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Research Article

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# Kosovo 2011 Census: Contested Census within a Contested State

Mehmet Musaj\*

This paper analyzes the census in Kosovo in 2011 with specific focus on the political implications and ethnic minority rights. A key conclusion is that this census highly influences public policy-making, and with regard to minority rights, the census data, in comparison to previous estimates and Kosovo Constitutional provisions, is not favorable to ethnic minorities. Expressing a lower number of minorities in total terms, the 2011 census explicitly reduced the representation of minorities at the central and local institutions, and consequently affected budget allocations. However, we must be aware that to some extent, because of the full boycott in the North by local Serbs, and the partial boycott in the South by the Roma and Serb communities, comparisons are limited and the data needs to be analyzed with care.

**Keywords:** Kosovo, census, state institutions, Western Balkans, minorities, identities.

## Introduction

After the fall of communism in Europe, the countries of the region entered into a new stage of transformation, where the transition to democracy has often been a difficult path. Yugoslavia, a socialist federation constituted by six republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and two autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina), experienced the most tragic transition in comparison to other ex-communist countries. Indeed, rather than a "routine" and peaceful transition, the ex-Yugoslav republics fell victim to nationalist appeals, and instead of proclaiming democratic principles, descended into violent conflict. Four ethno-national wars emerged, accompanied by a considerable number of victims, material and moral damage, and a significant number of internally and externally displaced persons.<sup>1</sup> Without a doubt, this displacement of persons and depopulation<sup>2</sup> during the Yugoslav wars reflected a project of ethnic cleansing, and has effectively contributed to the idea and reality of state homogenization. Recent history in the region of Yugoslavia suggests that *identity serves as an enduring political tool for the ambitious usurpation of*

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<sup>1</sup> Carter Johnson notes that throughout history, in the most extreme cases censuses have been used to identify 'the enemy' based on ethnic belonging, followed by targeted killing. See: Johnson, Carter. 2008. Partitioning to Peace Sovereignty, Democracy and Ethnic Civil Wars. *International Security* 32(4), 140-70.

<sup>2</sup> See Lukic, Tamara / Rastislav, Stojisavljevic / Durdev, Branev / Nad, Imre and Bojan Dercan. 2012. Depopulation in the Western Balkan Countries. *European Journal of Geography* 3(2), 6-23.

*power and strategic* resources.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, for reasons both intended and unintended, language, culture and ethnic belonging have seemingly become the most significant ‘trump card’ for citizens, and, especially for their politicians.

In this highly politicized context, in 1991 Yugoslavia conducted a population census which was fully boycotted by Albanians in Kosovo. At that time Kosovars started to build a parallel institutional system inside of Serbia. The Kosovar parallel life continued through mid-1999, when after the 1998-1999 war and international military intervention, Kosovo began a period under the administration of the United Nations until February 2008 when Kosovo declared its independence. During the period of international administration, Kosovo did not conduct any census on population and housing. Only after EU recommendations and facilitation, Kosovo finally conducted a census in 2011 after thirty years (the last non-boycotted census was in 1981).

This paper considers the Kosovo 2011 census paying specific attention to political implications and ethnic minority rights. A key conclusion is that this census has significantly influenced public policy-making, and with regard to minority rights, the census data, in comparison to previous estimates and Kosovo Constitutional provisions, is unfavorable to ethnic minorities. Expressing a lower number of minorities in total terms, the 2011 census explicitly reduced the representation of minorities at the central and local institutions, and consequently has affected budget allocations. However, due to the full boycott in the North by local Serbs, and the partial boycott in the South by the Roma and Serb communities, comparisons are limited and data needs to be analyzed with care.

### **Theoretical discussion: censuses and identity construction**

The emergence of the modern state has been characterized by features such as territory, government and population, wherein the need to have a clear picture of their territories and peoples evolved to become a primary concern of the modern state. Therefore, as mentioned by Kertzer and Arel, states became involved in representing their population at the cumulative level based on identity criteria, hence the census developed as the most evident, and perhaps the most politically important means by which states statistically illustrate collective identities.<sup>4</sup> In this respect, censuses have played a crucial role in the construction of identities, with specific emphasis on cultural, racial, linguistic and religious dimensions. Furthermore, in political terms, censuses have served as a tool for the construction of identities which have not existed in the past. In Anderson’s words (as cited in Kertzer and Arel), the census was conceptualized as a useful tool by the colonial state to impose a ‘totalizing, classificatory grid’ on its territory, allowing governments to differentiate between ‘peoples, regions, religions, languages.’<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Caytas, Joana D. 2012. *The Role of Identity in the Outbreak of the Yugoslavian Wars*. *Small Wars Journal*, 01 August 2012 (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Kertzer, David I. and Dominique Arel. 2002. *Censuses, identity formation, and the struggle for political power*, in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*, edited by Kertzer, David. I. and Dominique Arel. Cambridge: University Press, 1-42.

