

## **Muslim Population of the Republic of Macedonia: A Demographic and Socio-economic Profile<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper challenges the thesis of Muslim demographic exceptionalism by providing a detailed case study of the Republic of Macedonia. Given the heterogeneity of Muslim populations in different countries, country level investigation of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Muslim population is important to devulgarize the level of discussion about this subject, which has been receiving increasing attention in both academic/policy and popular circles in the aftermath of 9/11. The Republic of Macedonia had a population of 2.1 million as of 2009. Ethnicity and religious affiliation are almost identical for the main ethnicities - with the exception of a tiny fraction, almost all ethnic Macedonians are Christian Orthodox, and almost all Albanians, Turks, and Bosnians are Muslim. Ninety two percent of Romas are also Muslims. In 2009, about 35% population of Macedonia was estimated to be Muslim. Muslim population of the Republic of Macedonia will continue to grow over the next twenty years, with its the share of projected to increase to 40 percent by 2029 under a medium fertility scenario. Given the decreasing rate of growth, Muslims are expected to remain a minority for the foreseeable future. Thus, Muslims are expected to follow the demographic trajectory of other groups albeit with a delayed effect because of the population momentum. This finding is consistent with the conclusions from recent studies*

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*on the demographics of Muslims, and casts serious doubts on the thesis of Muslim exceptionalism.*

**Keywords:** *Macedonia, Macedonian, population, Muslim, Balkans, demography, socio-economic characteristics*

### **Introduction**

It is widely perceived within intellectual and policy circles in the West that Muslim societies share some unique cultural characteristics that prevent them from duplicating the demographic transition experienced by non-Muslim societies of Europe, North America, and other regions of the world. A look at the headings in the news media is telling. A widely cited report published by Guardian was entitled, "Muslim Europe: the demographic time bomb transforming our continent,"<sup>2</sup> In the aftermath of 9/11, media is abuzz with concern about the size and nature of Muslim population in the West. Thus, there is great interest among social scientists and policy makers in estimating the growing Muslim population in the West as evidenced by the increasing number of sponsored studies.<sup>3</sup> The Pew Research Center in Washington conducted the first-ever nationwide survey of Muslim Americans in 2007. In 2009, The Pew Forum published its comprehensive study entitled, "Mapping the Global Muslim Population."

Popular perceptions about Muslim exceptionalism notwithstanding, demographic studies have been increasingly telling a different story.<sup>4</sup> First, the

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<sup>2</sup> Michaels, A. (08 08 2009 r.). *Muslim Europe: the demographic time bomb transforming our continent*. ACCESSED ON 02 11 2015 on <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/5994047/Muslim-Europe-the-demographic-time-bomb-transforming-our-continent.html>

<sup>3</sup> Ba-Yunus, I., & Kone, K. (2004). Muslim Americans: A demographic report. *Muslims' Place in the American Public Square: Hopes, Fears, and Aspirations*, 299-321.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Groth, H., & Sousa-Poza, A. (2012). *Population dynamics in Muslim countries: assembling the Jigsaw*. Springer Science & Business Media. Islam, S. (2012). Demographic Change in Europe's Muslim Communities: Implications and Challenges. In *Population Dynamics in Muslim Countries* (pp. 279-292). Springer Berlin Heidelberg. Miller, T.

relationship between Islam and demography is unclear, and both pro and anti-natalist policies are observable among Muslims facing different socio-economic and political conditions in different countries (Groth and Souza-Posa, 2012). Few stylized observations about demographic patterns apply uniformly to Muslims living in different countries, hence, the need for country level investigation of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Muslim population. The present study is a modest attempt to fill this gap.

## 1. Demographic Trends and Trajectories of Muslims in Macedonia

### 1.A. Current Estimates of the Size of the Muslim Population

The Republic of Macedonia has the fourth largest percentage of Muslim population in the Balkans after Kosovo (91%), Albania (70%), and Bosnia-Herzegovina (47%).<sup>5</sup> As of 2009, the population of Muslims in Macedonia was estimated to be 726,000 or 35% of the total population of Macedonia (Table 4).

The first officially available estimates of the Muslim population in independent Macedonia are from the 1994 Census. Table 1 presents these estimates alongside the available estimates from 2002 census. Two points are worth noting here. First, 30 percent of the population identified itself as Muslim. Second, some of the ethnic groups are almost entirely mono-religious - 98% of Albanians and a similar percentage of Turks, Muslims, and Bosnians identified themselves as Muslim. According to the Census of 2002, Muslims in the Republic of Macedonia constituted slightly over one-third of the nation's total population. With the exception of the few Muslims of Macedonian ethnicity (called Torbeshi) and Slavic ethnicity (called Bosnians

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(2009). Mapping the global Muslim population: A report on the size and distribution of the world's Muslim population. *Washington, DC: Pew Research Center*. Eberstadt, N., & Shah, A. (2012). Fertility decline in the Muslim world. *Policy Review*, 173, 29. Islam, S. (2012). Demographic Change in Europe's Muslim Communities: Implications and Challenges. In *Population Dynamics in Muslim Countries* (pp. 279-292). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

<sup>5</sup> Figures for Kosovo are from the 2003 *Kosovo Mosaic* survey conducted by UNDP. Other figures are from the 2008 CIA Factbook.

and Muslims)<sup>6</sup>, almost all of the Muslims in the country are Albanian, Turkish or Roma. Almost all of the Albanians and Turks are Muslims (Table 1).

**Table 1. Muslims by Ethnic Origin 1994 and 2002 Census Compared**

	<b>Muslims (1994 census)</b>	<b>Total (1994 census)</b>	<b>Percent of Muslims (1994)</b>	<b>Total (2002 census)</b>	<b>Muslims (2002 census)</b>	<b>Percent of Muslims (2002)</b>
Macedonians	15,139	1,295,964	1.17	1,297,981		
Albanians	425,376	433,013	98.24	509,083	NA	NA
Turks	73,632	75,205	97.91	77,959	NA	NA
Roma	40,040	43,707	91.61	53,879	NA	NA
Vlachs		8,591	0		NA	NA
Serbs	138	40,220	0.34	35,939	NA	NA
Bosnians	6,686	6,815	98.11	17,018	NA	NA
Bulgarians		1,665	0	1417	NA	NA
Egyptians	2,947	3,072	95.93	3,713	NA	NA
Muslims <sup>2</sup>	15,105	15,407	98.04	2,553	NA	NA
Croats	36	2,242	1.61	129	NA	NA
Montenegrins	301	2,309	13.04	2686	NA	NA
Others	1,521	4,852	31.35	19796	NA	NA
Non-reported	275	1,868	14.72	404	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>581,196</b>	<b>1,934,930</b>	<b>30.04</b>	<b>2,022,557</b>	<b>674015</b>	<b>33.3</b>

(1) Based on self-reporting. Note: Figures are for the resident population. Source: State Statistical Office (SOS), The 1994 Census of Population, Dwellings and Agricultural Holdings in the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, 1996.

### **The Inter-censal Instability of Ethnic Identification of Muslims in Macedonia**

Table 1 also illustrates the intercensal instability of ethnic identification of Muslims in Macedonia. Given the changing political environment in the country, many Muslims in the republic, particularly Muslims of non-Albanian ethnicity, have often changed their ethnic identification (Gaber, N, and Aneta Joveska, 2004; Helsinki Committee, 1999).

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<sup>6</sup> The category of Muslims as a 'nationality' was introduced in 1961 and was changed to 'nation' in 1971. See for details: Klemenčić, M. (1994). *Territorial proposals for the settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. IBRU.

