

The Fluctuation in the National Identification of a Part of the Muslim Population in the People's Republic of Macedonia (Statistical and demographic analysis)

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Abstract

This article analyzes the statistical and demographic data obtained from the first two censuses taken in the People's Republic of Macedonia in 1948 and 1953 that show how the national identity of a part of the Muslim population (Turks, Albanians and Macedonians professing Islam) changed. The national identity of a part of the Muslim population at the time the censuses were taken was conditioned by several historical political, social and cultural factors. This is also a reason why these censuses do not give an accurate ethnic picture of the Macedonian society in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In fact, the authentic census data, useful in the making of a demographic analysis of Macedonia's ethnic structure, are very often imprecise, which may hamper the research of the ethno-demographic characteristics of the Macedonian society.

Keywords: *Ethno-demographic structure, Census, Muslim population, Turks, Albanians, Macedonian Muslims, National Identification*

Introduction

In the territory of former Yugoslavia, in the censuses taken after the Second World War, certain ethnic groups dramatically increased or decreased dramatically because a part of the population identified themselves differently

each time. One of the reasons for this was the political circumstances in which the census were conducted and so the censuses were in a way a reflection of the political situation that had an effect on how some people declared themselves in the population counts of the time.¹ Starting from 1948, in FNRJ (Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia)/ SFRY (Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia), censuses were conducted on a regular basis and through the information obtained it is possible to follow and analyze the ethno-demographic movements.² The results of the 1948 census showed that 1,152,986 people lived in the People's Republic of Macedonia, of whom 789,648 were Macedonians, which is 68.5 percent of the total population.³ The second largest ethnic group were Albanians, who totalled 197,389, or 17.1 percent of the total population⁴, followed by the Turks, who totalled 95,940, or 8.32 percent of the total population of the People's Republic of Macedonia. In the entire FNRJ, there lived 97,954 Turks, 97 percent of whom lived in the territory of the People's Republic of Macedonia.⁵ When the results were

¹ Snježana Mrdjen, *Narodnost u popisima promenлива i nestalna kategorija*, Stanovništvo, 40/1-4, Beograd, 2002, 77

² In the period between the two World Wars, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, censuses were taken in 1921 and 1931. Those were the first censuses in the Vardar part of Macedonia conducted by a modern and internationally accepted statistical methodology.

³ Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine, Beograd 1954, 14
Macedonians as a separate ethnicity in a national count appeared for the first time in the census of 1948.

⁴ Based on the results of the 1921 census, in the Vardar part of Macedonia, there lived 110,674 Albanians, i.e. Arnauts by their mother tongue as they were referred to in the official statistics. They accounted for 13.9 percent of the total population (Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921 година, Сарајево, 1932, 88-123). Ten years later, in the 1931 count, of the total of 938,628 people in the Vardar part of Macedonia, 129,645 were identified as Albanians. (Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichten Angaben der Zählung von 1931, Wien, 1943, 308-351; Stanovništvo predratne Jugoslavije po veroispovesti maternjem jeziku po popisu od 31.III.1931 godine-pregled po srezovima, Državni statistički ured, Serija II, sveska 3, Beograd, 1945)

⁵ Vladimir Simeunović, *Stanovništvo Jugoslavije i socijalističkih republika 1921-1961*, (studije, prilozi, analize) Beograd, 1964, 31. Although many of them left the country during the Balkan Wars and in the period between the two World Wars, there was still a fairly large Turkish population in the People's Republic of Macedonia. In 1921, in the Vardar part of Macedonia, there were 118,758 Turks. (Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921 година...,88-123). In 1931, as a result of their migration, their number fell to 105,407. (Die

announced, the Federal Statistical Office, the institution that conducted the 1948 count, raised doubt about the total number of Albanians in FНРY of 750,431, or 4.8 percent of the total population of the country. In its analysis of the census data, the Office said that a portion of the Turks in Macedonia and the region of Kosovo and Metohija identified themselves as Albanians and therefore the number of Albanians, based on the census results, was slightly higher than the real one.⁶

An analysis of the census results shows that in the 1948 count, the Macedonians professing Islam identified themselves as Macedonian, which, however, was not the case in the following censuses.⁷ According to the official records of 1948, of the total number of Macedonians (789,648), 37,096 were Muslims⁸ and they accounted for 4.69 percent of the total number of Macedonians in the People's Republic of Macedonia. In fact, in the 1948 census, Muslims were a separate category. It referred solely to the Muslims of South-Slavic origin who declared themselves as Serb Muslims, Croat Muslims, Macedonian Muslims or undefined Muslims. This classification existed only during the time the census was taken as those identifying themselves as Serb Muslims were added to the group of Serbs, those identifying themselves as Macedonian Muslims to the group of Macedonians, and so on, while the undefined Muslims were classified separately.⁹