<sup>5</sup> David and Arel, *Census, Identity*, 5.

Another category of identification which can have political implications is ethnicity – a multidimensional category that encompasses linguistic, religious, historical and territorial aspects, and which necessarily has a subjective dimension.<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, as Koller has framed it, even if it is based on self-identification, confessing one's belonging to an ethnic group is in itself a form of collective action. Those who indicate their ethnic affiliation, differentiating themselves from the majority group in a certain country, can experience certain disadvantages, social exclusion and different forms of discrimination.<sup>7</sup> Particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, the categorization of populations based upon their language, ethnic and national belonging, has been considered to be very important in public policy-making. However, Goldscheider rightfully raises a question - *what would we know about ethnicity if we only had the census definition or categories? If our only text about ethnic divisions and categories in a society came from official documents, what would be missing?*<sup>8</sup> Further, Goldscheider emphasizes that if our entire knowledge about certain ethnicities stemmed merely from census classification and categorization, we would have lost the point and consequently our understanding of the political, social and cultural connotation of ethnicity would be inaccurate.<sup>9</sup> However, for political (and often practical) reasons, the official counting and acknowledgement of ethnic groups remains important for governments due to issues such as political representation, elections and power-sharing and the (re) distribution of public goods within a society. Additionally, in Limenopoulou's words<sup>10</sup>, *the power of numbers* seems to be significantly important for ethnic and/or minority communities in relation to political settlements which may include mechanisms such as territorial autonomy and various levels of self-determination.<sup>11</sup>

In the following section, the multinational character of the Ottoman legacy, as illustrated from the censuses of the *First Yugoslavia*, (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) that emerged after World War I, and communist Yugoslavia (*Second Yugoslavia*), the federal state that emerged after World War II, will be explored. Then the very ethnic categorization and politicized context of the censuses will be considered in light of the break-up of the Yugoslav federation towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This historical review is brief for reasons of space; however it is important to introduce key trends and characteristics.

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<sup>6</sup> Haug, Werner. 2009. Ethnic, Religious and Language Groups: Towards a Set of Rules for Data Collection and Statistical Analysis. *Open Society Institute* (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>7</sup> Koller, Inez.Z. 2012. Ethnic Minorities and Censuses (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Goldscheider, Calvin. 2002. *Ethnic categorizations in censuses: comparative observations from Israel, Canada, and the United States*, in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*, edited by Kertzer, David.I. and Arel Dominique. Cambridge University Press, 71-91.

<sup>9</sup> Goldscheider, *Ethnic categorizations*,72.

<sup>10</sup> Limenopoulou, Katerina. 2004. The politics of ethnic identity in the Balkans in a post Communist power vacuum. *Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)* (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>11</sup> See here also Pieter Everaers's contribution in this volume.

### **Censuses in Yugoslavia before 1991**

Since 1921, Yugoslavia has, to some extent, regularly organized censuses. The intention here is not to analyze the details of all of them, but to emphasize the characteristics that are most related to the categorization of ethnicities and nationalities.<sup>12</sup> Ethnicity has been taken into account in some regards in the Yugoslav censuses in 1921 and 1931- but at that time, ethnic categories were not clearly classified because of the mixture of language, religion and ethnicity. For instance, Serbs and Croats were both indexed as speakers of Serbo-Croatian and cannot be differentiated on a linguistic basis; all Orthodox Christians are not necessarily Serbs, nor are all Catholics necessarily Croats; neither are all Muslims Slavs.<sup>13</sup> This lack of clarity in ethnic classification continued even in censuses held post-World War II, in 1948 and 1953. However, ethnic categorization was more clearly tabulated in the 1961 Yugoslav census and subsequently there was a clearer indexing of identities and somewhat less ambiguity.<sup>14</sup>