In the 1994 census, about 7000 people identified themselves as Bosnians (of whom 98% were Muslim) and slightly over 15000 identified themselves as 'Muslim' (Muslims constituted 98% of both nationalities 'Muslims' and 'Bosnians'; 'Muslims' refer to Muslims of Bosnian origin. Ethnicity was synonymous with religion in this case although a very tiny percentage of Bosnians did not identify themselves as Muslim.). The total for both groups in 1994 was about 22000. However, in the 2002 census, the total population of both groups is reported to be less than 20000. By the same token, Poulton (1997, p. 93) states that during the Yugoslav period the number of Muslims of Slavic origin who mainly spoke Macedonian was 40000. These were differentiated from the nation of 'Muslims', which referred to Serbo-Croat Muslims. However, in the 1994 census, only 15000 people of Macedonian ethnicity identified themselves as Muslim (Table 1). The same applies to the Roma population. As shown in Table 1, over 3000 Romas identified themselves as 'Egyptians' in the 1994 and 2002 censuses. In 1994, slightly less than 44000 people identified themselves as Roma; in 2002,

**Table 2. Muslim Population of Macedonia by Region according to the 2002 census<sup>7</sup>**

Region	Total Population	Number of Muslims	% of Muslims
<b>Macedonia</b>	<b>2022547</b>	<b>674015</b>	<b>33,32</b>
Pelagonia	238136	29655	12,45
Vardar	133180	14147	10,62
North-Eastern	172787	58842	34,05
South-Western	219741	114667	52,18
Skopje	578144	181589	31,41
South-Eastern	171416	13841	8,07
Polog	305930	250711	81,95
Eastern	203213	10563	5,20

Source: 2002 Census. Note: The table was constructed by the author by collapsing the data by municipalities to fit the NUTS 3 classification.

this number increased to about 54000, an unusual increase of 28% (Table 1). It is not clear to what extent there was an undercount of Romas in 1994 and to what extent this change reflects the tendency among some Romas to identify themselves as ‘Albanians’ or ‘Turks’.<sup>8</sup>As for the population of Turkish ethnicity, it increased from 75000 in 1994 to 78000 in 2002, an increase of about 4%, which is much lower than the 13 per percent increase in the population of Muslims in the country between 1994 and 2002.

According to the 2002 census of the country, the proportion of Muslim population increased from 30 % in 1994 to 33% in 2002, an increase of 3.29 percentage point over a period of 8 years (Table 1). Most of the increase in the number of Muslims between 1994 and 2002 is accounted for by the increase in the number of Albanians over this period. Their population increased by 16% between 1994 and 2002 and accounts for 88% of the total population increase in the country during this period. It is also worth noting that this intercensal increase in population of Albanians was highly concentrated in Skopje and Polog (Table 2). Of the eight regions in which the country is divided administratively, Polog is a predominantly Muslim region (with 80% of the population being Muslim. The other region which according to the 2002 census had a slight Muslim majority (52%) is Southwest.

Figure 1 and Table 3 present the trajectory of Muslim and non-Muslim populations of Macedonia from 1994 to 2009 and projects it through 2029. From 2002 to 2009, the share of Muslims increased from 33% to 35%. It is expected to increase to 40% by 2029.

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**Table 3: Changing Share of Muslims in the Total Population of Macedonia (1994-2029)**

	<b>1994</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2029</b>
<b>Total population</b>	1934930	2022547	2066147	2186197
<b>Muslims</b>	581196	674015	720985	874378
<b>Non-Muslims</b>	1353734	1348532	1345162	1311819
<b>Percentage of Muslims</b>	30	33	35	40

Source: 1994 and 2002 census, Statistical Yearbooks of Macedonia; author's projection

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<sup>8</sup> The rhetoric of tolerance and multiculturalism in the wake of accession to the EU and greater social acceptance may have dampened the tendency to switch ethnic identification among Romas.

It should be kept in mind that this unusual growth rate of the Muslim population during the short period between 1994 and 2002 was not due to higher fertility alone. Migration from the conflict ridden border region of Kosovo accounts for a significant proportion of this growth. What is worth noting here is the deceleration in the growth of Muslim population with demographic transition. Thus, while the share of Muslim population over a 15 year period between 1994 and 2009 increased by 5 percentage points, it would take another 20 years for a percentage share increase of similar magnitude (Table 4).

### *Sectarian Composition of Muslims<sup>9</sup>*

The vast majority of Macedonian Muslims are Sunni Muslims, belonging to the Hanafiya school of thought. A minority of them, of which there is no available number, belongs to six Sufi (Sunni) orders -- the Helveti, Qadiri, Sinani, Rufa'i, Naqsh-Bandi, Malami.<sup>10</sup> Followers of the Sufi orders (*tarikats*) of Macedonia are reported to be distributed geographically as follows: the Helveti (eastern and western Macedonia in Ohrid, Strouga, Kichevo, Gostivar, Kochani, Vinitsa, Stip, Radovish and Stroumitsa), the Qadiri (western Macedonia in Debar), and the Bektashi (Kichevo and Tetovo). The rest live in eastern Macedonia: the NakshBandi (Veles and Stip), the Malami (Radovish and Stroumitsa) and the Rufa'i (Veles, Kochani, Vinitsa, Radovish and Stroumitsa).<sup>11</sup>

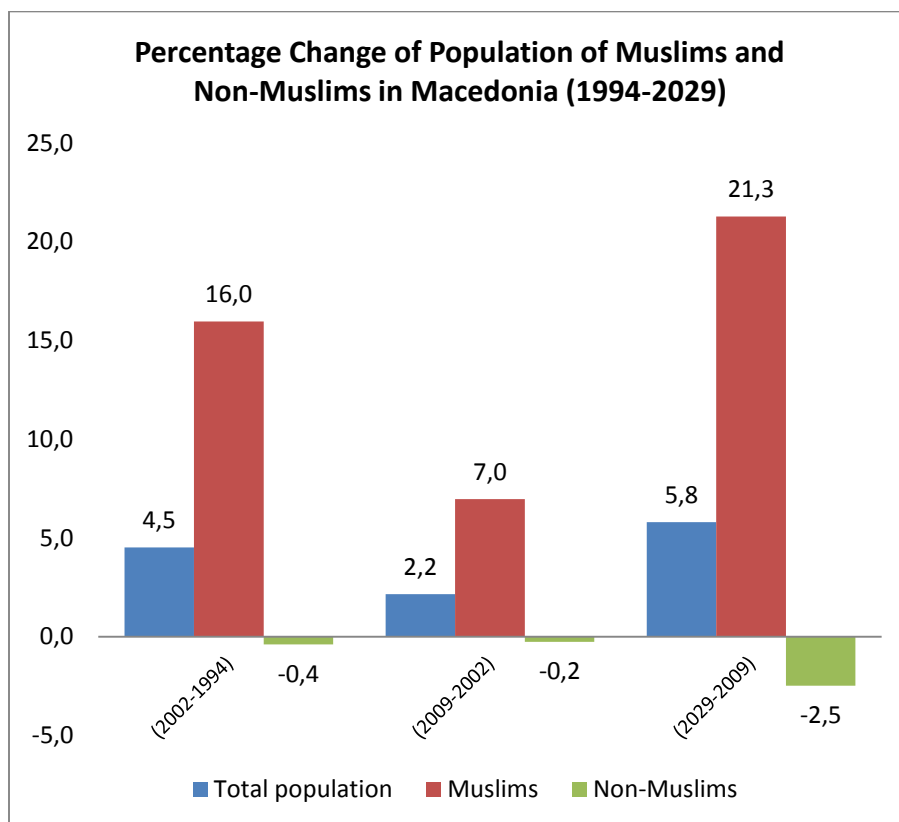
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<sup>9</sup> This section draws heavily upon CEDIME (2007)

<sup>10</sup> Attributed by CEDIME (2007) to Shejh Ibrahim Murteza (Erol Baba), Spiritual Head of the Rufa'i Tekke in Skopje; p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Attributed by CEDIME-SE (2007) to Shejh Ibrahim Murteza, spiritual head of a Rufa'i tekke in Skopje.

Figure 1.