Almost the entire population of Macedonians professing Islam were in the region of Skopje, the Markova Reka region, the Tetovo villages of Urvič and Jelovjane, the Veles villages of Gorno Vranovci and Melnica, the Kičevo

Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichen Angaben der Zählung von 1931...,308-351). They mostly lived in the Vardar River Valley, Ovče Pole, the regions of Radoviš and Kočani, and other areas. They were a significant part of the population of certain Macedonian cities as well. In Skopje, in 1948, there were 13,928 Turks, or nearly 16 percent of the total population. They were also one-fourth of the population of Ohrid and there was some Turkish population in all major cities. (Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine, knjiga IX, 447)

⁶ Ibidem, 14

⁷ In the 1931 census, in the Vardar part of Macedonia, 40,440 people whose mother tongue was Serbo-Croat said they professed Islam. (Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichen Angaben der Zählung von 1931...,308-351)

⁸ Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine...,xvii

⁹ Snježana Mrdjen, Op.cit, 86

villages of Plasnica, Čelopeci and Lisičani, a portion of the residents of the villages in the Reka region, such as Žirovnica, Rostuše, and Mogorče, as well as the villages of Labuništa, Podgorci, Oktisi and Borovec in Drimkol, and the villages of the Debar region of Župa were identified as Macedonian. However, only five years later, in 1953, most of the Macedonians professing Islam chose to identify as Turks.

In 1953, 1,304,514 people lived in the People's Republic of Macedonia.¹⁰ A prominent feature of the 1953 count was that the number of Turks in Macedonia increased considerably, from 95,940, or 8.32 percent, in 1948, to 203,938, or 15.63 percent, in 1953.¹¹ On the other hand, the number of Albanians fell from 197,389 to 162,524. The census authorities of 1953 also noted this demographic and statistical contradiction. The methodological explanations of the 1953 count state that certain ethnic groups in 1953 had grown while others had declined in size in relation to 1948, which could only be a result of the people's choice to identify themselves differently in 1948 and 1953 for various reasons. For example, the number of Turks had grown so much by 1953 that it was evident that a portion of the Turks back in 1948 identified themselves as Albanian and Macedonian, and that a portion of the Albanians and Macedonians identified themselves as Turkish in 1953.¹²

Reasons for Changing the Ethnic Affiliation

The change in the ethnic affiliation of a portion of the population of Macedonia in the censuses of 1948 and 1953 was a direct result of political,

¹⁰ The average rate of natural increase was the highest from 1948 to 1953, when the Macedonian population grew by about 30,000 people a year, which was primarily a result of the still high birth rate.

¹¹ From 1953 onward, the number of the Turkish population was steadily declining. The decline was particularly prominent in the places in which they lived as compact groups, primarily in the Vardar Valley region, Ovče Pole, the region of Radoviš, and the cities in which they constituted a considerable portion of the population, such as Skopje, where they declined from 34.4 percent in 1921 to only 16 percent of the total population in 1948. A decline in the number of Turks was also registered in other cities, except Tetovo and Gostivar. In 1953, the municipalities with the highest percentage of Turkish population were Valandovo, in which they constituted 40 percent, and Vinica and Radoviš, in which they were more than one-third of the total population.

¹² Попис становништва 1953, књига I, Београд, 1959, XXXV,

economic and social factors, which shaped the character of Macedonia's ethno-demographic development. The analyses made by the relevant authorities in Macedonia reveal that this was particularly typical of the Muslim population. There were cases when in the official records of births, marriages and deaths, a father was registered as Albanian and his children as Turkish and vice versa, or when multiple siblings were identified as of different ethnicity.

A question is posed as to the reasons for this fairly massive change in the ethnic affiliation within the five years under study. In the second half of the 20th century, the population of Macedonia and the whole society was going through a stage of significant structural change. The whole process of population development was determined by the development of the economic, demographic and political circumstances both in Macedonia and the whole federation. The ethno-demographic structure was also influenced by the historical processes in the Macedonian society, and certain historical, cultural and traditional values of the local environment. The shift from the traditional to the modern way of living was not taking place simultaneously in all ethnic groups.

