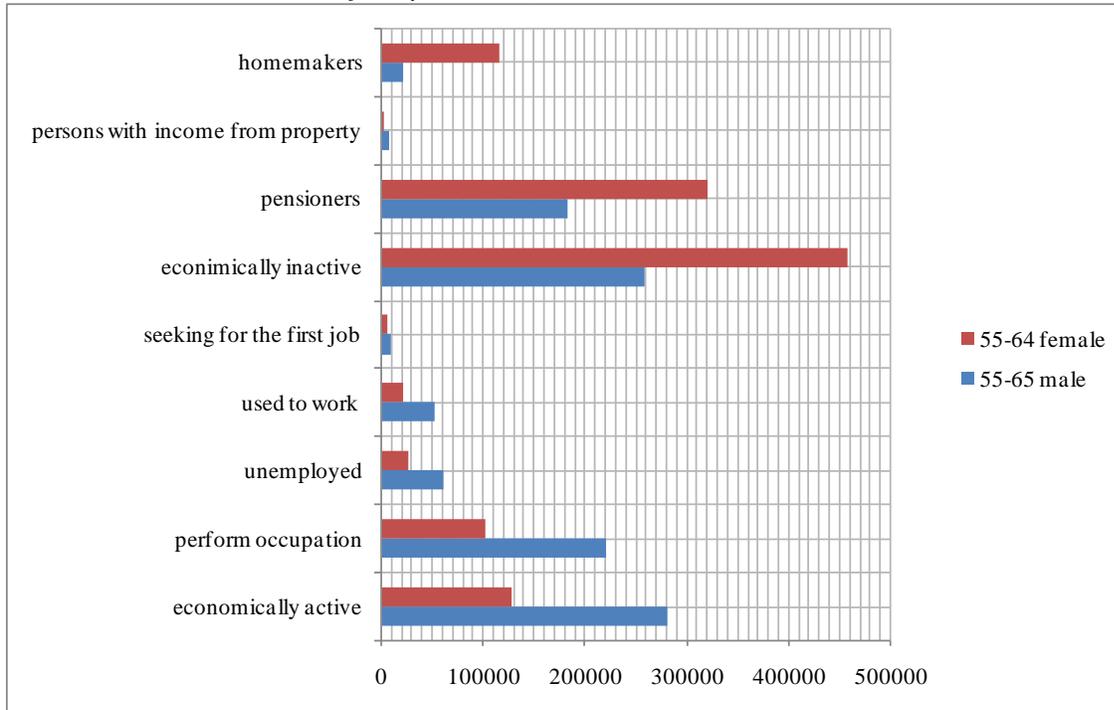


Unfavorable economic conditions existing in Serbia are reflected in economic structure of baby boomers, which is magnified with the fact that workers from this generation are so-called older workers. Also, unfinished economic transition led to widespread job losses specially affecting older workers. It is not surprising that economic structure of baby boomers in 2011 shows that only 14% of all economically active population is baby boomers (408 120), the same share that are employed (322 051) compared to total number of those performing occupation. Positive is the fact that around 80% of economically active baby boomers are actually employed, while the rest are unemployed (86 069), used to work (71 966) or are seeking for first job (14 103). It is important to stress that great difference exist among baby boomers regarding its age since in group 55-59 there is equal number of those active and inactive, while in age group 60-64 only 22% are economically active and 78% are inactive, with great sex differences.

Out of all economically inactive baby boomers (716 573), 70% are pensioners (503 761), which is 30% of overall number of pensioners in Serbia in 2011. As expected, most are women pensioners, since legal threshold to obtain pension form women is 60 years old, with non-negligible numbers of those who acquire this right before this age. This is reflected in the fact that there were 111 888 women pensioners aged 55-59 and 208 704 aged 60-64. Other modalities of economically inactive population are much less represented with baby boomers, so there is only 9 503 of those with income from property. Greater numbers are