While the total number of Muslims in the country can be estimated and projected over time, the same is not true of the sectarian composition of Muslims. The exact percentage of the Muslim population that adheres to various Shi'a sects, as opposed to the majority Sunni group, is indeterminate. No Sunni-Shi'a breakdown is available in any published source.<sup>12</sup> At present, the figures indicate about 99.3% Sunni and 0.07% (approximately 5000) Bektashi Shi'a, the only non-Sunni group in Macedonia with any significant

<sup>12</sup>The CIA World Factbook does not provide any numbers either as it normally gives a Sunni-Shi'a breakdown for countries where the Shi'a are a significant minority.



published information.<sup>13</sup>The Bektashi are organized in a separate religious entity although the latter was not registered as of 2007. Concentrated in Polog (Tetovo, Bektashi live also in Gostivar, Kichevo, Ohrid, Strouga, Kanatlartsi, Bitola and Resen), ethnically, most of the Bektashis are Albanians although there are also some Turks and Torbeshi (Muslims of Macedonian ethnicity), but no Bosnians. The total number of Bektashis in Macedonia reported to be 5000 in 1999.<sup>14</sup>

### **1. B. Fertility, Mortality, and Selected Demographic Indicators**

Figure 2 depicts the changing age sex distribution of the Muslim population between 2009 and 2029. The projection is based on the assumption of medium level fertility transition. (Other assumptions and procedure adopted are presented in the methodological note in the appendix).

The following points are worth noting. First, Muslims are expected to follow the demographic trajectory of other groups albeit with a delayed effect because of the population momentum – large proportion of young population today that is likely to contribute to future population growth even if the fertility rate falls significantly. Figure 3 juxtaposes the age sex distribution of the Muslims and non-Muslims populations in Macedonia in 2029. The overall shape of the population pyramids of the two groups is similar but the non-Muslim population has ‘relatively’ wider sections at the top than at the bottom, implying a much greater proportion of older people than the Muslim population and shrinkage of the working age groups of the population. See the cohort analysis below.

Table 4 projects key demographic indicators of the Muslim, non-Muslim and total population in the country through 2029. According to the table, the total population of predominantly Muslim ethnicities is expected to increase to 875000, almost one third higher than the 2002 estimate of 674000. The non-Muslim population is expected to remain more or less stable

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<sup>13</sup> There is no independent source to verify this claim but it is one quarter of a percent of the total population of the country. (CEDIME, 2007. Muslims of Macedonia: Minorities in Southeast Europe. Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe – Southeast Europe (CEDIME-SE ).

<sup>14</sup> This information is attributed to Baba Tahir Emini based on a 1999 interview (CEDIME-SE, 2007, p. 20).

although it could fall slightly. While the growth rate of Muslim population is higher than that of the non-Muslim population, it is expected to fall to an annual rate of 0.8% by 2029.

As for the total fertility rate (TFR) for Muslims, it was about 50% higher than that of non-Muslims in 2002 (2.18 vs. 1.39). It is expected to fall sharply over the next 20 years, and is expected to be at the replacement level while that of non-Muslim population is expected to show an inverted U-shaped pattern. Despite this turnaround in the non-Muslim total fertility rate, crude birth rate (CBR) of the Muslim population will remain higher than that of the non-Muslim population throughout the period of projection because of relatively higher proportion of younger cohorts in the Muslim population. Similarly, the crude death rate (CDR) of Muslims is expected to inch upward to reach 6.34 in 2029. Yet, it would still be much lower than that of the non-Muslim population after 20 years because of the higher proportion of young age groups in the Muslim population.

Fig. 2

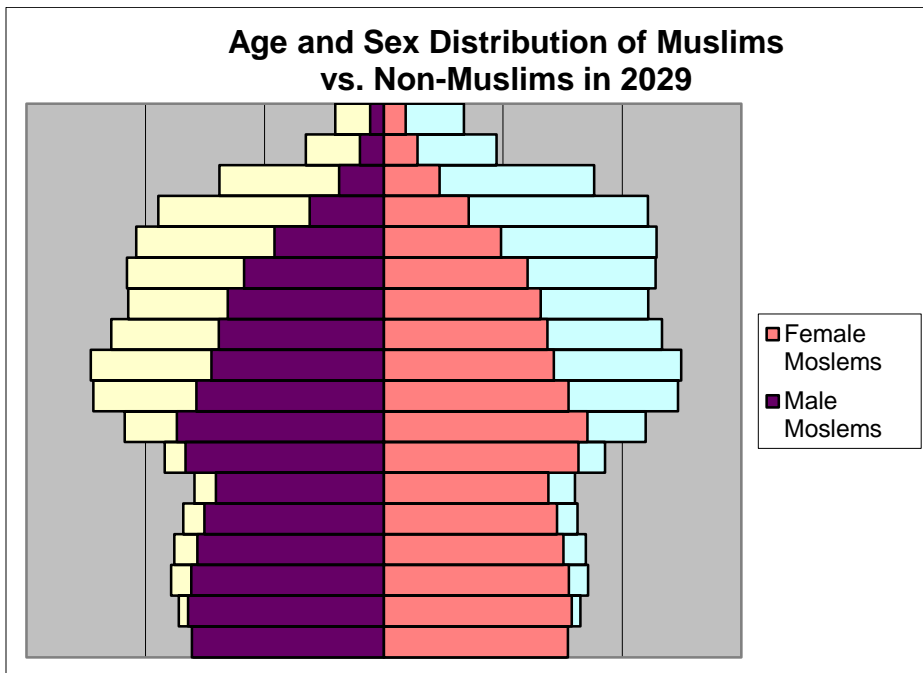
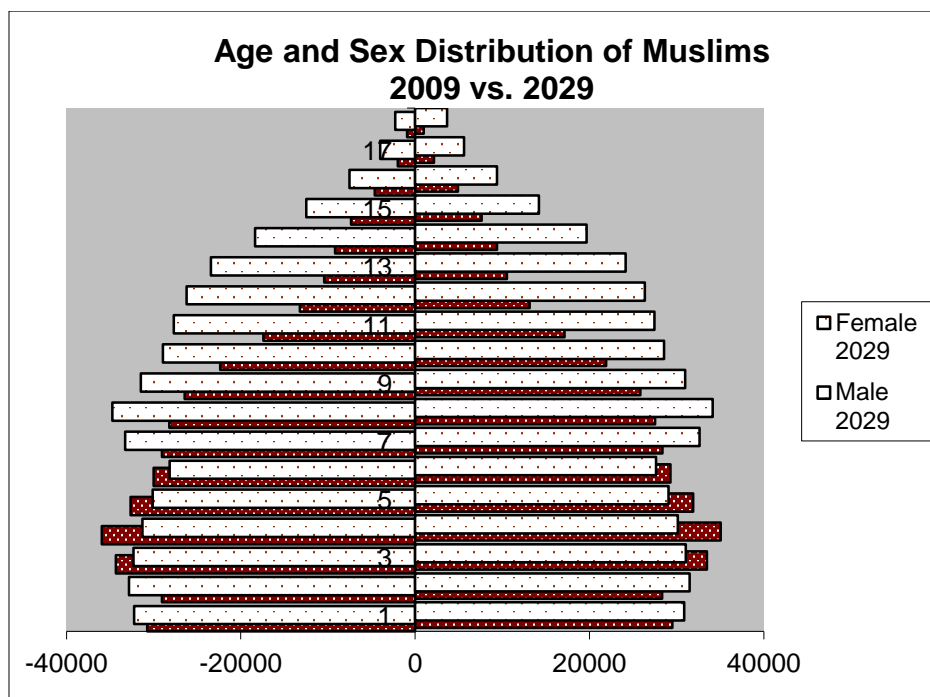


Table 4. key Demographic Indicators (2002-2029)							
Muslims							
Muslim	(census-based)	Base yr. for projection	Projected				
	2002	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
Total Population	674015	682248	720985	760370	799955	838783	874378
Annual pop % growth rate	1.23	1.11	1.07	1.02	0.95	0.83	0.67
Average annual increase	8498.07	7747	7877	7917	7765	7119	5962
TFR	2.18	2.18	2.14	2.11	2.07	2.04	2.00
NRR	1.03	1.03	1.02	1.01	1.00	0.98	0.97
Male life expectancy at birth	70.88	70.88	72.32	73.65	74.89	76.04	77.11
Female life expectancy at birth	75.67	75.67	77.23	78.62	79.87	81.00	82.00
Annual net migration (incl. deaths)	500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500
Annual births	11955	12281	12618	12936	13069	12741	12014
Annual deaths	3957	4034	4241	4519	4804	5121	5553
Annual natural increase	7998	8247	8377	8417	8265	7619	6462
CBR	17.20	17.50	17.04	16.58	15.95	14.87	13.51
CDR	5.69	5.75	5.73	5.79	5.86	5.98	6.24
Non-Muslims							
	(census-based)	Base yr. for projection	Projected				
	2002	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
Total Population	1348532	1350695	1345162	1340551	1335701	1326841	1311819
Annual pop % growth rate	-0.02	-0.08	-0.07	-0.07	-0.13	-0.23	-0.34
Average annual increase	-324	-1107	-922	-970	-1772	-3004	-4409
TFR	1.39	1.39	1.44	1.49	1.53	1.58	1.63
NRR	0.66	0.66	0.69	0.71	0.74	0.76	0.79
Male life expectancy at birth	70.88	70.88	72.32	73.65	74.89	76.04	77.11
Female life expectancy at birth	75.67	75.67	77.23	78.62	79.87	81.00	82.00
Annual net migration (incl. deaths)	500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500
Annual births	13375	13723	14183	14278	13689	12636	11701