Concerning ethnic belonging, it is interesting how the former Yugoslavia introduced two categories with regard to minorities. The first category was known as 'nation' (*narod*) and included Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonians, with the 'right' to statehood in their own republic. The second category was known as nationalities (*narodnosti*) and included among others Albanians, Hungarians, Italians and Turks, whose main 'national bodies' live outside Yugoslavia in kin states. Roma and Vlachs were classified as minority groups without any affinity to other states, and 'Yugoslavs' who were classified as a special ethnic group in the censuses.<sup>15</sup> Declaring oneself as 'Yugoslav' was mostly a response among people for whom ethnic identity did not play any crucial role, leading them to elect to not identify using historical terms; this often included supporters of the national unity of Yugoslavia, and children from ethnically mixed marriages.<sup>16</sup> Generally, throughout the Yugoslav censuses notions such as 'ethnic minority', 'nationality' or 'ethnic membership' were used as synonyms and without clarity or nuance. Another important aspect, with regard to ethnicity in Yugoslav censuses is the categorization of 'Muslim.' In the 1961 census, 'Muslim' was conceptualized as applicable merely to persons of Yugoslav origin, and not to other people of the Islamic faith such as Albanians and Turks.<sup>17</sup> Apparently 'Muslim in an ethnic sense' in the Yugoslav census was itself a form of ethnic engineering by the Communists in Yugoslavia, who had a special focus on ethnic relations in Bosnia.

With regard to the ethnic and national composition of Yugoslavia before 1991, it is interesting to compare the 1971 and 1981 censuses. Compared to 1971, the total number of inhabitants considerably increased by 1981, in all six republics

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<sup>12</sup> Many of the other articles in this special issue provide additional historical background. See for example the discussion in the contributions on Slovenia and Montenegro in this special issue.

<sup>13</sup> Hammel, E. A. / Mason, Carl and Mirjana Stavanovic. 2010. A fish stinks from the head: Ethnic diversity, segregation, and the collapse of Yugoslavia. *Demographic Research* 22(35), 1097-142, 1102.

<sup>14</sup> Hammel, *A fish stinks from the Head*.

<sup>15</sup> Werner, *Ethnic, Religious and Language*.

<sup>16</sup> Hammel, *A fish stinks from the Head*, 1105.

<sup>17</sup> Hammel, *A fish stinks from the Head*.

and the two autonomous provinces. According to the Yugoslav census of 1981, the country had 9.20% more inhabitants than in 1971, with the greatest increase in Kosovo (24.47%) and the smallest in Vojvodina (3.87%) and Croatia (3.95%).<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that despite the increased overall population, the numbers of some nationalities and/or ethnicities were lower. For instance, in 1981 there were 98,000 Croats and 7,000 Serbs fewer than in 1971, but at the same time, there was an increasing affiliation with the category of 'Yugoslavs'; according to the data from the 1981 census, the total number of people declared as 'Yugoslav' soared from 273,077 in 1971 to 1,215,000 in 1981, with an increase of 450%.<sup>19</sup> These changes do not suggest massive population shifts, but changes in the way individuals chose to self-identify.

### **The Yugoslav Census of 1991: Kosovar Contestation**

During the history of Yugoslav censuses, there is no doubt that the 1991 Yugoslav census remains one of the most controversial, reflecting not just the census taking process and its methodology, but the changing political dynamics. Problems related to the conduct of censuses can be of varying nature, but politically motivated interferences are always the most problematic. Haug noted that a significant problem relates to the way in which censuses are conducted and the political climate during a census operation.<sup>20</sup> The problems listed by the author include the challenges of countries with a high degree of illiteracy, communication problems, the lack of confidence in enumerators and the state bodies, inadequate data protection or even direct attempts to pressure or manipulate the conduct of field operations.<sup>21</sup> In this regard it is critical to mention that the Yugoslav census of 1991 was conducted on the eve of the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, when the sparks of the inter-ethnic wars were beginning to appear on the horizon. For example, the census was conducted after the abolishment of Kosovo's autonomy by Serbian authorities, ultimately leading to Kosovo's development of its own parallel institutions. Therefore, not only was the 1991 census boycotted by the Albanians in Kosovo; the census was contested within the framework of an increasingly contested (Yugoslav) state. In this political context, as Bookman (as cited in Limenopoulou) writes, and as particularly evident in Bosnia, all three main groups were using population statistics to strengthen claims that their peoples deserved more territory and political power.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning Kosovo, due to these political factors springing from the boycott of the 1991 census and the 1998-1999 war, it has been difficult to calculate the exact population since the 1981 census, which was the last regular census conducted in Kosovo within the Yugoslav federation. However, Brunborg has conducted some useful investigation with regard to Kosovo's population evaluations in 1997, 1998 and 1999. For example, she notes that the Federal Statistical Office of Yugoslavia used the so-called *cohort component method*

<sup>18</sup> See Stankovic, Slobodan. 1982. *Yugoslavia's Census 1981 – Final Results*. *Open Society Archives*, 03 October 1982 (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Stankovic, *Yugoslavia's Census*.

