

## **POPULATIONS AND POWDER KEGS: THE MACEDONIAN CENSUS OF 1994 IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Among the uses or abuses of history are the assignment of blame and the abdication of responsibility. Thus, for example, M. Edith Durham (1925) in her book *The Serajevo Crime* lays the entire blame for World War I at the doorstep of Serbia, while in Belgrade there is a street named in honor of Gavrilo Princip, the perpetrator of the assassination to which Durham's title refers. In Sarajevo itself, before the current war, there was a museum at one end of the bridge where the assassination took place commemorating those who undertook it. Among the displays at this museum was a political cartoon from the period shortly before the outbreak of the Great War. The cartoon shows a disorderly circle of powder kegs, some with long, dangling fuses, others on their sides with gunpowder spilling out. Amidst these powder kegs are a few thin, ill-shaven men in national costumes of the Balkan nations looking around bewildered. Standing outside the circle, eagerly extending lit matches to them, are well-fed, well-groomed men in the West European formal dress of the Great Powers. Thus was the concept of "Balkan powder keg" understood in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup>

There is a certain irony in the image of the Balkans in the center and the Great Powers at the periphery, since in fact precisely the opposite is and has been the case in virtually every sphere of relations between Southeastern Europe and the rest of that continent. And there is a periphery within the periphery. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, national movements in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia all crystallized in such a way that Macedonia was (and still is) at the edge of their overlapping claims. Macedonia is a center of conflict because it is on the periphery of all its neighbors, who are themselves on the periphery of Europe.

In comparison to the current position of Albania and Kosovo, Macedonia is both central and marginal. Unlike Kosovo with its shadow government and parallel education system, Macedonia meets the normal requirements for an independent country. But unlike Albania with its unequivocal international status and membership in the United Nations under its own name, Macedonia does not enjoy the normal recognition of an independent European state. Some countries have recognized it under its own constitutional name (the Republic of Macedonia), while others use the temporary United Nations term Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Kosovo can be viewed as a region where an ethnolinguistic Serbian minority dominates the Albanian majority; Albania is a country ruled by its ethnolinguistic majority (although the veracity of the 1989 census figures on minorities is questionable). But Macedonia has non-Macedonian troops stationed inside its borders for protective purposes (U.S. and Nordic battalions of United Nations Preventive Deployment [UNPREDEP]) and is still the occasional object of a dispute over whether there is a majority ethnolinguistic group or even a plurality. The very legitimacy of the identity of the majority ethnolinguistic group--the Macedonians--is still subject to equivocation, both purposeful and naïve. Thus, while in many respects the situation of Albanian majorities in both Albania and Kosovo may be either economically or politically worse than the situation of the Albanian minority in Macedonia, it is Macedonia that is arguably the most unstable of the three. It is the country on which both Albanian and Kosovar attention is focused (as seen in public statements by leaders such as Sali Berisha and Ibrahim Rugova), and it is the country whose situation will be the focus of this paper.

The extraordinary census of the summer of 1994 provides an opportunity to view both the complexity of the Macedonian scene of which the Albanians are a part and the role of European mediation more broadly.<sup>2</sup> The 1994 Macedonian census raises fundamental issues of which the more recent conflicts such as those over education and language use at the federal level are continuations. It is also worthy of a more detailed account as a historical moment around which national and international tensions crystallized. Regardless of what the future holds for Macedonia, the 1994 census is one of the key links in the chain of events leading to that future.

The counting of populations has been fraught with political tensions for millennia. We read in the Book of Numbers (Num. 1:2-3) of a census for the purpose of preparing for war, and the census mentioned in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:1-5) was quite probably connected with Roman efforts to consolidate its hegemony in what was then still the kingdom (as opposed to province) of Judea (cf. Alford 1980, 456-57). From 21 June until mid-July 1994, under intense internal and external political pressure, an extraordinary census took place in the Republic of Macedonia. (The last ordinary census was conducted in 1991, when the Republic was still "Socialist" and a part of what is now the former Yugoslavia.) The 1994 census was not funded by the government of the country, as is usually the case with modern censuses in sovereign states, but by supranational organizations--the Council of Europe (CE), which had so far refused to admit the Republic of Macedonia, and the European Union (EU), whose policies toward Macedonia have often been dominated by Greece. The overseers of the census appointed by the European organizations were

officially called the "Group of Experts" (cf. Todorova 1994, 481-82 on the concept of expert knowledge applied to the Balkans). I was working that summer as a senior policy and political analyst covering Macedonia for the Analysis and Assessment Unit organized by Dr. Susan Woodward for the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, attached to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) stationed in the former Yugoslavia. In connection with these duties, I arranged to be authorized as an outside observer of the extraordinary 1994 census in my capacity as a member of an international organization in accordance with Article 33 of the Census Law. Although I was not officially connected with any of the funding organizations, the majority of their representatives were quite willing to allow me to accompany them on their duties and attend their meetings. As a result, I was able to observe both the process of the census itself and the European observers who were observing it.