**Abdul GAFFAR MUGHAL**

Annual deaths	14199	14330	14606	14748	14961	15140	15610
Annual natural increase	-824	-607	-422	-470	-1272	-2504	-3909
CBR	9.92	10.18	10.56	10.67	10.28	9.58	8.99
CDR	10.54	10.63	10.88	11.02	11.24	11.48	12.00
	Total (Macedonia)						
	(census-based)	Base yr. for projection	Projected				
	2002	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
Total Population	2022547	2032943	2066147	2100921	2135656	2165623	2186197
Annual pop % growth rate	0.40	-	0.32	0.33	0.33	0.28	0.19
Average annual increase	8174	6641	6955	6947	5993	4115	1552
TFR	1.69	-	1.67	1.70	1.75	1.82	1.87
NRR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Male life expectancy at birth	70.88	70.88	72.32	73.65	74.89	76.04	77.11
Female life expectancy at birth	75.67	75.67	77.23	78.62	79.87	81.00	82.00
Annual net migration (incl. deaths)	1000	-1000	-1000	-1000	-1000	-1000	-1000
Annual births	25330	26005	26801	27214	26758	25377	23715
Annual deaths	18156	18364	18847	19267	19764	20262	21163
Annual natural increase	7174	7641	7955	7947	6993	5115	2552
CBR	12.52	12.79	12.97	12.95	12.53	11.72	10.85
CDR	8.98	9.03	9.12	9.17	9.25	9.36	9.68
Source: census 2002; Statistical Yearbook of Macedonia, 2008; author's calculations. Notes: The projections are based on the medium scenario. See the appendix for details.							

**Fig.3**



***1.C. International Migration<sup>15</sup>***

Table 5 provides information about the stock of emigrants from and immigrants into Macedonia as of 2006. The historical pattern resulting in high emigrants stock is unlikely to continue in future. What is important for the purpose of population projection is the annual net flow of migration. This number is highly unreliable. Data from the 1994 census indicate that, according to the number of persons who left the country as a percentage

<sup>15</sup> This section draws heavily upon (Mughal et al, 2009) and (IOM, 2007).

**Table 5: Macedonia: Estimated Stock of Migrants and Emigrants**

	Emigrants	Immigrants
Total Stock	370.8267	121.291 <sup>1</sup> (2005)
As percentage of total population	18,28	6 (2005)
	Status of emigrants	Status of immigrants
Refugees	7.940 (2006)	1.240 assisted (2006); 176 returned (2006)
Gender ratio		70.724 female, 50.567 male (2005) <sup>3</sup>
Asylum-seekers	1.587 (2006)	-205 (2006)
Emigration rate of tertiary educated	20,9%	

Source: World Bank Factbook, 2008. UNCHR [2006]: Statistical Yearbook 2006. Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons. Figures represent end-2006 statistics. Status as at 15 June 2007.

of the total population in Macedonia, two groups of emigration areas could be distinguished. The first group consists of the municipalities of Resen (26.3 percent) and Bitola (25.4 percent), and the second of Demir Hisar, Ohrid, Struga, Tetovo, Gostivar and Kicevo, where this percentage was between 10.6 percent and 19.6 percent.

Accurate information about emigration or immigration flows by ethnicity is sporadic and almost non-existent in Macedonia. Although the Ministry of Interior keeps record of immigrants from different countries, the ethnic and religious identity of these immigrants is unknown (IOM, 2007). There has been no nationally or regionally representative household survey of migrants conducted by the state statistical agency in Macedonia. According to the updated list of registered voters presented at the beginning of May 2007 by the Ministry of Justice there are 59,650 voters staying abroad up to one year out of 1,742,316 registered voters in the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia. The population census of 2002 identified 22,995 people being abroad for a period of up to one year and another 12,128 staying longer. Pursuant to the amendments in the Law on Census in 2002, the census included only citizens staying abroad up to one year (UNDP, 2007, p. 22). Recent research reveals that 56.3% of Macedonian migrants have been staying in their host countries two to five years. Women are more likely to stay less than 2 years while men are believed to spend longer periods in the destination country.<sup>16</sup> The net migration rate in Macedonia in 2006 was -1/1000.<sup>17</sup> According to the 2002 census, annual net migration (including deaths) was 500 persons, a relatively negligible number.

While the actual number of emigrant and immigrant flows is shrouded in mystery, we have information from household surveys about the ethnic pattern of migration. Table 8 from the Macedonian Quality of Life Survey (henceforth, MQOLS08) presents the main socio-demographic characteristics of the households in comparative perspective.<sup>18</sup> The key fact to note here is the migrant to population ratio in the Albanian community is much higher than the migrant to population ratio in the Macedonian community.

While only 26.76% of the households in Macedonia are of Albanian origin, 41% of all households with migrants happen to be Albanian. The percentage of such households in rural and urban areas other than the capital city of Skopje is substantially higher than in the capital (7% in rural areas as opposed to less than 1,5% in Skopje).

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<sup>16</sup>Centers for Research and Policy Making [2007]: Strengthening Cross-Border Cooperation in the Western Balkan Regarding Migration Management. Macedonia. Migration Flows in Modern Macedonia. Skopje

<sup>17</sup>Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division's World Population Prospects: the 2006 Revision Population Database; UN Development Programme Human Development Report, 2006

<sup>18</sup> The Quality of Life Survey of 2008 sponsored by UNDP had a small module with questions on migration and remittances.<sup>18</sup> It must be kept in mind, however, that the question on migration in the survey focused on temporary migration for work of household members and does not reflect permanent emigration from the country. However imperfect the survey is, it reveals valuable information about the pattern of international migration by ethnicity.

**Table 6: Socio-Demographic characteristics of sample household members**

<b>Base: All household members in the sample unless otherwise specified</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Share in total sample %</b>	<b>Share in Migrant Households</b>
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Macedonian	7068	68.91	55.71
Albanian	2463	26.76	40.69
Turk	91	0.7	0.94
Roma	223	2.06	0.67
Serb	84	0.73	0.44
Vlav	54	0.43	0.89
Other	46	0.41	0.67

Source: MQOLS08

## **2. Family, Fertility, Mortality, and Maternal and Infant Health**

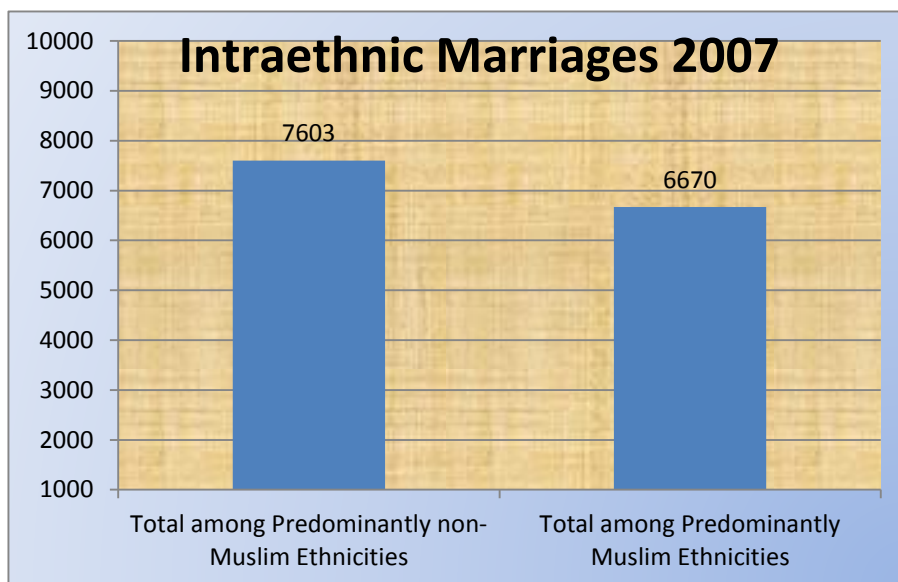
### ***2.A. Life course development - marriage and divorce***