<sup>20</sup> Werner, *Ethnic, Religious and Language*.

<sup>21</sup> This is characteristic for Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia who were encouraged and motivated by their political leadership to boycott the Yugoslav census of 1991.

<sup>22</sup> Limenopoulou, *The politics of ethnic identity*, 4.

where a population for a certain area is projected by age and sex, based on the demographic component of mortality, migration and fertility; therefore, in spite of the boycott the size of the population of Kosovo can be estimated based on the 1981 census applying this methodology.<sup>23</sup>

There are other separate population estimates made about Kosovo during this period of tension throughout the 1990s, such as estimates for 1995 by Huizi Islami (1997), a 1998 estimate by UNHCR (1999), the Federal Secretariat of Information (1998) and Blayo et al. (2000).<sup>24</sup> In addition, after the 1998-1999 war, a significant demographic survey was conducted by the UNFPA (United Nation Population Fund) in the period between November 1999 and February 2000.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, there is and has been available data, though methods and results often remain contested. A thorough review of the various data is beyond the scope of this article except to note that the data from all of these estimates often provide no or very limited information on the ethnic composition of the country, and represent different methodological approaches.

### The Kosovo Census of 2011

Like most other countries in Europe, in 2011 Kosovo conducted a Population and Housing census.<sup>26</sup> For Kosovars, this was the first internationally recognized census since 1981. According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (*Agjencioni i Statistikave të Kosovës, ASK*)<sup>27</sup> the census was organized in full accordance with the international recommendations prepared by the UN Economic Commission for Europe in cooperation with the European Union Office of Statistics (EUROSTAT)<sup>28</sup>.

Table1. Kosovo 2011 official census results by ethnic or cultural background

	Figures	%
Albanian	1.616.869	92.9%
Serbs	25.532	1.5%
Bosniaks	27.533	1.6%
Turks	18.738	1.1%
Roma	8.824	0.5%
Ashkali	15.436	0.9%
Egyptian	11.524	0.7%
Gorani	10.265	0.6%
Other	2.352	0.1%
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1.739.825</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: ECMI Kosovo: Minority Communities in the 2011 Kosovo Census Results: Analysis and Recommendations, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> Brunborg, Helge. 2002. Report on the size and ethnic composition of the population of Kosovo, 14 August 2002 (accessed: 30 October 2015), 1-18, 6-8.

<sup>24</sup> Helge, *Report on the size and ethnic composition*.

<sup>25</sup> See UNFPA (United Nation Population Fund), SOK (Statistical Office of Kosovo), IOM (International Organization for Migrations). 2000. Demographic, social, economic situation and reproductive health in Kosovo following the 1999 conflict. *Statistical Office of Kosovo* (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Appendix 1 - you can see the results of the census 2011 for all municipalities and natural growth for the period 01 April - 31 December 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics (*Agjencioni i Statistikave të Kosovës, ASK*). 2012. *Rezultatet përfundimtare të regjistrimit të popullsisë 2011*[Final Results of 2011 Census]. Prishtina.

<sup>28</sup> The International Monitoring Operation (IMO) noted that, the 2011 Kosovo Census was conducted in a relatively successful manner and resulted in figures that can be relied on.