Questions of ethnic identity, citizenship, language rights, and the interrelationships of the concepts of language, religion, and nationality were hotly contested and rendered the census a clearly political event rather than the statistical exercise it was officially claimed to be. And this was not the first time that Macedonian census figures have been the subject of conflict concerning these factors. At the beginning of this century, as at its end, economic and political structures in the Balkans were unstable and/or in transition, wars were being fought, interethnic tensions were high, and Macedonia was the object of conflicting claims supported in part by conflicting census figures. In this paper, I shall examine the 1994 Macedonian census both as an event in itself and as a part of the larger context of quests for identity and hegemony in the Balkans. In so doing, I hope to shed light not only on the specific and general questions connected with the concepts of ethnic, linguistic, and religious identity, and with citizenship and hegemony, but also on the relationship of the supranational to the national, of the central to the marginal, and of "Europe" to the land mass west of the Urals and north of the Mediterranean. I will suggest that, by imposing their own constructs while continuing to marginalize Macedonia, the Western Great Powers, who largely determine and fund the policies of the international community, are not contributing to Macedonian stabilization.

In her article on the current Western "reinvention" of the Balkans, Maria Todorova (1994) has accurately criticized the notion invoked by some journalists and politicians that the current Balkan conflicts are rooted in "ancient hatreds" and the "distant tribal past." (We can note here in passing that no such rhetoric has been invoked in any attempt to explain the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe in recent years.) In fact, there is a much more complex dynamic operating between Western Europe and Southeastern Europe, and this is nowhere more clear than in the Republic of Macedonia. The events of the past can be invoked to influence the present, but they should not be confused with the present itself. Since census figures were used to bolster justifications of the partitions of geographic Macedonia that resulted in the current situation, however, a brief look of some those claims provides a useful background to subsequent censuses, including the most recent.

The figures in table 1 are cited in d'Estournelles de Constant (1914, 28-30) from

Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek sources, respectively.<sup>3</sup> They refer to three different views by writers representing the three states that were independent and had territorial claims on Macedonia at the outbreak of the First Balkan War.<sup>4</sup> I have added a Turkish account of the 1905 Ottoman census for comparison (Saral 1975, 152).

Table 1  
Conflicting Territorial Claims on Macedonia at the Outbreak of the First Balkan War

Nationality	Bulgarian	%	Serb	%	Greek	%	Turk	%
Bulgarian	1,181,336	52.31	57,600	2.01	332,162	19.26	896,497	30.8
Greek	228,702	10.13	201,140	7.01	652,795	37.85	307,000	10.6
Serb	700	0.03	2,048,320	71.35	—	—	100,000	3.4
Albanian	128,711	5.70	165,620	5.77	—	—	—	—
Turk	499,204	22.11	231,400	8.06	634,017	36.76	1,508,507	*51.8
Wallachian	80,767	3.58	69,665	2.43	25,101	1.45	99,000	3.4
Jewish	67,840	3.00	64,645	2.25	53,147	3.08	—	—
Gypsy	54,557	2.41	28,730	1.00	8,911	0.52	—	—
Misc.	16,407	0.73	3,500	0.12	18,685	1.08	—	—
Total	2,258,224	100.00	2,870,620	100.00	1,724,818	100.00	2,911,004	100.00

Source: d'Estournelles de Constant, Baron, et al., *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (1914; reprint, with a foreword by George F. Kennan, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1993).

\*Osman Yavuz Saral, *Kaybetmiş Rumeli* (Istanbul, Turkey: Boğaziçi, 1975), 152, does not distinguish Turks from Albanians but writes, "Muslim (the majority Turkish, the minority Albanian)."

Although Christo Dako (1919, 75) in his book significantly entitled *Albania: The Master Key to the Near East* cites similar figures and refers to the obvious discrepancies as "amusing," these discrepancies are not entirely arbitrary.<sup>5</sup> Rather, at least to some extent, different authors have selected criteria that would support their points of view.