There are significant differences between the Muslim and non-Muslim ethnicities in patterns of marriage and divorce. Although Muslims constitute slightly over one third of the population according to the 2002 census, intra-ethnic marriages among the predominantly Muslim ethnicities account for 47% of all marriages taking place in the republic in 2007. On the other hand, while, Muslims account for a disproportionate share of total marriages in 2007, the divorce rate among intra-ethnic couples of predominantly Muslim ethnicities was 38% showing a lower incidence of divorce among



predominantly Muslim ethnicities.<sup>19</sup> The high marriage and low divorce rates are at least partly rooted in the cultural norms, particularly in rural areas, which discourage sex out of wedlock. The following chart depicts information concerning the recent marriage patterns in the country.

**Fig. 4**



Source: author's calculation from the Statistical Yearbook of Macedonia, 2008.

Note: There is a tiny proportion of unknown ethnicities which has been excluded from the total count.

Despite the law that allows women to exercise their right to spousal choice, marriages are often arranged by parents in the Roma and Albanian population.<sup>20</sup> The 2005 Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (henceforth,

<sup>19</sup> The divorce rate in 2007 is not related to the marriages taking place in 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Women's rights in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Briefing for the Human Rights Committee

MICS3) in Macedonia reveals some interesting patterns by ethnicity. Predominantly non-Muslim Macedonian women are more likely to have their husband/partner 10+ years older, than women from the predominantly Muslim ethnic groups. Women from the Roma ethnic group are more likely to have had sex before 18 (27 percent), compared with women from other ethnic groups. These patterns may have some interesting implications but further discussion on these is outside the scope of the present study.

### *2.B. Current fertility levels and its correlates<sup>21</sup>*

The 'exceptional' fertility of Albanians has long been a subject of controversy (Courbage, 2002), there has been a sharp decline in the fertility level of Albanian women. As noted by Courbage, the completed fertility of Albanian women was twice that of Macedonian women in recent years: 4.12 live births by ages 45-49 in the 1994 Census, as against 2.07 for Macedonian women.

It is easier to describe the proximate determinants of fertility than to explain its deep causes. In a seminal article on demographic transition among Muslims in Eastern Europe, Courbage (1992) observes that Islam has often been seen as pro-natalist and the high fertility of Muslim populations in FRY, which was real enough until the 1970s, is attributed to Islam. Since independence in 1991, the Macedonian Albanians have found themselves in a minority position vis-à-vis the Macedonian majority, and it is reasonable to ask whether this minority status per se affects fertility? Courbage rightly observes that unlike Serbia and Kosovo where differential fertility was considered to be an important political issue, in Macedonia, notwithstanding plentiful fertility data by ethnic group, the question has been less politicized partly because both Albanians and Macedonians saw themselves as minorities vis-a-vis the Serbian majority within Yugoslavia.<sup>22</sup>

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from the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of the Republic of Macedonia (ESE) in partnership with the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT), p.4.

<sup>21</sup> This section draws heavily upon Courbage (2002, pp. 434-437).

<sup>22</sup> The Macedonian language press has reported the unauthorized settlement of Albanian refugees from Kosovo or Sandal (Serbia).

Most scholars are skeptical about the culturalist explanation of fertility. There is considerable empirical evidence that casts doubt on the cultural explanation: the dramatic reduction in fertility in large Muslim countries such as Bangladesh and Iran, and the observed reduced fertility of Muslim women who migrate to advanced Western societies are just some cases in point. The most recent MICS survey shows that there are no significant differences in the use of contraceptives between the women from different ethnic groups (UNICEF 2006, p.41). We agree with Courbage who observes that “Albanians living in Macedonia, Turks and Roma as well, possess a set of socio-economic characteristics which in synergy almost invariably induce high fertility” (ibid., p. 435). An important indicator of the insignificance of cultural explanation is the parity in the use of contraceptives. Several hypotheses can be invoked to explain the higher fertility of Albanian women. The following table of socio-demographic characteristics by ethnicity is highly instructive. The key insight that emerges from this table is the remarkable strides made by Albanian women between 1994 and 2008.

**Rustic Environment:** Not only is the opportunity cost of bearing and rearing children lower in rural areas, but socialization in the rural setting also reinforces the high fertility norms. Population of Albanian ethnicity has been hitherto predominantly rural relative to the population of Macedonian ethnicity. According to the 1994 census, twice as many Albanians lived in rural areas as Macedonians (two in three as opposed to one in three). Although urbanization of Albanians is on the increase as shown by recent data, the majority of Albanians (57%) still live in rural areas according to MQOLS08 (Table 7). Many Albanians continue to live in remote mountainous areas.

**Age at marriage:** According to the 1994 census, the mean age at marriage is lower among Albanian women (23.3 years) than among Macedonian women (24.5 years) and permanent celibacy is lower (0.7% as against 3.1%). No recent data is accessible on this subject.

**Average time spent in school:** Lower age at marriages of the Albanians is closely associated with shorter duration of completed schooling. According to the 1994 census, Albanian women on average spent only five years in school as opposed to eight years for Macedonian women. Nine out of ten Albanian female school children were unable to continue beyond primary education (compared with five out of ten of their Macedonian counterparts). However, significant improvement in the average amount of time spent in school has happened since 1994. Thus, in 2008, the average number of years

of schooling increased to 10 – only slightly less than that of Macedonian women. Roma women attending schools also show similar improvement in the years of schooling (Table 7). As of this year, secondary school has been made obligatory in Macedonia.

**Low participation of women in the labor force:** By choice, or through family pressure, only 9% of Albanian women participate in the labor market (40% among Macedonian women). Thus, the cost of bearing and rearing children for Albanian women is very low. In 2006, Tetovo, a predominantly Albanian city, displayed the lowest levels of female participation in the labor force (WB, 2008b, p. 9). “With only 11 percent estimated to be economically active, women of Albanian origin were 35 percent less likely to be employed than women of Macedonian origin” (Paunova, 2013; p. 7.). In 2005, non-Macedonian female workers were associated with 35 percent lower probability of participating in the labor force compared with female workers of Macedonian origin. The recent World Bank report on the labor market in Macedonia observes, “[A] relatively large part of women from Non-Macedonian ethnic groups explained that their responsibilities as care givers do not allow them to work” (ibid., p. 10).

**Rentier Economy:** Courbage (2002) discusses the hypothesis that the persistently high fertility of the Albanians is related to the particular nature of their economic system, which is a form of Rentier economy in which income is unrelated to productive work.<sup>23</sup> According to the census 1994, only one third of the working age population of Albanians participates in the labor force while the corresponding figure for the Macedonian was two-third. In our judgement, Courbage misses the point that the Albanian participation rate is lower mainly because of the extremely low activity of female population. Similarly, for Roma, access to the labor market jobs due to ‘statistical discrimination’ is highly probable. The labor force participation rates of non-Macedonian ethnic groups have been on the rise. Macedonian ethnic population displays the highest participation rate of 53.5%. In 2005, male

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<sup>23</sup> As shown above, Albanians have a disproportionate representation in the pool of migrants who send remittances to support household members. The share of households of Albanian origin in the total remittances is 34.8% (even though Albanians constitute about 25% of the total population), and that of Macedonian origin 60%. The rest are accounted for by other minorities. (Mughal et al, 2009).