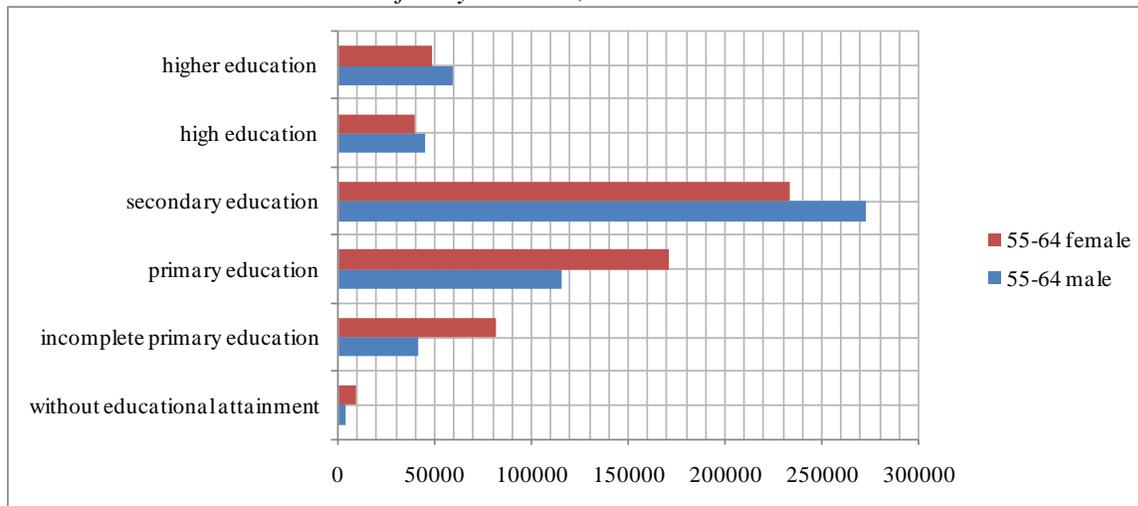
characteristics of homemakers – 136 926, but with considerably overbalance in favor of women boomers. Given all analyzed data, economic structure of baby boomers can be regarded as disadvantageous because of ratio between those active and dependent. Also, sex differences are showing much less active and much more inactive female baby boomers compared to male counterparts.

Chart 7. *Economic structure of baby boomers, 2011*



Cohorts older than baby boomers were not as fortunate as baby boomers when it comes to education. Only after WWII compulsory primary education is introduced in Serbia and baby boomers are among the first that were encompass with this change which is clearly visible in the number of baby boomers without educational attainment (only 12 160). One of important feature of educational characteristics of baby boomers is difference between sexes, since it is clear that women are overrepresented in those with incomplete primary and primary education, while men in greater numbers finished secondary education. Secondary education is most frequent form of school attainment of baby boomers since 50% of all male and 40% of all female baby boomers have finished high school. When it comes to high and higher education, balance between sexes is not as big as in primary education, which is important feature of baby boomers if we compare them with older cohorts.

Chart 8. *Educational attainment of baby boomers, 2011*



In short, baby boom generation in the light of different demographic structure is showing few interesting features, namely, as expected count of women is greater than men. Also, there are more widows (around 20% of all women) than widowers (around 5% of all men) and there are more married men (80%) than women (67%). Economic structure reveals that 69% of all economically active baby boomers are men, and similar percentages are for those performing occupation, those who are unemployed, those who used to work and boomers who are seeking their first job. Meanwhile, 64% of inactive are women, and also two thirds of all pensioners are women. Greatest gap between sexes is for homemakers (85% women). Educational attainment is at question, there is noticeable dominance of females only at lower stages. Overall, half of male boomers have secondary education and 40% of women. All together, this data are giving picture of baby boomers are census in 2011 registered which can be useful for assessment of structure of future old population.

### **The future – population projections**

Difference in percentage of older population between last two censuses was quite small (0,86 percentage points), because of the influx of notch cohorts born during WWII. But the future situation could resemble 2002/1991 when this difference was biggest ever and share of old population added about 5 percentage points in 11 years, mostly due to dynamic migrations affecting age structure and low fertility during 1990s.

If we analyze the generational shift of baby boomers in the future, it is important to mark the following time points:

2012, when the first baby boomer become older than 65 years

2021, when the whole generation of baby boomers are going to be older than 65

2027, when the first baby boomer have more than 80 years of age

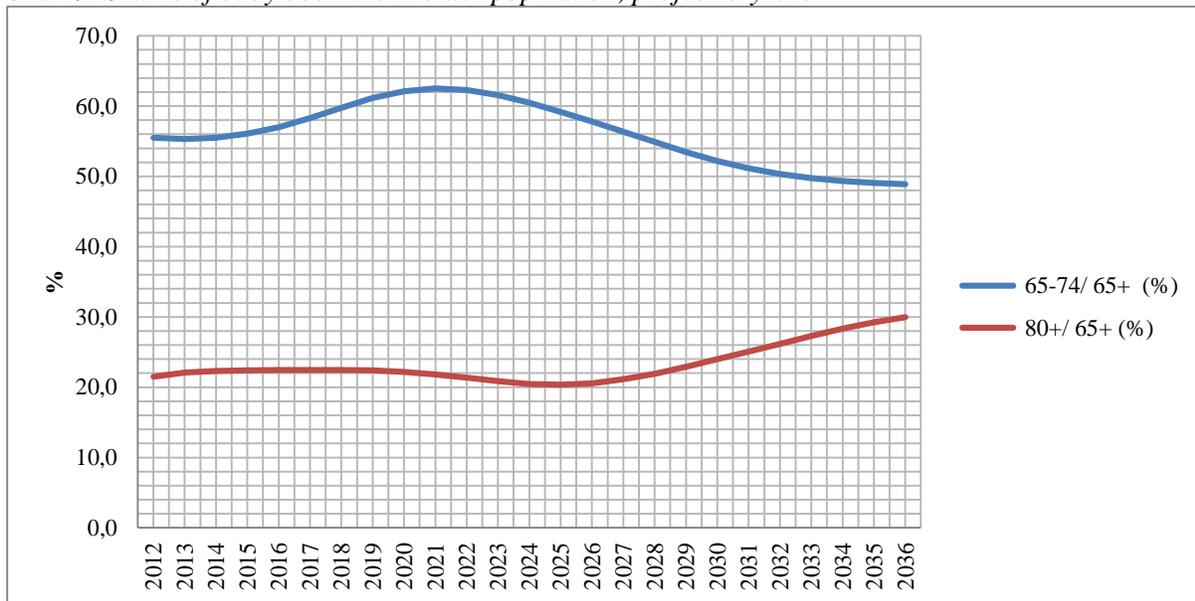
2036, then all baby boomers are belonging to the oldest old contingent (80+)