The state institutions said in their analyses that there was an objective reason for "the ethnic instability and the fact that the formation of the national identity with a portion of the Muslim population was incomplete."¹³ The analyses of the Commission on National Minorities of the Central Committee of the Federation of Communists of Macedonia (SKM), comments, among other things, that Albanians in Yugoslavia before World War II were oppressed both politically and economically. The authorities manipulated them politically in various ways in order not to let their national identity develop because they feared the concentration of the Albanian population along the Yugoslav-Albanian border.¹⁴

¹³ The State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia (hereafter DARM), f. CK KPM/SKM, Commission on National Minorities, k-71, a.e.1/5 The party structures established that in Macedonia there were relatively few "real Turks" but that a rising number of Macedonians professing Islam, who were highly religious but without a clearly formed national identity, declared themselves as Turks.

¹⁴ DARM, 427.27.56/11

In Yugoslavia before the war, a portion of the Albanian urban population started tilting toward the Turk population. They were learning the Turkish language and regarded themselves as Turkish because of their religion and also for the purpose of acquiring higher reputation.¹⁵ These tendencies, of course, inevitably affected how these people declared themselves ethnically in the first censuses after the war. This was particularly true for that part of the population whose national identity was still underdeveloped and among whom religious identification dominated. After 1944/1945, a new political and social reality began, which sparked a process of national differentiation and separation. From then onward, the national identification of the Muslim population became increasingly stronger.

In 1948, these “nationally underdeveloped elements” among the Muslim population mostly gravitated toward the Albanian population because relations with Albania at that time were quite good and they believed that if they declared themselves Albanian they would be entitled to more privileges and more protection than if they declared themselves Turkish in a time when Turkey was rather unpopular in Yugoslavia and was regarded as a country from the opposite political bloc.

By 1953, when the second census in Yugoslavia after the war was conducted, the political situation had considerably changed in relation to 1948. After the Informbiro Resolution, relations with Albania worsened. On the other hand, with the signing of the Balkan Pact of February 1953 Turkey became FNRY’s ally. In the meantime, the religious fanaticism of a part of the Muslim population was dealt a heavy blow with the adoption of the law that banned wearing yashmaks a face veil worn by Turkish Muslim women. All of this had an effect on the national identification of that part of the Muslim population with an unstable national identity.¹⁶

At that time, there also appeared the possibility of emigration to Turkey, a process that had a strong influence on the national identification of a fairly large number of Muslims. The authorities were aware that alongside

¹⁵ This assimilation of the Muslim population and its identification as Turkish was typical of the entire period of Ottoman rule in the region.

¹⁶ DARM. 427.27.56/ 7 It was for this reason that, after holding prior consultations, the Supreme Court of the People’s Republic of Macedonia sent a letter to the Secretariat of Home Affairs on 5 April 1954 demanding that ethnic identification records could be amended at the regional offices of the Secretariat of Home Affairs.

Turks, a certain number of Macedonians professing Islam and Albanians would also take interest in moving to Turkey for the political and religious reasons mentioned.¹⁷ Certain official records state, “a part of them are strongly determined to make themselves eligible for migration by changing their ethnicity”. Suddenly courts became overrun with requests for changing ethnicity and the whole procedure took quite a long time to complete.

In 1948, a part of the Turkish population declared themselves Albanian. They were those urban Muslims (some of them of Albanian and others of Macedonian origin), who ever since the Ottoman rule, by learning to speak Turkish as the language of the trade at the time and because of professing the same religion as the Ottomans, had started to self-identify as Turks. This people remained “ethnically volatile” after the liberation and most of them declared themselves as Albanians (or Shquiptars, as the official statistics of the time referred to them) because relations with Albania at the time were still friendly.

In the census of 1948, a portion of the Muslim population in Western Macedonia, especially Gostivar and Tetovo, identified as Turks in the counts carried out in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, declared they were Albanian. In 1948, Tetovo had 17,259 inhabitants, of whom 5,992 were Macedonians, 9,975 Albanians and 302 Turks.¹⁸ However, by 1953, the number of Turks had grown substantially. More specifically, of the total population of 20,209,

¹⁷ The migration of the Turkish and Muslim population from the geographical territory of Macedonia commenced during the Balkan Wars just as in the other Balkan countries where the Muslim population withdrew together with the Ottoman military and administrative authorities. One of the scholars studying this process of migration in the 1930s wrote: “Turks refused to live under someone else’s jurisdiction and government. Those who had ruled until recently were now leaving for Asia Minor regarding it as their fate, as *kismet*.” (Мита Костић, Из историје колонизације Јужне Србије крајем прошлог века, Гласник скопског научног друштва, књ. 12, Скопље, 1933, 255)

¹⁸ *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine, ...450*. In 1921, 15,119 people lived in Tetovo, of whom 6,432 were identified as Turks based on their mother tongue. (Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921 година..., 116-117). In 1931, in the district of Tetovo (Lower Polog), there were 7,934 Turks. (Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichen Angaben der Zählung von 1931..., 312)

7,575 were Macedonians, 7,155 Albanians and 4,470 Turks.¹⁹ This trend was also registered in the census of 1961.