**Table 7**

Source	Indicator	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma
1994 Census	Urbanization rate (%)	62	35	34	82
MQOLS 2008		68	43	89	94
1994 Census	Labor force in the primary sector (%)	9	11.8	13.8	5.8
2002Census	Labor force participation rate (%)	63.2	32.3	42.4	50.4
1994 Census	Women in labor force (%)	40	9	27	27
MQOLS 2008		76	19	1	2
1994 Census	Unemployment rate (%)	28	52	16	72
2002 Census		32	61	58	79
MQOLS 2008*		31	27	30	74
1994 Census	Employed members of labor force in total population of the group	31	8	12	12
MQOLS 2008		36	28	33	11
1994 Census	Non-qualified and semi-qualified persons in labor force (%)	29	48	54	72
1994 Census	Illiteracy Rate				
	Women	12	27	30	53
	Men	4	10	13	25
1994 Census	Average duration of studies among persons attending school (years)				
	Women	8	5	5	3
	Men	9	7	7	5
MQOLS 2008	women	11.7	10.3	10.7	7.6
	men	11.7	10.9	10.8	8.1

Source: 1994 figures from Courbage (2002); 2008 figures calculated by the author from MQOLS08.  
Notes: \*The quality of MQOLS08 is uncertain as there was an unusually high non-response rate of over 80% among the Albanians.

workers of non-Macedonian origin were associated with an 8 percent lower probability of participating in the labor force relative to male workers of Macedonian origin. In 2006, Tetovo, a predominantly Albanian city, displayed one of the largest increases in male participation from 2004 to 2006. (WB, 2008b, p. 9)

**Education:** Education is expected to induce a taste for quality relative to quantity of children. This explains why highly educated women prefer to have fewer children, but invest more resources in upbringing and educating the ones they have. Thus, MICS 2005-2006 data shows that women with no education are less likely to demand contraceptives to prevent pregnancies, than women with secondary or higher education (13 percent versus 33percent). In terms of ethnicity, MICS 2005-2006 shows that the percent is lowest among Roma women (20 percent) (SSO, 2007., P.42).

**Unmet Need for Spacing:** MICS 2005-2006 shows that five percent of women have unmet need for spacing of time between their pregnancies. This percentage is highest among women aged 20-29. Women with no education are less likely to have unmet need for spacing (2 percent), compared to women with secondary education (6 percent). Albanian women and women from the category of other ethnic groups are most likely to have an unmet need for spacing. Twenty nine percent of women have unmet need for limiting. Urban women are more likely to have unmet need for limiting than rural. The percentage is highest among women aged 40-44. (ibid. p. 42)

### ***2.C. Infant and Maternal Health<sup>24</sup>***

Analysis of the 2005 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by UNICEF depicts a picture of significant inter-ethnic differences in indices of infant and maternal health.

MICS shows that ninety five percent of Macedonian women have heard of AIDS as compared with less than 60 percent of women from other ethnic groups. While 77 percent of Macedonian women believe that using a condom every time can prevent HIV/AIDS transmission, this percentage is significantly lower among women from Albanian and Roma ethnic groups (34 percent). The two most common and relevant misconceptions in Republic

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<sup>24</sup> This section draws heavily upon MICS 2006 (UNICEF. 2006).

of Macedonia are that HIV can be transmitted by supernatural means and sharing food. Only 8 percent of Roma women can identify both misconceptions, compared with 43% for Macedonian women. Comprehensive correct knowledge is highest among the Macedonian population (33 percent) than the other ethnic groups (less than 8 percent for either the Albanian population or the Roma population. Women from the Albanian and Roma ethnic group are less likely to correctly identify means of HIV transmission from mother to child than Macedonian women (29 percent versus 70 percent). Women from the Albanian ethnic group are less likely to know a place to get tested (18 percent) compared to Macedonian women (60 percent). Women from the Roma ethnic group are less likely to receive antenatal care from a doctor than Macedonian women (79 versus 98 percent).

As for children, Albanian (65 percent) and Roma (66 percent) children are less likely to be vaccinated, compared to Macedonian children (88 percent). Also, Roma children are twice as likely to be stunted and are more likely to be underweight than Macedonian or Albanian children.

#### ***2. D. Cohort analysis of the Young and the Old***

The following table presents projection of the Muslim population of Macedonia by working and dependent age cohorts. Several points are worth noting here. First, while the young dependents' cohort (0-14) shows a U-shape pattern of growth through 2024, the 2009 cohort of young dependents (both male and female) is likely to be slightly smaller than that of 2009. Second, the size of 65+ cohort in 2029 will be almost double the size of this cohort in 2009. Third, the proportion of population 30-59 years is expected to continue to increase, albeit at a decreasing rate, through the projection period. The increase in the dependent old would offset the decrease in the dependent young, resulting in a about the same total dependency ratio in 2029 as in 2009. As regards the male/female ratio, it was 1.03 according to the 2002 census. We project the sex ratio to be 1 by 2029 presumably because of the absence of all factors that cause the sex ratio to be unbalanced. Further investigation of this topic is beyond the scope of these paper.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Davis, Devra Lee; Gottlieb, Michelle and Stampnitzky, Julie; "Reduced Ratio of Male to Female Births in Several Industrial Countries" in *Journal of the American Medical Association*; April 1, 1998, volume 279(13); pp. 1018-1023

**Table 8**

<b>Working Age and Dependent Cohorts of Muslims (2009-2029)</b>					
<b>Males</b>	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
0-14	94,185	90,820	93,263	94,356	93,631
15-64	247,738	269,205	283,436	295,619	304,282
65+	24,262	26,697	30,321	36,522	45,931
	366,184	386,721	407,020	426,497	443,844
<b>Females</b>	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
0-14	91,420	87,745	89,642	90,610	89,838
15-64	242,665	264,704	279,534	291,706	300,111
65+	25,288	29,451	34,790	42,713	53,999
	359,373	381,901	403,966	425,029	443,948
<b>Both</b>	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
0-14	185,605	178,565	182,904	184,966	183,469
15-64	490,402	533,909	562,970	587,325	604,393
65+	49,550	56,148	65,111	79,235	99,930
15-29	196,931	204,902	197,715	186,509	179,672
<b>Total Muslims</b>	<b>725,557</b>	<b>768,622</b>	<b>810,986</b>	<b>851,527</b>	<b>887,792</b>
<b>Male/Female Ratio</b>	<b>1.019</b>	<b>1.013</b>	<b>1.008</b>	<b>1.003</b>	<b>1.000</b>
<b>Total %</b>	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
0-14	25.6	23.2	22.6	21.7	20.7
15-64	67.6	69.5	69.4	69.0	68.1
65+	6.8	7.3	8.0	9.3	11.3
15-29	27.1	26.7	24.4	21.9	20.2
30-59	37.5	39.5	41.1	42.2	42.4
60+	9.7	10.6	12.0	14.1	16.7
<b>Dependency Ratio of Population of Predominantly Muslim Ethnicities (2009-2029)</b>					
	2009	2014	2019	2024	2029
<b>Young Dependency Ratio</b>	0.38	0.33	0.32	0.31	0.30
<b>Old Dependency Ratio</b>	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.13	0.17
<b>Total Dependency Ratio</b>	0.48	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.47



### **3. Socioeconomic Issues**

#### **3.A. Gender and Race**

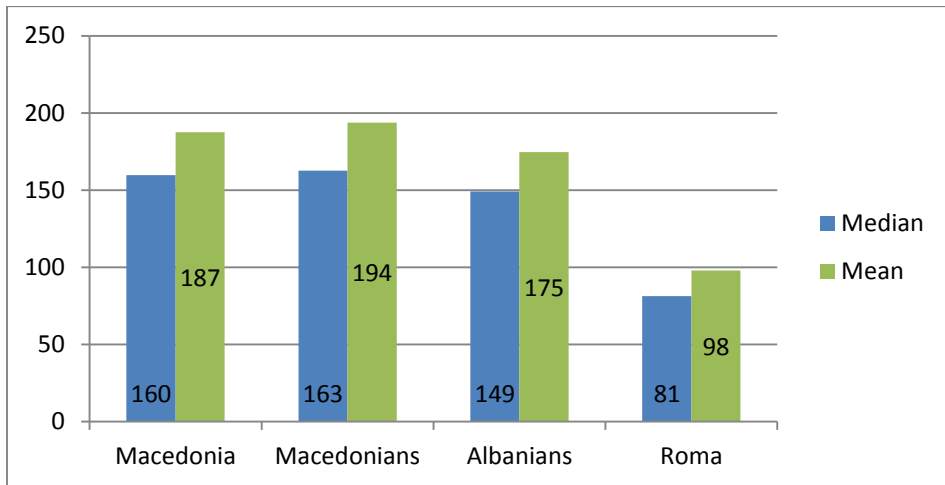
Gender statistics of Muslim population by ethnicity shows significant differences with predominantly non-Muslim ethnicities. Many fertility inducing patterns of behavior within the Muslim community of Albanians are highly gendered. This includes lower rates of schooling attainment and enrolment.