In the case of Greek and Turkish authors, the choice was based on religion and/or schooling. Any member of the Greek Orthodox Church or, after 1870, any Patriarchist (as opposed to Exarchists, called "schismatics" by Cleanthes Nicolaïdes [1899, 26]) as well as anyone who went to a Greek school (and since schooling was controlled by religion, Macedonian Christians were left with little choice until the mid-nineteenth century) was counted by the Greeks as a Greek, hence expressions such as "slavophone Greek" and "albanophone Greek."<sup>6</sup> The complete absence of Albanians from the Greek figures is explained by their being counted as Turks, Greeks, or Miscellaneous on the basis of religion—Muslim, Orthodox, or Catholic (cf. also Saral 1975, 152).

Since the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian schools remained relatively weak except in parts of the north and west of Macedonia, Serbian authors selected specific

isoglosses--dialect boundaries based on individual linguistic features--to justify ethnic and therefore territorial claims as illustrated in table two.<sup>7</sup>

Table 2  
Dialect Boundaries

Nationality/Word	[1] shoulders	[2] white	[3] woman/the woman
Serbian	pleći	bel	zhena
Macedonian	pleki	bel	zhena/zhenata
Bulgarian	plešti	bjal	zhena/zhenata

The dialect boundary illustrated by column one--the reflexes of Common Slavic \*tj/\*dj, where Serbian and Macedonian have a single palatal stop or affricate rather than a combination of palatal fricative plus affricate or stop--was used by Belić (1919, 250) to justify Serbian claims to virtually all of northern and central Macedonia.<sup>8</sup> By extending the criterion to include column two--the reflex of Common Slavic \*ě--Serbian linguists could extend Serbian territorial claims into the western third of Bulgaria. On the other hand, choosing a feature such as the presence of the postposed definite article--as in the third column--helped justify Bulgarian territorial claims to the entire Timok-Morava valley in southern Serbia in addition to Macedonia. Bulgarian figures assumed that virtually any Slav in Macedonia was Bulgarian and increased the numbers by assuming higher fertility and incidence of extended families for Slavs than for other groups (Kǎnčev 1900, 136-37). Thus, for example, if a given village had 50 Albanian houses and 40 Slavic houses, by counting 5 members per Albanian household and 7 members per Slavic household based on the foregoing assumption, we end up with a Slavic majority despite the smaller number of houses--280 Slavs as opposed to 250 Albanians.

Notably absent from these statistics are any figures representing the views of ethnic Macedonians themselves.<sup>9</sup> Except for the 1913 map by Dimitrija Čupovski (cited in Petruševski 1992, 83), which in any case is not a statistical document, we have very little in the published literature except occasional moments such as Ćorgi Pulevski's statement of Macedonian national consciousness (1875, 48-49), Krste Misirkov's formulation of Macedonian language and statehood (1903, 71), the Kostur (Greek Kastoria) school of 1892 (Andonovski 1985), and Allen Upward's (1908, 204) account of his trip to Voden (Greek Edhessa).<sup>10</sup> As Rossos (1994; 1995) has made abundantly clear, the suppression of Macedonian ethnic identity in all its manifestations was not only in the interests of all the small powers that lay claim to the territory, but ultimately also in the interests of the great powers that supported the various small powers and that ultimately had a stake in maintaining the partitions of Macedonia as a viable solution for peace. In certain respects, that situation is being replicated today, and population figures are again being used to bolster conflicting claims ranging from minority rights to irredentism. In particular, the technique of privileging religion over language as the basis of identity, which was used by

both Turks and Greeks (and later Bulgarians and Serbs) to assert hegemony and assimilate various populations in Macedonia, is again being brought into play, as will be seen below.