The same happened in Gostivar, in which almost the entire Turkish population in the 1948 count self-identified as Albanian²⁰. In other words, of the total number of inhabitants of 7,832, 1,911 declared themselves as Macedonians, 5,333 as Albanians and only 53 as Turks, which of course did not reflect reality. However, by 1953, Gostivar's population had grown to 9,509 inhabitants, of whom 2,637 were Macedonians, 4,313 Albanians and 1,924 Turks.²¹ The fact that despite the massive emigration of Turks from Macedonia to Turkey in the 1950s, the number of Turks in Gostivar had increased to 4,349 by the 1961 count when they outnumbered the local Albanians, who then totaled 2,904, shows best that people changed the way they self-identified over time. In this context, the observations of the Croatian

¹⁹ Население по населби и народност во СРМ, според административно-територијалната поделба од 9-II-1962, Скопје, 1964

²⁰ All historical, ethnographical or anthropogeographical research conducted since the second half of the 19th century indicate that the Turkish population of Gostivar had been quite populous, see: Васил Кънчов, *Македонија етнографија и статистика*, второ фототипно издание, Софија, 1996, 513; Материјали по проучувањето на Македоини® Софи®, 1896 427-431, Rudolf Petrovič, *Polog-Antropogeografski prikaz*, Zagreb, 1942, 30. According to Kanchov, in the late 19th century, in Gostivar there were 310 Bulgarians, 3,100 Turks, 100 Arnauts, as well as members of other ethnic groups. In 1905, Serbian ethnographer Svetozar Tomić visited Gostivar and according to his statistics Gostivar at that time had approximately 3,400 inhabitants, of whom only 17 houses were Christian and the rest were Muslim. About the origin of the Muslim population of Gostivar, Tomić says: "Some say that many of the residents of Gostivar are of Ottoman origin, i.e. real Turks. However, whatever their origin, today they are genuine Arnauts by the way they speak, dress and conduct their lives." The statistics of 1921, too, indicate a prominent percentage of Turkish population in Gostivar. Based on the official national statistics, in Gostivar in 1921, 3,743 people said their mother tongue was Turkish, while only 138 said their mother tongue was Albanian, or Arnaut as the statistics of the time referred to it. (Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва од 31 јануара 1921 године..., 117). In 1931, 7,705 Turks lived in the Upper Polog district. (Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichten Angaben der Zählung von 1931..., 318)

²¹ Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност, . . . 78

anthropogeographer Rudolf Petrović made in the 1930s are worth mentioning. He said: "Among the many Arbanasi people, particularly those who settled in Gostivar and Tetovo and their immediate vicinity, a process of adopting a Turkish identity began, as a result of the influence of Islam and their coexistence with Turks. Thus, in the villages of Gorna Banjica and Dolna Banjica near Gostivar, almost all the Arbanasi people speak Turkish both at home and outside, while only few elderly people speak the Arbanasi language. They all consider themselves as Turks although many of them remember that their ancestors came from Debar and its surroundings. This is especially the case in Tetovo and Gostivar. Therefore, it has recently become difficult to separate the Turks from the Arbanasi people having adopted a Turkish identity. This situation also adds a great deal of confusion to the statistics... There are certain very strong ties between the Arbanasi people and the Turks and therefore from a social and political point of view they may be regarded as one group."²²

Statistics

These statistics should only confirm that in the years immediately after the end of the Second World War, the national identification of a certain part of the population in Macedonia fluctuated greatly for a number of both historical and political reasons. This means that if the figures obtained from the two censuses, conducted after the war, are analyzed superficially, the resulting conclusions may be very misleading.

By 1953, the number of Macedonians had increased to 860,699, but in terms of percentages, they had declined to 65.97 percent, because most Macedonians professing Islam, who identified themselves as Macedonians in 1948, had changed their ethnic affiliation in the later census.²³

²² Rudolf Petrović, Op. Cit, 20,26

²³ About the attitude of the authorities toward the Macedonian population professing Islam and their attempts to ensure these people continued to self-identify as Macedonians see: Jakim Sinađinovski, *Националното прашање и меѓунационалните односи кај нас*, Скопје, 1988; Нијази Лимановски, *Исламизацијата и етничките промени во Македонија*, Скопје, 1993; Глигор Тодоровски, *Демографските процеси и промени во Македонија од почетокот на првата балканска војна до осамостојувањето на Македонија*, Скопје, 2001; Страшко Стојановски, *Инкорпорирање на Македонците*