There is considerable evidence of gender inequalities within the Albanian community, with significant differences between the Sunnis and the Shias. Within the Albanian community, the Bektashis women as in the Ismaili and Khoja *Jamaat khanas* (community centers), can participate in the religious ceremonies together with men. This is different from the Sunni Muslims and the Sunni Sufi Orders, where men and women are separated during the prayers in different parts of the mosque or in different rooms (CEDIME-SE, 2007, p.20).

The recent Quality of Life survey (MQOLS08) shows that Muslims are the poorest as well as the most unequal of all ethnic groups. Population of predominantly Muslim ethnicities has lower mean and median income than the predominantly Orthodox Christian Macedonians (Fig. 5). There are also significant differences within predominantly Muslim ethnicities. Romas have the lowest median monthly equivalized income (81 Euros), which is 54% of the median equivalized income of Albanians and 50% that of ethnic Macedonians (163 Euros).

Table 9 presents recent data on income inequality *within* ethnic groups. The table shows that there is considerable heterogeneity within predominantly Muslim ethnicities. The Romas are the most unequal with the income share of the top 20% of the households having 20 times the income share of the bottom 20% of the households. While Albanians show a slightly lower ratio between the top and the bottom 20%, income shares of all quintiles except the bottom 20% are similar to those of Macedonians. There is little evidence that these intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic disparities have anything to do with religion.

Figure 5: Mean and Median Equivalized Household Income by Ethnicity



Source: PCA Survey, July/August 2008 (MQOLS08).

Table 9: Equivalized Disposable income and Expenditure by Quintiles by Ethnic Group

Quintiles	Equivalized disposable income by quintiles					Equivalized disposable expenditure by quintiles				
	Ethnic Macedonian	Ethnic Albanian	Roma	Othe	All	Ethnic Macedon.	Ethnic Albanian	Roma	Other	All
1	3%	5%	2%	7%	3%	9%	7%	5%	9%	8%
2	13%	11%	9%	12%	13%	14%	14%	11%	15%	14%
3	17%	17%	15%	16%	17%	18%	18%	18%	19%	16%
4	24%	23%	23%	24%	24%	22%	23%	24%	23%	25%
5	43%	43%	50%	41%	43%	37%	38%	41%	34%	37%
S80/S20	15	9	20	6	12	4	5	8	4	5

Source: PCA Survey, July/August 2008 (MQOLS08); Note: Turks and other ethnic groups were aggregated in 'others' because there were too few cases in the sample.

Socially, the Romas have been historically discriminated against and are looked down upon by members of both Muslim and non-Muslim ethnicities alike, their religious affiliation with Islam notwithstanding. Interethnic marriages are an index of social inclusion and integration. Traditionally, there were few mixed marriages in Yugoslav Macedonia, recording one of the lowest rates in the former Yugoslavia. Romas were the only group that mixed freely with other groups, consistent with the tendency among some Romas to identify with other 'higher status' nationalities (Gaber, pp.104-105).

### ***3.B. Educational attainment by gender***

Ethnic and gender disparities in access to education in Macedonia are well-publicized. Albanians have made significant strides in getting access to higher education as well as education in their own language in the aftermath of the Ohrid Framework. Nevertheless, significant disparities remain. The most recent country Expenditure Review by the World Bank (WB, 2008a) reports that expenditures per student vary substantially across municipalities in Macedonia, with a large part of the variation reflecting low spending per student in Albanian and dominant-Albanian schools. The average expenditure per student in Albanian schools is about 75 percent of the average expenditure in FYR Macedonian schools regardless of whether the schools are rural or urban. (WB, 2008a, P. 23)

The same report observes: "The enrollment share of children of Macedonian ethnicity exceeds their population share at all education levels, especially after the primary level. . . . Roma children are underrepresented at all levels of education. Although the Albanian and Turkish groups are slightly over-represented at the preschool level, both groups are under-represented starting at the upper primary level" (WB, 2008, pp.24-29). The highest percentage of children of secondary school age that should be attending secondary school, but are not, is among the children from Albanian ethnic group (7 per cent) compared with the Macedonian children (less than 1 per cent) (UNICEF, 2009, p. 28).

In terms of access to education by ethnicity, the results are clearer. "The enrollment share of children of Macedonian ethnicity exceeds their population share at all education levels, especially after the primary level. . . . Roma children are underrepresented at all levels of education. Although the

Albanian and Turkish groups are slightly over-represented at the preschool level, both groups are under-represented starting at the upper primary level” (WB, 2008a, P.29).

Survival rates of Roma, Albanians and Turks students are lower beyond grade 8 relative to the Macedonian students. By the time students reach the end of grade 12, the vast majority of those continuing into higher education are Macedonian (WB, 2005, p.44).

According to MICS, children from the Roma and Albanian ethnic groups have the lowest access to children’s books (32 and 27 percent).

There are some differences in the attendance rate of children from different ethnic groups - only 2 percent of Albanian children attend pre-school education compared to 17 percent of Macedonian children. This figure is only 4 percent for the Roma children. The percentage of Roma children of primary school age attending primary or secondary school is also lower in comparison to other ethnic groups (61 percent as opposed to the overall percentage of 95 for all children of primary school age (ages 7-14) in the Republic (SOS, 2007; Table ED.3). The highest percentage of children of secondary school age that should be attending secondary school but are still attending primary school is among the children from Albanian ethnic group - 7 percent, compared with the Macedonian children where this percentage is less than 1 percent.

There are significant variations in primary school completion across ethnic groups. The percentage of children attending the last grade of primary education is lower among children who belong to the Roma ethnic group (45 percent), compared to 87 percent of Macedonian children,

As noted above, Albanian women on average lag behind the Macedonian women. The deficit of Albanian women emerges more clearly still from the short length of time they spend in school and university (for those who attend). According to the World Bank report cited above, participation in preprimary education varies greatly by ethnic group (90 percent among Macedonians, 54 percent among Albanians, 37 percent among Turkish) , and especially by gender. According to the same report, girls accounted for 33 percent of the Roma enrollment, 39 percent of the Albanian enrollment, and 33 percent of the Turk enrollment in 2005. However, recent data testifies to significant improvement in the educational status of Albanian women. Dimova (2006) argues that since independence, the access of Albanian women to higher education has led to massive changes in the role

that Albanian women are able to play in public and private spaces. She notes that the number of Albanian women who are political activists and representatives has been growing steadily (Dimova, p. 305).

### *3.D. Occupation, unemployment and economic development*

MQOLS08 sheds important light on the socio-economic status of different ethnic groups. In terms of the occupation, employment, and income status of Muslims versus non-Muslims, ethnic rather than religious categories tend to be more revealing. The Albanian community was the subject of persecution and discrimination during the last years of FRY. Access to high paying public sector jobs was limited for Albanians and Romas forcing many of them to seek informal sector employment. This lack of opportunity has had a cumulative effect putting the community at a disadvantage vis-à-vis non-Albanian ethnic groups (PCA. 2009; UNDP,2004). .

The following table provides the breakdown of unemployment rate by religious affiliation.<sup>26</sup>There does not appear to be any significant difference across religious lines.<sup>27</sup>It should be pointed out that the actual unemployment rate is lower as the current tax code offers perverse incentives and induces many people to work in the informal sector, which has a disproportionate participation by members of the Albanian and Roma community.

**Table 10**

	<b>ORTODOX</b>	<b>MUSLIM</b>	<b>CATHOLIC</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
UNEMPLOYED	31.02	30.05	12.07	35.64

Source: author's calculation from MQOLS08

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<sup>26</sup> Readers are cautioned to take these results with some skepticism.