Between the first and fifteenth of April 1991, under conditions of impending political disintegration, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia conducted its last census. Before the end of that year, while the census data were still being processed, war had broken out in the former Yugoslavia, and the Republic of Macedonia had declared independence. The census itself was carried out in an atmosphere of distrust and animosity. Led by the two largest Albanian-identified political parties in Macedonia, the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP, in Albanian PPD) and the smaller but more vocal and radical Peoples Democratic Party (NDP, in Albanian PDP), both of which were founded in 1990, the majority of Albanians in Macedonia (and elsewhere) boycotted the 1991 census, claiming that they would be purposefully undercounted.<sup>11</sup> The Bureau of Statistics estimated the data for Albanians in the boycotted communes (*opštini*) by means of statistical projections utilizing the data from the 1981 census, natural growth of the population during the intercensus period, migration, and other statistical data (Antonovska et al. 1991). The preliminary results were published in November 1991. Tables three and four give comparative statistics in raw numbers for 1953 through 1994 and percentages for the last three censuses. I have also given percentages of increase/decrease for the censuses from 1961 through 1991.<sup>12</sup> The categories "Egyptian" and "Bosniac" represent new sociopolitical realities.<sup>13</sup>

Before the preliminary figures for the 1991 census were published, Albanian political actors began an international media campaign declaring not merely that they had been miscounted, but that in fact Albanians constituted about 40 percent of the population of Macedonia--that is, seven to eight hundred thousand people (*Nova Makedonija* 91/04/20).<sup>14</sup> Representatives of other groups also cited larger statistics. Serbs claimed up to 300,000; Turks up to 200,000; Roms 200,000; Greeks 250,000; Ćupci 30,000, and Bulgarians and Vlahs similar figures (cf. MILS [Macedonian Information Liaison Service] 93/01/13; MILS 93/02/22). Added together, they surpassed the total number of inhabitants of Macedonia without Macedonians. The point was clearly not one of statistical accuracy but rather of claims to political power and hegemony.

The success of the Albanian public relations campaign can be seen in the fact that within a year of the publication of the preliminary results of the 1991 Yugoslav census, Dr. Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, a German diplomat with the rank of ambassador and head of the Working Group for Human Rights and Minorities within the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), called for an extraordinary census in Macedonia to be supervised by the international community (MILS 92/11/25). Ambassador Ahrens made two proposals. One involved only those areas with large Albanian populations; the other concerned the entire country. This pair of proposals had many implications and repercussions. By focusing exclusively on the Albanians, who according to the 1991 census made up 14.37 percent of the population, the first proposal implicitly legitimized both Albanian claims for special treatment and the Albanian politicians' right to claim discri-

Table 3  
Yugoslav Census Data, 1953-1994

Nationality/Year	1994*	1991	+/-	1981	+/-	1971	+/-	1961	+/-	1953
Macedonian	1,288,330	1,328,187	+4	1,279,323	+12	1,142,375	+14	1,000,854	+16	860,699
Albanian	442,914	441,987	+17	377,208	+35	279,871	+52	183,108	+12	162,524
Turk	77,252	77,080	-12	86,591	-20	108,552	-17	131,481	-49	203,938
Rom**	43,732	52,103	+21	43,125	+76	24,505	+18	20,606	0	20,462
Vlah	8,467	7,764	+22	6,384	-11	7,190	-11	8,046	-7	8,668
Serb	39,260	42,775	-4	44,468	-4	46,465	+9	42,728	+21	35,112
Muslim	15,315	31,356	-21	39,513	+307	1,248	-42	3,002	+89	1,591
Bulgarian	1,547	1,370	-31	1,980	-41	3,334	+8	3,087	+235	920
Greek	349	474	-33	707	+32	536	-36	836	-1	848
Egyptian	3,169	3,307	---	----	---	----	---	----	---	----
Bosniac	7,244	----	---	----	---	----	---	----	---	----
Yugoslav	*** 595	15,703	+9	14,225	+74	3,652	+65	1,260	---	----
Other****	9,893	31,858	+104	15,612	-47	29,580	+63	10,995	+13	9,752
Total	1,936,877	2,033,964	+7	1,909,136	+16	1,647,308	+17	1,406,003	+8	1,304,514

\*According to Dr. Svetlana Antonovska (95/05/25), Director of the Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Macedonia, the lower figures for some nationalities in 1994 compared with 1991 are due to the fact that citizens living abroad for more than one year were included in the 1991 census. By contrast, in the 1994 census, in accordance with international norms, only those citizens living abroad for one year or less were counted.