The legal basis for the 2011 census was the adoption of the Census Law in 2010, wherein the status of resident was defined as all persons who had permanently lived in Kosovo for 12 months before the census and who intended to remain in Kosovo for over a year afterwards, as well as recognizing those who were temporarily absent from Kosovo and were abroad for less than 12 months for different reasons, including work, study, travel or medical treatment.<sup>29</sup> However, the Law also included provisions for a supplementary list for all persons living and working abroad (Diaspora), and who could not be considered as residents, with all information about this group of people to be provided by the person themselves, or by their family members.<sup>30</sup>

This definition of the concept of resident was not fully accepted by the wider public, many of whom wanted the Diaspora formally counted. For example the Kosovo Academy of Science and Arts (Akademia e Shkencës dhe Arteve të Kosovës, ASHAK) strongly contested this definition by noting that all persons who have not been in Kosovo for more than 12 months would not be included, and in this way the real demographic conditions of Kosovo would not be presented and the rights of “our countrymen living abroad will be violated.”<sup>31</sup> This debate is in fact a deliberation between *de facto* and *de jure* meaning of population. While the *de facto* population includes all persons present in the country at the time of the census, the *de jure* population includes the total population of a country that could be “home” and resident in the country, even if away at the time of the census.<sup>32</sup> As Kosovo has a substantial Diaspora population living and working abroad for short- or longer periods of time, this distinction is relevant. According to Brunborg, the Yugoslav censuses historically have tended to follow the *de jure* concept<sup>33</sup>, despite the fact that for international comparisons purposes, the *de facto* definition is recommended by the United Nations.<sup>34</sup>

It is important to emphasize again that this census was conducted within a considerably politicized atmosphere. Indeed, the 2011 Kosovar census was completely boycotted and contested by the Kosovo Serbs in the Northern part of the country, as well as partially in the Southern part, by both the Serb and Roma<sup>35</sup> communities. This boycott was based upon the contestation of Kosovar

<sup>29</sup> Kosovo Assembly. 2010. *Law on Population and Housing Census*. Law No. 03/L-237, Art.3.1.1

<sup>30</sup> Kosovo Assembly, *Art.3.1.2*

<sup>31</sup> Collaku, Petrit. 2011. *Kosovo Academy Seeks Delay to Census*. *Balkan Insight*, 02 March 2011 (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>32</sup> Helge, *Report on the size and ethnic composition*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Helge, *Report on the size and ethnic composition*; As Brunborg mentioned: the Yugoslav censuses adopted the *de jure* concept, which means that every inhabitant had to be enumerated in their place of permanent residence, even when at the time of census he/she was absent from that place due to any reason (travel, education or field work, temporary work abroad, compulsory service in the army, medical treatment, penal service, imprisonment, etc.).

<sup>34</sup> Helge, *Report on the size and ethnic composition*; After dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, ethnic composition became very important indicator. The size of an ethnic group was perceived as a threat to the others, a fear magnified by the fact that a range of political relations are built upon this criterion.

<sup>35</sup> Roma are usually Romani-language speakers. They live both in the Serbian-majority area (north of the Ibar River in the northern municipality of Mitrovica and in Serbian enclaves scattered around Kosovo) as well as in the more southern areas of Kosovo (Bhabha et al 2014, p.8). Thereby, they have boycotted the census as well.



statehood by Serbia since the proclamation of independence in 2008. Therefore, the Serb community in Kosovo was strongly influenced by appeals of official authorities in Belgrade to boycott, emphasizing that Kosovo is not a recognized state, and hence Kosovar institutions had no right to conduct any kind of census. In this politicized context, the Serbian parliament's committee for Kosovo called on Kosovo Serbs not to take part in the census, saying Kosovo institutions had no authority to carry out a head count.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, Serbia's minister for Kosovo and Metohija declared that Kosovo's Albanian-led institutions were preparing 'a census theft' in order to make the world believe that fewer Serbs live in Kosovo than is the case. The minister stated that 250,000 Serbs had been displaced from Kosovo since the 1990s and that the Serbian government maintains that only the UN can carry out a census in Kosovo.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, proposals that suggested Serbia would conduct a census within the entire territory of Kosovo were presented as well. Miladin Kovacevic, Deputy Director of the Serbian Statistical Office emphasized that the constitution obliges the office to carry the population census out in the entire territory of the country, including Kosovo (which Serbia does not recognize as independent).<sup>38</sup> The first census conducted in post-independent Kosovo was therefore challenged and contested on two levels, externally by the Serbian authorities in Belgrade, and internally by the local Serbs.