<sup>27</sup> This does not apply to the tiny communities of Catholics and others but there were extremely few cases and therefore, these should be taken with skepticism.

A breakdown of unemployment by ethnicity offers significant insights. Table 11 presents the same picture by ethnicity. The table underscores the significance of ethnicity as a differentiating factor. The table shows a slightly lower level of unemployment of Albanians. But, three out of four Roma respondents reported being unemployed.

**Table 11**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Unemployment rate</b>
Ethnic Macedonians	31%
Ethnic Albanians	27%
Roma	73%
Other	27%

Source: author's calculation from MQOLS08

Table 12 shows that migration status of the households can be an important factor in determining employment. Two points are worth noting here. First, there is a statistically significant difference between the migrant and non-migrant households in the Albanian community. While less than 11% Albanian households with migrants report having all working age adults to be unemployed, over 37% of the households without migrants of Macedonian ethnicity report being unemployed. The difference is significant at the 10% level.

**Table 12: Unemployment Rate by Ethnicity and Household's Migration Status**

<b>Unemployment Rate by Ethnicity and Household's Migration Status</b>			
	Households with Migrants	Households w/o Migrants	P-Value for Difference in the Rates
Macedonian	37.34	30.75	0.1966
Albanian	10.72	27.61	0.0101
Roma	100	72.82	too few observation
All Others	0	28.48	0.0872

Source: author's calculation from MQOLS08

The headcount poverty rate by religion shows a very high poverty rate among Muslims compared with non-Muslims (Table 13).

**Table 13**

	ORTODOX	MUSLIM	CATHOLIC	OTHER
POVERTY HEADCOUNT	16.74	29.51	27.27	36.36

Source: author's calculation from MQOLS0

The survey also shows that while the main difficulties that people face in starting a business are financial, Albanians and other non-Macedonian groups face much higher perceived legal obstacles in starting a business than Macedonians. This suggests the relatively weaker initiation and integration of the members of predominantly Muslim ethnic groups into the legal system.

**Table 13: Three main difficulties you have faced in starting a business (%)**

	<b>Macedonian</b>	<b>Albanian</b>	<b>Other</b>
Financial	72	69	64
Spatial	6	2	7
Communal	5	6	0
Legal	4	8	14
Advising	3	3	0
Human resources	1	0	0
Other	2	2	7
No problem	7	11	7

Source: author's calculation from MQOLS08

### **3.D. The rural/urban divide including internal migration**

As noted above, Albanians have a very high proportion of rural population than the Macedonians (57% according to MQOLS08). The small Turkish population is highly urbanized but scattered throughout the country. Macedonian Muslims (known as Torbeshi) live in Western Macedonia in the Centar Zupa, Debar, Struga and Plasnica areas. However, we have information about inter-municipality and inter-regional migration. Inter-municipal migrations have been dominant in the internal population movements in the country over the last decade, while migrations between settlements within a municipality are relatively less frequent (UNDP, 2004, p. 21).

### **4. Discussion and Concluding Remarks**

Muslim population of Macedonia will continue to grow over the next twenty years, *ceteris paribus*, but at a decreasing rate. Muslims would still be a minority twenty years from now. This finding is consistent with the conclusions from recent studies on the demographics of Muslims, and casts serious doubts on the thesis of Muslim exceptionalism.



Despite projected decline in fertility of populations of predominantly Muslim ethnicities, Macedonia is expected to face continuing demographic pressure on the labor market as illustrated by the ratio of the potential labor market entrants over the next couple of decades (proxied by the population aged 0-14) (Table 8). While the Muslim population is likely to grow faster relative to the non-Muslim population of the country, the large inflow of fresh labor force into the labor market offers an important opportunity for a graying Macedonia. Given the size of the informal economy in Macedonia and the disproportionate share of the Albanians in it, it would be highly beneficial for the economy if most economic activity is shifted from the informal to the formal sector and the labor force from the predominantly Muslim ethnicities is allowed improved access to jobs in the high paying public and private sectors. Thus, the Muslim population can *potentially* make increasing contribution to the social security system over the next few decades. A more likely scenario is that this potential contribution would be diverted to the advanced countries of the European Union if the push factors that drive people abroad to seek jobs remain unaddressed.

Beginning January 2010, Macedonian citizens have been able to travel within the European Union without visa. With a GDP per capita among the lowest in Europe, emigration potential in Macedonia remains high. In addition to the income gap between the sending and receiving countries, emigration from the country could also be fuelled by perceived or real discrimination by members of certain minority groups in the domestic labor market, in general, and, the public sector in particular.<sup>28</sup> However, network theory suggests that disproportionate migration of Albanians would continue despite diminishing real or perceived discrimination. Evidence from the NEW Member States shows that the possibility to work freely within the EU is likely to benefit the most disadvantaged individuals / groups of the candidate countries, and/ or those people and ethnic minorities who for any reason feel discriminated against in the domestic job market.

Inadequate minority education reform could be another emigration driver for Macedonia's Albanian speakers. The process of transition to a fully

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<sup>28</sup> Despite the Ohrid Framework Agreement, perceptions of substantive discrimination are widespread among the members of the minority groups. For instance, if proficiency in the Macedonian language is necessary to access certain high-level public sector jobs, the minority groups will continue to be disadvantaged.

functioning market system in Macedonia has been relatively long with the benefits of growth not yet trickling down enough to the disadvantaged sections of the population (PCA, 2009). This factor coupled with the perception of slow implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement could increase the feelings of hopelessness, which is further intensified by the adverse international political environment including the delays in resolving the dispute with Greece over the name of the country. In addition to the delay in the improvement of the condition of the disadvantaged groups, there are several structural factors that suggest continued migration pressure (Mughal et al, 2009).

With all the structural and policy related constraints, the recent Quality of Life Survey (MQOLS08) offers a ray of hope - pessimism about the future is more prevalent among the mainly ethnic Macedonian Christian populations, whether Orthodox or Catholic, whereas the mainly ethnic Albanian Muslim population appears to be more optimistic about the future (Pca09, p. 18)! This latter feeling is expected to promote greater initiative and enterprise among members of the predominantly Muslim ethnicities.

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### Methodological Note

Projection for Macedonia is done by Cohort-component method. Two separate projections were made for the population, one for Muslim population and another for persons with other religious affiliations; projection for the country was done by merging results from those two projections.

Base population was calculated from Census 2002. Calculations were done for estimating population for 2004 by using balancing equation. Then population was fitted to the distribution of population by religion according to the 2002 Census.

For calculating fertility, base assumption is that all Albanians, Turks, Romas and Bosnians are Muslim; all other nationalities are assumed not to be Muslims. Total fertility rate by religious affiliation of mother was calculated from crude birth rate by nationality of mother using formula for estimating TFR by CBR developed and used by UN. Crude birth rate was calculated from estimated population according to nationality using data from Vital statistic (SSO of RM). Total fertility rate was calculated separately for Muslim population and for persons with other religious affiliations. For Muslim, TFR in 2004 was 2.18 and is *assumed* to drop to 1.85 by 2050. For persons with other religious affiliations, TFR in 2004 was 1.39 and is allowed to rise to 1.63 by 2029.

For mortality trends use was made of model lx from West model life table where e0 for male is 72.1 and e0 for female is 75.0.

Net migration is assumed to remain constant at -1000 persons per a year during the projection period.



*Appendix Table*

<b>Estimation of Error by Region in Identical Treatment of Religion and Ethnicity</b>			
	(1) % of Predominantly Muslim Ethnicities in the Region (2002 census)	(2) % of Muslims (2002 census)	Discrepancy (2-1)
Macedonia	32.53	33.33	<b>0.79</b>
East	5.57	5.20	<b>-0.38</b>
Northeast	34.21	34.05	<b>-0.16</b>
Pelagonia	12.22	12.45	<b>0.23</b>
Polog	80.57	81.95	<b>1.38</b>
Skopje	31.36	31.41	<b>0.05</b>
Southeast	7.79	8.07	<b>0.28</b>
Southwest	48.01	52.18	<b>4.17</b>
Vardar	8.75	10.62	<b>1.87</b>
Source: Census of population, households and dwellings 2002			