\*\*The predominately Romani-speaking ethnic group popularly known as Gypsies in English and Cigani in Macedonian (similar ethnonyms are used in most of the languages of Central and Eastern Europe) is now referred to by the native ethnonym Rom (singular) in scholarly literature as well as in official documents in many countries. (The term was official in the 1971 Macedonian census.) Although in languages other than English this form has been unhesitatingly adapted to the grammar of the language in which it is used (for example, in Macedonian the plural of Rom is Romi), considerable inconsistency has arisen in English usage. Thus some scholars and other serious writers use the Romani form Roma as the plural of Rom, others adapt the word to English morphology and write Roms, others use a pluralized adjective Romanies, and some treat the noun as uninflected, using Rom for both singular and plural. I have argued elsewhere (Friedman and Hancock 1995) that just as in English the plural of Turk is Turks not Turkler, so the plural of Rom should be Roms and not Roma. I would argue that the form Roma exoticizes and marginalizes rather than emphasizing the fact that the group in question is an ethnic group just as are Turks, Magyars (not Magyarok), etc. A unique ethnic group to be sure, but still an ethnic group. The usage in other European languages supports this view.

\*\*\*This figure includes those who declared "Yugoslav" as well as nationalities not counted separately in the census, mostly from Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East. (Macedonian Information Center 95/01/05)

\*\*\*\*Yugoslav and Macedonian censuses distinguished up to thirty-four nationality categories as well as several other types, including those who declared a regional identity and those who did not declare a nationality. For the sake of conciseness, the smaller categories, none of which is relevant for this paper, have been grouped under the designation "other." This designation includes the following specified groups: Austrian, English, Belgian, German, Danish, Jewish, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, French, Dutch, Croatian, Montenegrin, Czech, Swiss, and Swedish.

**Table 4**  
**Census Data for Yugoslav Macedonia, 1981-1994**  
**(percentage of population)**

Nationality/Year	1994	1991	1981
Macedonian	66.5	65.3	67.0
Albanian	22.9	21.7	19.8
Turk	4.0	3.8	4.5
Rom	2.3	2.6	2.3
Vlah	0.4	0.4	0.3
Serb	2.0	2.1	2.1
Muslim	0.8	1.5	2.1
Bulgarian	0.1	0.0	0.0
Greek	0.0	0.0	0.0
Egyptian	0.2	0.2	—
Bosniac	0.4	—	—
Yugoslav	0.0	0.8	0.7
Other	0.4	1.6	3.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

mination and demand a recount. At the same time, the proposals helped reify, as a Macedo-Albanian conflict, tensions that had been building since the riots in Kosovo in 1981 but that were not an inherent feature of Macedonian life at all periods.

Ahrens's announcement of November 1992 was followed by nineteen months of uninterrupted dispute. First there was an intense controversy over whether or not to hold the census.<sup>15</sup> This agreed upon, there followed prolonged debate over the wording of the census law, which was eventually passed with the support of the Albanian members of parliament. One of the chief issues was language-use in the census, and Article 35 of the census law provided for bilingual forms in Albanian, Turkish, Romani, Vlah, and Serbian in addition to Macedonian.<sup>16</sup> Finally, just as the census was actually beginning, there were serious behind-the-scenes negotiations with the Albanian members of parliament, who threatened to call for a boycott, despite the presence of the International Census Observation Mission (ICOM) observers and the expense incurred by the European organizations.

The ICOM members were, for the most part, statisticians without previous Balkan experience.<sup>17</sup> Many members of the team, including some of the highest ranking, told me that they were quite surprised when they discovered that they were embroiled in highly charged political issues, as opposed to a mechanical statistical exercise, and they expressed confusion and dismay over the complex ethnic situation they encountered. The lack of



knowledge of Macedonia on the part of the CE and ICOM was embodied in the orientation packet for ICOM team members. The only item relating to the country itself rather than to ICOM's mission in it was a chart listing Cyrillic printed and cursive letters with the names of the letters in Cyrillic and Latin orthography and labeled simply L'alphabet. The very lack of a qualifying adjective in a sense erases Macedonian from the observer's view, and in fact the chart was not a guide to Macedonian Cyrillic, but actually a guide to Russian Cyrillic with the last six letters omitted. Although the last six letters of Russian Cyrillic do not occur in Macedonian, there are seven other letters that are used in Macedonian Cyrillic but not in Russian that were therefore missing from the chart.<sup>18</sup> To compound the effect, the names of the Russian Cyrillic letters utilize a vowel whose letter comes at the end of the alphabet, so the names of the letters used a symbol that was not given in the list of letters. The chart's incorrect information reflected a concern for the Albanian question by which the ICOM lost sight of Macedonian concerns.