However, while Kosovo did successfully conduct the census in 2011 in spite of the principal contestations noted above, the results of this census produced a range of dissatisfied reactions, particularly with regard to minorities. From this perspective the census explicitly influences the government's policy-making and distribution of public goods, and the results are therefore consequential. After the publication of the census results by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ASK), the Kosovar Institute for Advanced Studies (Instituti për Studime të Avancuara, GAP),<sup>39</sup> made inquiries on the census data, and the implications that the data may have on public policies.<sup>40</sup> For instance, it is important to understand how the population of a municipality impacts the distribution of government grants. According to the Law on Local Government Finance (Law n.03/L-049), the government grants for municipalities are based upon four criteria: the total population; the number of minorities; if the national minorities make up a majority; and geographical size. Therefore, reflecting municipal population differences from before and after the 2011 census, the government is required to reframe the distribution of grants for all municipalities. Specific concerns are related to the four Serb municipalities in the North, which as previously noted boycotted the census en bloc. Therefore, since there are no official census data for the North, it is unclear upon which criteria the government would distribute grants.<sup>41</sup> For the other Serb

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<sup>36</sup> Barlovac, Bojana. 2011. Kosovo Serbs at Loggerheads Over Census. *Balkan Insight*, 30 March 2011 (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>37</sup> N.N. 2011. Serbia Postpones Census. *Balkan Insight*, 01 April 2011 (accessed: 30 October 2015).

<sup>38</sup> Barlovac Bojana. 2011. Serbia to Include Kosovo in 2011 Census. *Balkan Insight*, 06 January 2015 (accessed: 30 April 2015).

<sup>39</sup> Institute for Advanced Studies (GAP). 2012. Population Census Data and their Impact on Public Policies, 1-17.

<sup>40</sup> Appendix 2 summarizes the differences between previous estimates and 2011 census data.

<sup>41</sup> It is important to emphasize that the Northern Serb municipalities have continued to receive substantial financial assistance from Belgrade.

municipalities in the rest of Kosovo, the census data of 2011 could also be affected by the partial Serb boycott.

Another important issue is employment in local administration and/or the civil service. In 2008 the government of Kosovo issued a decision (no.10/46) on the size of local administration, which noted that the minimal number of employees in all municipalities must be 55 in municipalities with over 100,000 inhabitants, with one civil servant per 620 citizens; and in municipalities with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants, the proportion must be one civil servant per 780 citizens, while not dropping below 55. Thereby, using this formula in light of the results of the 2011 census it appears that at the local level there are 3111 civil servants more than the government decision of 2008 recommends.<sup>42</sup> Another aspect of interest regards the discrepancies between the numbers of voters. In this respect comparing the total number of voters with the data from the 2011 census, in some cases the number of registered voters in a municipality exceeds the total number of inhabitants.<sup>43</sup> It remains unclear how the government will update or implement policies based on such census data.

Another important dimension of the census data is related to minorities, whose rights and obligations became a very sensitive issue in the post-Communist era and the dissolution of the multinational state. Concerning minority issues, the Kosovo 2011 census is of particular interest because of political implications, as the results from the 2011 census may directly influence on power-sharing in political institutions, budget distribution, and other fields of public life in Kosovo.

The European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo (ECMI) prepared a useful analysis of minorities' concerns emanating from the Kosovo 2011 census. According to the 2011 census results, the proportional number of minorities in Kosovo proves to be 7%, which is lower than the previous estimates of 10-12%. Thereby, this lower percentage, in addition to leading to voices of dissatisfaction from among the minorities, carries a set of political implications since various minority rights and provisions in Kosovo, are related to the total number of the minority population. Likewise, according to the Constitution of Kosovo and the Law on Local Self-Governance, in municipalities where at least 10% of the residents belong to non-majority communities, the position of Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Assembly for Communities must be reserved for a representative of these communities. Similarly if such a condition is met, there shall also be a Deputy Mayor for Communities. The new numbers can therefore lead to significant changes. For instance, according to previous estimates made by ECMI Kosovo and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, in the municipality of Obiliq, non-majority communities comprised 11-18% of the municipality's total population, but according to the 2011 census they amount to approximately 7-8%. This percentage falls under the official threshold to

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<sup>42</sup> Institute for Advanced Studies, *Population Census*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> Institute for Advanced Studies, *Population Census*; This might happen because of two basic reasons: first, the dead persons are not completely removed from voters' rolls; and second, because of discrepancies between census data and voter rolls with regard to Kosovan diaspora.p.8

nominate a Chairman of the Municipal Assembly for Communities and a Deputy Mayor for Communities.<sup>44</sup>