Before looking into future, it is appropriate to state that share of older than 65 in 2011 were 17,4% of total population. Results of population projections - medium variant (SORS, 2014) indicate that in 2021, when the whole generation of baby boomers is going to be older than 65, the percentage of people over 65 is predicted to be 22% of the total population, and that by the end of the projection horizon (2041), the proportion of elderly is going to increase to 24%. This cohort/generational shift will lead to intensification of demographic ageing, since in only 10 projected years, share of older population is projected to rise for more than 4 percentage points.

Baby boomers will be affecting primary number of older population, while the share of baby boomers in total population in Serbia in the future will be gradually declining, from 15,5% in 2012 to 11,8% in 2026. Still, there are sex differences, so than share of female baby boomers will drop from 15,7% to 13%, and male boomers 15,2% to 10,5% in the same period. Coefficient of masculinity will therefore decline from 922 in 2011 to 767 in 2026.

Ageing of the oldest old (80+) is important and complex demographic phenomenon, since this population segment had the most dynamic increase in the past in Serbia (Stojilkovic, Dinic, 2012). In 2036, baby boom generation will have 80 or more years, affecting increase of contingent of oldest old people. During the inflow of baby boomers in the oldest old group, the proportion over 80 will most possibly double from 3,4% in 2011 to around 7% of projected population in 2036.

Chart 9. Shares of baby boomers in older population, projected years



Internal structure of old population is going to be affected the most because of large numbers of baby boomers coming to the old age, leading to rejuvenation of older population. In 2021, when all baby boomers are to be over 65 years old (between ages 65 and 74 years), they will consist of even 62,5% of the old population, which will affect the growth of “younger old”. In the previous and following period, share of age group 65-74 is much lower, as visible on Chart 9. Impact of baby boomers on future oldest old will be noticed in 2036, when complete baby boom generation is older than 80, and when share of oldest old is rising to the projected 30% in population older than 65.

## Conclusion

Baby boom generation in Serbia is one of the most distinctive demographic events in recent history which affected not only demographic processes but also other aspects of society. The most important characteristic of baby boomers is their numbers, because this is what delimits them from previous and following less numerous cohorts. Still, baby boomers are greater than pure numbers because their generation was followed with different social, economic, political and cultural condition that created common feeling of belonging to this unique group.

Formation of this generation has been accompanied by very high fertility and mortality. After postponement during WWII, recuperation of fertility followed in years after the war, but undeveloped vital statistics is limiting factor at some extent for research of this phenomenon. Still, first available data on fertility indices are highlighting that in period 1947-1956 number of births skyrocketed, and so did other indicators, such

as crude birth rate and total fertility rate. On the other hand, mortality was negative force since infant mortality was enormous in the years when baby boom happened.

Cohort flow of baby boomers had pervading effect on various segments of societal reality, but also this generation was affected by dynamic changes of Yugoslav society. Boomers were generation that lived their youth in peace unlike previous cohorts. They had good chances for education since primary education became compulsory when they were still in preschool ages. Freedom to travel across borders unlike neighboring socialist countries created open mind mentality. Almost full employment in worker self-management allowed them to be financially independent. On the other hand, the fact they were numerous generation had impact on school system which had to deal with great number of pupils, than on housing when they started to marry and nowadays they will most surely affect pension system.

In the nearest future, baby boom generation will be older than 65 years, so that rejuvenation of older population can be expected. Also, population ageing is to be continued and intensified, since number of baby boomers and number of younger of 15 in Serbia was quite close in 2011. Preparation for these great changes can define whether ageing of baby boomers will lead to unbearable burden or to valuable resource of knowledge and experience.

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