The 1994 Macedonian census was linked to a political goal--namely the claim of Albanian politicians for nonminority status for Albanians within Macedonia based on their large numbers. This was explicitly stated by Albanian political leaders and in the independent Albanian language press (Xhaferi 1994). The ICOM Group of Experts, however, declared in its press conference on the first day of the census (21 June 1994) that the census was strictly a statistical exercise unconnected with any political implications. Nevertheless, after the press conference, some members of the expert team had a separate meeting with Albanian political leaders. As a UN employee, I was permitted to attend the meeting. The topic was the threatened last-minute boycott mentioned above. One member of the Group of Experts spoke in very strong terms to the Albanian political leadership about the need for them to cooperate with the census. One of the moderate Albanian leaders stated that he understood the situation clearly and wanted to see the census work, but went on to say that he also saw no point in allowing radicals to destroy his political career.

The privileging of Albanian claims over any others was symbolically represented on the ICOM observers' control forms for censused households. Although the Macedonian control forms had sections for indicating the six ethnic affiliations defined by the languages of the census forms (Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Romani, Vlah, and Serbian), as did the ICOM control form on enumerators, the ICOM household control form specified only Macedonian and Albanian, the remainder being subsumed under "Others." During a meeting with Albanian political leaders at the beginning of the census, I asked Ambassador Ahrens if internationalizing Albanian claims in Macedonia via the CE/ICFY-sponsored census might, in fact, exacerbate ethnic tensions.<sup>19</sup> Dr. Ahrens responded that he thought the international intervention was beneficial and cited as evidence the fact that as soon as the Council of Europe agreed to fund the census, Albanian claims dropped immediately from 40 to 30 percent. Indeed, during the negotiations that I attended, the figure Albanian political actors cited as a being the minimum below which they would claim falsification was 25 percent. I should note, however, that even before the first results were released, the percentage claimed had jumped. After the first results were published, and despite ICOM

approval, the figure 40 percent was again being cited. (See also the statements of Albanian prime minister Alexander Mexi, who reportedly cited the figure 800,000 [MILS 95/04/13]).<sup>20</sup>

Since the 1994 census was the direct result of the Albanian boycott of the 1991 census, there was a tendency at ICOM to view Albanian claims as based in fact rather than as raising an unresolved question. The Macedonian government was therefore sometimes placed in the position of being treated as guilty unless proven innocent. Censuses conducted by sovereign states are not normally overseen by other organizations, while censuses in colonies are supervised by their colonial rulers, as was the case in the 1911 British census of India (cf. Anderson 1913, 1-13). The fact that the 1994 census in the Republic of Macedonia was conducted under pressure from and funded by external organizations (CE/ICFY) put the country in an ambiguous position. On the one hand, the external funding and oversight by individuals who were not citizens of Macedonia placed the country in a position similar to that of a nonsovereign entity. On the other, Macedonia was treated as a sovereign state engaged in discriminatory behavior. In July, during the census, I was approached by ICOM members who informed me that the government was discriminating against Muslims by not listing them as Bosniacs (*Bošnjaci*) or by not giving their language as Serbo-Croatian. These ICOM members had been in contact with Bosniac political activists who had claimed that all Slavic Muslims in Macedonia are Serbo-Croatian-speaking and/or Bosniacs. These inaccuracies were at first accepted as established fact. There are, however, a significant number of Macedonian-speaking Muslims--popularly known as *Torbeš*, although many prefer to be called *Muslimani*--who do not speak Serbo-Croatian and who do not identify themselves as Bosniac. The ICOM members were eventually persuaded of this separate identification, but their initial view demonstrates not only the European observers' distrust of the Macedonian government in regard to the census but also, because their expertise did not include prior knowledge of the territory in which they were operating, their difficulty in distinguishing information from misinformation disseminated by various ethno-political actors.

Macedonian Muslims often live in underdeveloped, neglected, and isolated areas such as the municipalities of Debar and Kičevo, where there is no ethnic absolute majority. They have therefore been vulnerable to manipulation by Albanian and Turkish politicians who have convinced some of them that they are Slavicized Albanians or Turks rather than Islamicized Slavs,<sup>21</sup> (cf. Verdery 1993) and that therefore they could rely more on Turkish or Albanian political parties to support their economic interests, since in economies of shortage, such interests tend to fragment along ethnic lines. The emphasis of Macedonian nationalist politicians on the connection between the Macedonian Orthodox Church and Macedonian nationality has further alienated some Macedonian Muslims.<sup>22</sup> Census attempts in Macedonian-speaking Muslim villages (Plasnica and Preglovo, Kičevo municipality; Župa, Debar municipality) ran into cases where a monolingual Macedonian Muslim family would demand a bilingual Albanian or Turkish form with an interpreter but then have to have the Albanian or Turkish translated into Macedonian. These incidents were part of a larger pattern of conscious language shift based on religion, such as the

incident in the monolingual Macedonian Muslim village of Bačište (Kičevo municipality), where parents demanded an Albanian school for their children (*Nova Makedonija* 91/05/13; Friedman 1993).