Further provisions with regard to the total number of minorities are related to the Law on the Civil Service, wherein a minimum of 10% of civil service positions in central level institutions should in principle be reserved for minority communities. Again, new 2011 numbers could lead to changes. For instance, according to the census data the total number of the Turkish community in the municipality of Lipjan is 2%, while previous estimates had ranked that community in amount of 6-7%. Language is another important aspect, as municipalities in which at least 5% of the population consists of a non-majority community speaking a language different than the official languages (Albanian and/or Serbian) this language must have the status of official language in that municipality. Additionally, in accordance to the total number of non-majority communities in Kosovo, there are also reserved places for students belonging to non-majority communities within Kosovo's public universities.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, according to the Constitution of Kosovo (art.96), non-majority communities form part of central state institutions, and constitutional provisions guarantee twenty seats in the Kosovo Parliament for all minority communities, of which ten are reserved for the Serb community, while at the Government level non-majority communities are represented by two ministers and four vice ministers.<sup>46</sup> As of the time of writing, changes on the ground resulting from the *implementation* of policies based on the new census numbers have not been observed; the potential future implications remain unclear.

## Conclusion

As argued throughout this article, in countries like Kosovo that have emerged after the collapse of communism in Europe, the conduct of censuses can be a very politicized issue, wherein nationalist rhetoric with specific emphasis on ethnicity is a well-known and crucial driver of political demands. The very nature of political polarization is expressed by the boycott and contestation in the North of Kosovo by local Serbs, whose aim is to contest the state *per se*, primarily encouraged from their homeland's official structures in Belgrade. Others have argued that as the census was contested partially by the Roma and Serb community in the South as well, it may be classified as an *extensively contested census*.<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, censuses cannot be considered as a simple bureaucratic and administrative tool of enumeration. In particular this article has tried to illustrate the political importance of censuses in the process of public policy-making, especially in relation towards national minorities. The article

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<sup>44</sup> European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo [ECMI Kosovo]. 2012. *Minority Communities in the 2011 Kosovo Census Results: Analysis and Recommendations*, 2012. European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo, 3.

<sup>45</sup> ECMI, *Minority Communities*.

<sup>46</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo. 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Visoka, Gëzim and Elvir Gjevori. 2013. *Census politics and ethnicity in the Western Balkans*. *East European Politics* 29 (4), 479-98.

introduces several issues that the government has to reframe based on the results of the 2011 census, the most prominent being related to municipal budget allocations. On the other hand, the government and local authorities will have to carefully scrutinize and possibly cut the number of employees in the public administration; something that will have an impact not only on minorities, but on general employment and patronage. The mismatch between the data from the census and voter lists further illustrates the challenges of the count, and in particular the definition of a resident. The discrepancies can be great - according to the results of 2011 census, in twelve municipalities the number of voters exceeded the total number of the population.<sup>48</sup> There is clearly a need for more cooperation between the Kosovo Agency of Statistics and the Civilian Registration Office. The minorities in Kosovo have found themselves in a very disadvantageous situation following the release of numbers showing smaller minority populations than previously estimated (a deviation from 10% to 7%). The full implications remain unclear, but could be manifest in a loss of some political and/or functional positions throughout local and state institutions, which may translate into lower budgetary funds.<sup>49</sup> In closing, it is clear that while the contestation and boycott of censuses is not new, it does reflect the still conflicted nature of the region emerging from the 'aggressive' break-up of the Yugoslav federation. Censuses have been boycotted in the past, such as the Yugoslav census of 1991, and continued to be contested to various extents. Disagreement on whether a census should count the number of people resident in a country at the time of the enumeration, or include the often substantial Diaspora populations, also reflect the historical legacy of regional politics, emigration and identity-building. Ethnic and racial identity can be reflected in and constructed through censuses, and the data may then be variously used in public policy. The long-term implementation of the results of the 2011 census in Kosovo will demonstrate the impact of population changes, census methodology and adherence to constitutional and human rights principles, as the still relatively young state continues to shape as a polity.

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<sup>48</sup> GAP, Population Census, 8-9.

<sup>49</sup> It is important to note that this can be partially explained by the Serb and Roma boycott, and demonstrates that census data should never be used to provide absolute figures. Until now there have not been any additional efforts to employ different methodologies to estimate the numbers of peoples that boycotted the census.