I will cite as examples several villages populated exclusively by Macedonians professing Islam. In 1953, the Veles village of Gorno Vranovci had population of 3,847 and almost all of them identified as Turks²⁴. The party organization in the village with about 70 members disintegrated immediately after the process of emigration to Turkey commenced. Another typical example is Plasnica and the nearby villages populated with Macedonians who had converted to Islam. Nearly 3,000 Turks were recorded in these villages in the 1953 count.²⁵ In all the villages of the regions of Skopje²⁶ and Tetovo²⁷, the Macedonians professing Islam also declared they were Turks. In the Reka region this trend was not as pronounced. In Dolna Reka, populated solely by Macedonians (either Muslim or Orthodox Christian), 2,802 people were recorded as Turks in the 1953 census and the upward trend of increased Turkish representation persisted in the following censuses as well.²⁸

In the regions of Župa²⁹ and Drinkol, too, a great many Macedonians professing Islam identified themselves as Turks. This was the case in the

муслимани како дел од македонската нација, сп. Историја XLIV/1-2, Скопје, 2008, 142-158. Anthropogeographer and ethnographer Jovan F. Trifunski refers to the Macedonians professing Islam as Torbesh in his works Охридско-струшка област, антропогеографска проучавања, Населба и порекло становништва, књига, 44, Београд, 1992; Битољско-прилепска котлина, антропогеографска проучавања, Населба и порекло становништва, књига, 45, Београд, 1998, as well as in other earlier published studies.

²⁴ Of the 3,847 inhabitants, only 47 indentified as Macedonians, while 3,780 declared they were Turks. About the population of Gorno Vranovci and its emigration to Turkey in the 1950s see: Jovan F. Trifunski, *Oblas Babune i Topolke, Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, knjiga 47, Zagreb, 1977

²⁵ Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност, . . . 21; All scholars from the Balkan countries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries agreed that they were Macedonians who had converted to Islam at some earlier point in time.

²⁶ Držilovo, Dolno Količani, Pagaruša, Cvetovo, Elovo, and Umovo

²⁷ Urvič and Jelovjane

²⁸ Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност, . . . , 237-239, Јаким Синадиновски, *Op. Cit.*, 238-239

²⁹ The Debarska Župa region, which is relatively small in size, is particularly suitable for scholars to follow how the process of migration of the Turkish and Macedonian population unfolded after 1912. From 1913 to 1954, 323 Turkish and 87 Muslim Macedonian households left the region. The process was most intense between the two World Wars, when 291 Turkish and 69 Muslim

villages of Labuništa, Podgorci and Oktisi³⁰, as well as in the Tetovo villages of Urvič and Jelovjane, in which almost the entire population (in Jelovjane all 893 residents)³¹ identified themselves as Macedonian in the 1948 count, while as many as 2,009 residents of a total of 2,094 declared they were Turks five years later³².

In the region of Prilep, Macedonians who professed Islam and whose mother tongue was Macedonian lived in the villages of Lažani, Debrešte and Peštalevo³³. Those in Peštalevo identified themselves as Turks, while most of those in the nearby villages of Lažani and Debrešte identified themselves as Albanians in the 1948 census³⁴. Only five years later, in 1953, over 90 percent of the Muslim residents of these three villages declared themselves as Turks.³⁵

In the 1953 census, only in the villages populated with Macedonians who converted to Islam at some earlier point in time, around 22,000 people, declared they were Turks. This figure does not include the cities in which Macedonians professing Islam also lived. In Kičevo, for example, 1,693 people were recorded as Turks in 1948³⁶ and by 1953 this population had

Macedonian households left. Most of them moved to Turkey. Interesting are the observations of the scholars who saw the reasons for the migration after 1912 in the desire of “the Turks to live in Turkey among their own, who profess the same religion and speak the same language. In the case of the Macedonians professing Islam, considering the faith managed to suppress their feeling of ethnic affiliation, their reasons for moving to Asia Minor were basically the same as those of the population of Turkish origin.” (Бранислав Руси°, Жупа Дебарска, Скопје, 1957, 35–38). People continued leaving this region perhaps even more massively after 1954. From 1953 to 1961, the population of the region shrank from 6,119 to 4,398.