As in other European censuses, the definition of the categories "mother tongue" and "nationality" was a problem in the 1994 Macedonian census. The ICOM control forms used ethnic affiliation and national affiliation interchangeably.<sup>23</sup> But the concepts of ethnicity, nationality, language, and religion have a complex history of interrelationships in Macedonia, one whose complexity continues into the present day. Thus, for example, some Muslim speakers of Macedonian declare their nationality as Albanian or Turkish on the basis of identifying their religion with Turkish or Albanian ethnicity. Similarly, some Christian speakers of Albanian declare their nationality as Macedonian, equating Macedonian Orthodox Christianity with Macedonian ethnicity. Needless to say, Albanian ethnopoliticians insist that Macedonian-identified Albanian speakers are Albanians while Macedonians insist that Albanian-identified Macedonian speakers are Macedonians. There was also the citizenship-based category Yugoslav, which until 1991 was steadily growing in popularity, not only among Slavs, but also among non-Slavs. Now that Macedonia is no longer part of Yugoslavia, however, this category has ceased to be valid for most people, since it refers to another country.<sup>24</sup>

ICOM observers were unaware of the difference between Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian when they arrived to observe the census. When they grasped that the difference was a linguistic one, they concluded that language was therefore the basis of nationality. Although language and ethnic or national affiliation coincide to a certain extent in Macedonia, this is clearly not always the case, as can be seen not only from such categories as "Muslim" but also from table five, which gives statistics for the correspondence between declared nationality and declared mother tongue for the 1953 and 1981 censuses. (Figures for 1994 have not yet been processed.) By attempting to impose a West European construct equating language with nationality (and nationality with statehood), ICOM helped force on people the kind of choices that have led to the current conflict (cf. Gal 1993, 344-45).

Adaptability of identity has long been a feature of life in Macedonia. The oldest generation from Western Macedonia remembers when Christians and Muslims would live under the same roof as part of the same extended family. Before the Mürszteg agreement of 2/3 October 1903, only Muslims could serve as gendarmes, and such officials had significant power at the local level (cf. Skendi 1968, 203, 207, 253). In Christian families, therefore, it was not uncommon for one brother to convert to Islam in order to be in a position to protect the entire family. Everyone ate at a common table, and if, for example, pork was available and a *zelnik* (pie) was made, the women of the house would put pork in only half the pita and both the Christian and Muslim sides of the family would eat from the same pan. On the other hand, marriages have always been freely contracted along religious lines but across linguistic ones. The children of such "mixed" marriages would grow up bi- or multilingual. In recent times, when faced with the necessity of choosing a nationality,

Table 5  
Mother Tongue and Nationality, 1953 and 1981\*

Mother Tongue	Macedonian		Albanian		Turkish		Serbo-Croatian		Romani		Vlah	
Nationality/Year	1953	1981	1953	1981	1953	1981	1953	1981	1953	1981	1953	1981
Macedonian	853,971	1,276,878	1,986	190	281	160	934	547	277	316	2,565	ns
Albanian	2,152	1,218	153,502	374,181	6,569	3	181	440	70	1,697	1	ns
Turk	32,392	16,608	27,087	8,592	143,615	60,768	534	366	70	94	10	ns
Rom	1,040	4,160	860	1,697	2,066	808	25	24	16,456	36,399	1	ns
Vlah	137	1,111	4	1	2	0	14	3	0	2	8,130	[5,257]
Serb	3,945	8,521	0	10	8	3	31,070	35,867	41	14	9	ns
Muslim	ns	15,075	ns	4,968	ns	2,038	ns	16,325	ns	308	ns	(30)
Yugoslav	2,152	7,645	25	1,943	50	274	563	2,746	2	530	4	ns
Other	322	13,282	341	4,247	569	2,853	5,258	17,031	173	1,280	31	---
Total	896,651	1,334,498	183,805	391,829	153,160	64,907	38,579	63,349	17,089	37,780	10,751	ns