Appendix 1

Population census 2011 and natural growth for the period 01 April - 31 December 2011

Municipality	Population	Fertility	Mortality	Natural growth
Deçan	40.019	562	113	449
Gjakova	94.556	1.327	335	992
Glllogoc	58.531	983	167	816
Gjilan	90.178	1.165	335	831
Dragash	33.997	583	156	427
Istog	39.289	541	132	409
Kaçanik	33.409	500	122	378
Klina	38.496	740	120	620
Fushë Kosova	34.827	573	123	450
Kamenica	36.085	349	150	199
Mitrovica	84.235	1.243	356	887
Leposaviq	13.773	92	130	-38
Lipjan	57.605	951	164	787
Novobërda	6.729	45	30	15
Obiliq	21.549	315	66	249
Rahovec	56.208	1.014	151	862
Peja	96.450	1.351	320	1.031
Podujeva	88.499	1.251	236	1.015
Pristina	198.897	2.922	605	2.317
Prizren	177.781	2.640	552	2.087
Skenderaj	50.858	848	131	718
Shtime	27.324	426	58	369
Shtërpca	6.949	74	46	28
Suhareka	59.722	1.165	214	951
Ferizaj	108.610	1.636	361	1.275
Vitia	46.987	700	161	539
Vushtrri	69.870	1.033	233	800
Zubin Potok	6.616	52	58	-6
Zveçan	7.481	54	76	-23
Malisheva	54.613	1.149	118	1.031
Junik	6.084	71	12	59
Mamusha	5.507	92	10	82
Hani i Elezit	9.403	145	25	120
Graçanica	10.675	63	67	-4
Ranillug	3.866	25	37	-12
Partesh	1.787	21	23	-2
Klllokot	2.556	17	19	-2
Total	1.780.021	26.719	6.014	20.705

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics [Agjencia e Statistikave të Kosovës ASK], 2013.

## Appendix 2

The difference between the data presented in “Annex I” of the Law on Local Government Finance on the overall number of population and minorities compared with the census data

Municipality	Number of population according to the Law on Local Government Finance	Number of population according to the census	Difference	Number of minorities according to the Law on Local Government Finance	Number of minorities according to the census	Difference
Deçan	40.400	40.019	- 381	294	550	+256
Gjakovë		115.000			94.556	
Glllogoc	60.000	58.531	- 1.469	0		45
Gjilan		100.348			90.178	
Dragash	35.000	33.997	- 1.003	12.935	13.559	+624
Istog	44.000	39.289	- 4.711	2.646	3.085	+439
Kaçanik	33.000	33.409	- 409	4	36	+32
Klinë	44.000	38.496	- 5.504	1.863	1241	-622
Fushë K.	33.682	34.827	+ 1.145	3.730	4511	+781
Kamenicë	49.581	36.085	- 13.196	4.670	1864	-2.806
Mitrovicë	90.000	71.909	- 18.091	0	2199	+2.199
Leposaviq	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lipjan	69.115	57.605	- 11.510	4.952	3112	-1.840
Novobërdë	9.899	6.729	- 3.170	2.785	3192	+407
Obiliq	26.000	21.519	- 4.481	3.360	1655	-1.705
Rahovec	63.000	56.208	- 6.792	1.953	944	-1009
Pejë	115.000	96.450	- 18.550	12.650	8.334	- 4316
Podujevë	117.000	88.499	- 28.501	735	849	+114
Prishtinë	388.561	198.897	- 189.664	4.961	4146	-815
Prizren	214.963	177.781	- 37.182	30.077	31.682	+1.605
Skenderaj	56.000	50.858	- 5.142	366	109	-257
Shtime	28.000	27.324	- 676	560	858	+298
Shtërpcë	11.000	6.949	- 4.051	3.438	3167	+271
Suharekë	80.000	59.722	- 20.278	471	575	+104
Ferizaj	111.000	108.610	- 2.390	3.367	4193	+826
Viti	46.458	46.987	+ 529	293	258	-35
Vushtrri	75.000	69.870	- 5.130	2.615	960	-1655
Zhubin P.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zveçan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malishevë	52.000	54.613	+ 2.613	28	54	+26
Hani i E.	10.000	9.403	- 597	0	44	+44
Mamushë	6.000	5.507	- 493	0	820	-
Junik	9.600	6.084	- 3.516	0	4	-
Klllokoti	4.542	2.556	- 1.986	1.205	763	-
Graçanicë	18.642	10.675	- 7.967	2.670	2517	-153
Ranillug	4.955	3.866	- 1.089	0	170	-
Partesh	5.217	1.787	- 3.430	0	0	0

Source: Institute for Advanced Studies –GAP: Population Census Data and their Impact on Public Policies 2012.

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