³⁰ Население по населби и народност во СРМ, според административно-територијалната поделба од 9-II-1962, 67

³¹ Коначни rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine..., 449

³² Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност, ... 125–126

³³ Јован Трифуноски, Битољско–Прилепска котлина антропогеографска проучавања, Београд, 1998, 281,285,367

³⁴ Коначни rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine..., 448

³⁵ Население по населби и народност во СРМ, според административно-територијалната поделба од 9-II-1962, 9

³⁶ Коначни rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine,442

grown to 4,749³⁷ and had become predominant in the city. In other words, over 30,000 Macedonians who professed Islam changed their ethnic affiliation from Macedonian to Turkish, which is one of the reasons why the share of Macedonians in the total population of Macedonia declined.

In some parts of Macedonia, especially in those where they were a minority, such as the regions of Skopje, Kumanovo, Bitola and Prilep, a great many Albanians declared themselves as Turks in the census of 1953. This was typical of the rural areas where the religious affiliation was stronger than the ethnic one and where simultaneously the possibility for emigration to Turkey appeared.

In some of the villages of the region of Skopje, the majority of Albanians declared themselves as Turks.³⁸ A portion of the residents of the Albanian-populated villages on Mt. Skopska Crna Gora³⁹ and of the villages in the region of Kumanovo also self-identified as Turks in the count of 1953. In Lipkovo for example, of the 19,178 residents in 1953, 12,743 declared they were Turks and 4,111 said they were Albanians⁴⁰. In the same territory in 1921 and 1931, most of the Muslims said their mother tongue was Albanian (Arnaut)⁴¹. There is extensive literature on the origin of this population that

³⁷ Попис на население и станови во 1971 година, Основни податоци по општини, Скопје 1972, 20

³⁸ This was particularly typical of the villages along the Markova Reka and Kadina Reka rivers. There are several scholarly studies on the origin of this population: Јован Хаџи Васиљевиќ, Скопје и негова околина, Београд, 1930, Матријали за проучувањето на Македонија, Софија, 1896; Јован Трифуноски, Поречието на Кадина Река, Скопје, 1952

³⁹ In the villages on Mt. Skopska Crna Gora (Tanuševci, Brest and Blace) as many as 1,961 people identified themselves as Turks in 1953. Although not as intensively, this trend continued in 1961 when 1,052 Albanians identified themselves as Turks. After 1961, when the emigration to Turkey stopped, the number of those who declared they were Turks was negligible.

⁴⁰ DARM, f, 427. k-72, a.e.1/4

⁴¹ Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва...,100-101. In 1931, in the district of Kumanovo, Albanians totaled 13,845, which was 20.8 percent of the total population of the district. (Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichten Angaben der Zählung von 1931...,351)

started settling in the region of Kumanovo in the second half of the 18th century, coming mostly from the regions in northern Albania.⁴²

I will cite as examples several places in this region where the Albanian population declared themselves as Turks in 1953 and 1961. Based on the 1953 count, Romanovce, one of the largest villages in the municipality of Kumanovo, had 2,078 inhabitants, of whom 997 were Macedonians, 72 Albanians and 939 Turks, and based on the 1961 count, the village had 2,077 inhabitants, of whom 1,013 were Macedonians, 126 Albanians and 833 Turks.⁴³ In 1963, however, field investigations were carried out which revealed that the village had 330 families, of which 180 were Macedonian, 140 Albanian and only 8 Turkish.⁴⁴ This means that most Albanians had earlier declared themselves as Turks for various reasons, including their wish to move to Turkey or their underdeveloped feeling of ethnic affiliation.⁴⁵ The same happened in many other villages of this region but I am only going to cite the example of the village of Lopate in order to depict this phenomenon completely. In 1961, the village had 1,260 inhabitants, of whom 475 were Macedonians, 129 Albanians and 578 Turks⁴⁶. However, based on the field research carried out several years later, in 1965, of all the families in the village, 79 were Macedonian, 76 Albanian and four Turkish (who settled in the village as Muhajir from Bulgaria in 1878), which shows that in Lopate, too, most Albanians had earlier identified themselves as Turks, although they originated from the villages on Mt. Skopska Crna Gora and settled in this lowland village in the second half of the 19th century.⁴⁷ Most of the Muslims in the aforementioned villages started declaring themselves as Albanian as late as the 1970s and particularly the 1980s.

⁴² Јован Хаџи Васиљевић, Јужна Стара Србија, књига И, Београд, 1909; Јован Трифуноски, Кумановско- Прешевска Црна Гора, Насеља и порекло становништва, књига, 33 Београд, 1951; Атанасије Урошевић, Куманово, с.л, 1949

⁴³ Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност ...,165

⁴⁴ Јован Трифуноски, Сеоска насеља скопске котлине, Скопје 1964, 29

⁴⁵ The massive emigration of the Muslim population of this village to Turkey started immediately after the end of the Balkan Wars. From 1912 to 1941, about 50 families moved to Turkey. Most of them were Albanian and only 5–6 Turkish.

⁴⁶ Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност...,164

⁴⁷ Јован Ф. Трифуноски, Кумановска област Сеоска насеља и становништво, Скопје, 1974, 44-45

Albanians were identifying as Turks, although to a lesser extent, in other parts of Macedonia, too. In Demir Hisar, for example, 946 people were identified as Albanians and only six as Turks in the 1948 count, while five years later, in 1953, 1,015 people declared they were Turks and only 50 recorded their ethnic affiliation as Albanian.⁴⁸ Changes occurred in certain cities as well, although it is harder to keep track of the urban population, especially the Muslims, primarily because of their rapid amalgamation within the framework of the religious group irrespective of ethnicity.

In Ohrid in 1948, 1,011 people identified themselves as Albanians and 2,758 as Turks. In 1953, however, despite the pronounced rate of natural increase, the number of Albanians fell to 765, while the number of Turks climbed up to 3,667, which means that a portion of those who declared they were Albanians five years earlier had by now started to self-identify as Turks.⁴⁹ There was a similar tendency in Bitola as well. While in 1948, census takers registered 1,327 Albanians and 3,543 Turks, by 1953 the number of Albanians had decreased to 651 and the number of Turks had scaled up to 6,476.⁵⁰ Considering that the number of Turks had doubled in only five years,

⁴⁸ DARM, f, 427. k-72, a.e.1/ 4; Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15 marta 1948 godine... ,439

⁴⁹ Interesting are the observations of the prolific researcher Atanasije Urošević, who conducted field surveys in Ohrid in the middle of the 1950s. Speaking about the Turkish population in Ohrid, he says that the Muslim population of various ethnicities who were settling in Ohrid started to self-identity as Turks shortly upon their arrival considering the local Turks were the main representatives of Islam and urban culture. The local Albanians, whose ancestors settled in the city as early as the middle of the 18th century, having emigrated from the nearby territories of present-day Albania or from the region of Debar, were also affected by this process. Another part of the Albanians who amalgamated with the local Turks originated from South Albania, as evidenced by the high incidence of the surname Toska. (Атанасије Урошевић, Охрид географска монографија, Скопје, 1957, 14-16). Later, however, a reverse process began and a rising number of Muslims started declaring themselves as Turks. While the number of Albanians stepped up from 765 in 1953 to 2,703 by 1994, the number of Turks decreased from 3,667 in 1953 to 2,344 by 1994. The number of Albanians had also grown because a great many residents of the large Albanian-populated villages around Struga emigrated to Ohrid.

⁵⁰ Попис на население и станови во 1971 година, Основни податоци по општини...,16; Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност...,42

it is obvious that a portion of the local Roma population and other Muslims identified themselves as Turks as well.

In the other areas, particularly those of Western Macedonia, there was a fairly stable, homogenous Albanian population that hardly ever merged with other ethnic groups. The process that unfolded in the regions of Kumanovo or Skopje was only incidental in the regions of Kičevo, Debar or Struga. In these areas, it was the Macedonian population professing Islam that proved ethnically unstable. In almost all the censuses after 1953, most of them declared themselves as Turks, even after the 1960s when the wave of emigration to Turkey completely stopped.

Census	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks
1948	789,648	197,389	95,940
1953	860,699	162,524	203,938
1961	1,000,865	183,108	131,481
1971	1,142,375	279,871	108,552
1981	1,279,323	377,208	86,591
1994	1,295,964	441,104	78,019
2002	1,297,981	509,083	77,959

Only in the Albanian-populated villages in the regions of Skopje, Kumanovo, Kruševo, Prilep, Bitola, approximately 30,000–35,000 people

self-identified as Turks in 1953. Toward the end of the 1950s, the process of emigration of the Muslim population to Turkey subsided and so did the process of changing the ethnic affiliation among the population professing Islam. In some regions this trend continued in the censuses of 1961, 1971 and 1981 but to a much lesser extent and mostly in rural areas in which Albanians were a minority. I will cite several examples from Skopje's immediate vicinity. In the village of Mojanci nearly 80 percent of the Albanian population identified themselves as Turks in 1971 and none in 1981, while in the neighboring village of Grušino 11 percent of the Albanians identified themselves as Turks even in 1981.⁵¹ In the village of Čiflik, along the Markova Reka, of all the 444 residents in 1981, 295 declared they were Turks. In 1994, however, only 25 people of the total population of 536 self-identified as Turks.⁵² Worth mentioning is also the village of Crnilište near Prilep. Since 1953, an overwhelming majority of the Muslim population of the village declared themselves as Turks in the population counts even though they were Albanians.⁵³ In 1948 as well as in the counts conducted between the two World Wars, the residents of Crnilište identified themselves as Albanians or as native speakers of the Albanian language, depending on the methodology. Since 1981, however, the number of those declaring they were Turks has been declining. While as many as 928 of its residents declared they were Turks in 1981, in the last census taken in 2002, only 26 identified as Turks and as many as 1,704 as Albanians.⁵⁴ In fact, in the last few decades of the 20th century, contrary to the 1950s and 1960s, the number of Albanians changing their ethnic identification in the population counts, most often to Turkish, became negligible.

Unlike Albanians, most Macedonians professing Islam identified themselves as Turks in all the censuses until 2002. It is eye-catching that in

⁵¹ About the origin of the population in the aforementioned villages, see: Јован. Ф. Трифуноски, Сеоска насеља скопске котлине, Скопје, 1964, 25-28. Thirteen families from the village of Grušino emigrated to Turkey between 1956 and 1960.

⁵² Вкупно население на Република Македонија според изјаснувањето за национална припадност...,253. About the origin of the population in the said village, see: Јован. Ф. Трифуноски, Слив Маркове реке антропогеографска проматрања, Скопје, 1958

⁵³ Јован. Ф. Трифуноски, Битољско-прилепска котлина, Београд, 1998, 374-375

⁵⁴ Попис на населението домаќинствата и становите во Република Македонија, Вкупно население според изјаснување за национална припадност, мајчиниот јазик и вероисповедта, книга X,

2002 a small number of them self-identified as Albanians in certain areas. In the late 1980s, Jakim Sinadinovski wrote: "The Macedonians professing Islam have not yet experienced a process of complete national emancipation." They are left on their own," he further commented, "and subject to ever stronger and ever more organized assimilation performed by our Greater Albanian nationalists and irredentists".⁵⁵

This idea was confirmed twenty years later in the count of 2002 when in the Struga villages of Labuništa, Borovec, Podgorci and Oktisi, 5,380 residents identified themselves as Albanians.⁵⁶ Eight years earlier, in the census of 1994, there were 1,961 Albanians in these villages, which indicates that in less than a decade, a substantial part of the Muslim population changed their ethnic identification from Turk, Macedonian or Muslim to Albanian. This also means that a portion of the Muslims in Macedonia continue to change their ethnic affiliation.

Conclusion

One of the characteristics of the censuses carried out in the People's Republic of Macedonia in 1948 and 1953 is the fact that the Albanian and Turkish ethnic groups fluctuated in size because of the different ethnic identification of a portion of the Muslim population as a result, among other things, of the varying political circumstances. For example, in 1948 most of the urban Muslim population of Tetovo and Gostivar, as well as several other cities, declared themselves Albanian. Five years later, however, a high percentage of them self-identified as Turks. A portion of the rural Albanian population in the regions of Skopje, Kumanovo, Veles and Pelagonija and, to a lesser extent, in other areas, also declared themselves Turkish. In addition to the incomplete national emancipation, one of the main reasons for this ethnic identification of a part of the Albanian population of the aforementioned regions was the ongoing emigration to Turkey. It is also conspicuous that Albanians identified themselves as Turks mostly in areas where they were in the minority. Most of the Macedonians professing Islam, identified as

⁵⁵ Jakim Sinaadinovski, Op.cit, 203,205

⁵⁶ Попис на населението домаќинствата и становите во Република Македонија, Вкупно население според изјаснување за национална припадност...,131,181

Macedonians in 1948, also declared they were Turks in 1953. However, unlike the Albanian population, most of them continued to declare themselves as Turks in the following censuses as well, even after the massive emigration to Turkey ended.

It was for these reasons that pronounced fluctuations were registered in the numbers of Albanians and Turks in 1948 and 1953. While the number of Albanians decreased from 197,000 in 1948 to 162,000 in 1953, the number of Turks went up from 95,000 in 1948 to 203,000 five years later and therefore the analysis of the data obtained from the abovementioned censuses should always be approached very critically.

The table shows that after 1953 while the Albanian population steadily grew, the Turkish population noted a steady decline. The number of Albanians from 1961 to 1971 increased by nearly 100,000, which besides being a result of the high rate of natural increase and migration from the region of Kosovo and Metohija was also a consequence of the fact that a portion of the Albanian population (mostly in the regions of Kumanovo and Skopje) identified themselves as Turks in the census of 1961. The distrust of the census as a process resulted with a boycott of the count in 1991 by most Albanians. Even today there are those that doubt the results of the last census of 2002, which sometimes also affects interethnic trust.

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