\*ns-category not specified

choices can follow gender lines. For example, if a Turkish man marries an Albanian woman in some families the sons may be Turks and the daughters Albanian, while in others the choice may be for one son to be Albanian and one to be Turkish. The European concept of nationality--equating ethnicity with language with state--does not correspond to the complex realities of Macedonia, and focusing on nationality to the exclusion of other characteristics results in contradictory situations such as those of parents insisting that their children be schooled in a language that they do not know despite the fact that the primary justification for multilingual education at the elementary level is the idea that children learn best when taught in their mother tongue.<sup>25</sup>

The politicization of the language issue and its confusion with nationality in the 1994 census was highlighted in several incidents that occurred in Albanian-speaking villages in southwestern Macedonia, where members of the censused population objected to the fact that some of the Albanian-speaking enumerators were not ethnic Albanians but rather Roms (Gypsies), Ćupci ("Egyptians"), or Vlahs (*Flaka e Vëllazërimit* 94/06/28). Since most Ćupci in southwestern Macedonia have Albanian as their first language and many Roms and Vlahs are fluent in it, especially in southwestern Macedonia, the issue was clearly not a question of the right to register in one's mother tongue, but rather the demand for an ethnic Albanian--that is, an instance of ethnic prejudice.

The events leading up to the boycott of the 1991 census, the imposition of the 1994 census, and subsequent developments show a pattern of manipulations and fragmentations of ethnic and linguistic identities utilizing legitimate grievances to benefit certain types of political elites. At the time of the census, my assessment was that it would prove a statistical success but a political failure. Insofar as it has not resulted in any significant changes in the figures--both official and purported--according to which ethnically based political relations are determined, this prediction has held true. The ICOM final report, while not uncritical, affirmed that the census was carried out according to European or international standards. It has been refuted by the Albanian political actors who brought it about, but at the same time they have generally continued to try to work within the existing governmental framework. In January 1995, the constitutional court ruled that Article 35 of the census law, which governed language use, was unconstitutional--that is, contrary to Article 7 of the constitution, which declares Macedonian the official language and guarantees (or restricts) official minority language use at (or to) the local level (MILS 95/01/26). Thus the census law solved nothing in this respect, and the debate over the use of minority languages continues.

The 1994 census highlighted, among other things, the ambiguity of the term Europe. Geographically, it refers to a continent bounded on the south and east by the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the southern slopes of the Caucasus, and the western slopes of the Urals. Politically or culturally, however, the term Europe often still has the meaning of Western Europe or the Europe of the Great Powers. Thus, for example, the most powerful political unit on the continent calls itself the European Union, although only West European nations plus Greece are included in it. It is no coincidence that in 1994 Greece was engaged in a

vigorous internal propaganda campaign stressing its membership in this Europe. The exclusion of the southeastern peninsula of geographical Europe from what can be called political Europe is well known in the Balkans.<sup>26</sup> The sense of alienation generated thereby was eloquently expressed by the Bulgarian author and journalist Aleko Konstantinov (1895) at the end of a vignette in his famous work *Baj Ganjo*, which satirizes the adventures of a Bulgarian rose oil merchant in the Western Europe of his day and subsequently in then newly liberated Bulgaria. In the penultimate sentence of *Baj Ganjo žurnalist* (Baj Ganjo as a journalist) Konstantinov writes, "*Evropejci sme nij, ama vse ne sme dotam! . . .*" (We're Europeans--but still not quite!). I heard a comparable use of the term Europe during the 1994 census when an ethnic Albanian politician brought me with him into a restricted building explaining to the guard in Macedonian, "*Toj e od Evropa*" (He is from Europe). My companion knew that I was an American and an employee of UNPROFOR, but he identified me as *od Evropa* because my role at that moment was that of a privileged Western outsider just like a member of ICOM. Insofar as international European organizations succeeded in pressuring Macedonia into conducting a census which those organizations funded and observed, it can be argued that political Europe was exerting authority in geographical Europe's southeastern periphery and particularly in Macedonia as a periphery of peripheries.<sup>27</sup>

This political Europe was utilized by both Albanian and Macedonian political actors to further their particular goals. The Albanian politicians mobilized quite legitimate social and political grievances based on very real discrimination against ethnic Albanian citizens of Macedonia, ranging from censorship and restriction of language and property rights to firings and jail sentences, to further their own careers and demands for autonomy, federalization, and ultimately irredentism (cf. Xhaferi 1994). Macedonian statisticians and politicians, faced with the choice between an externally imposed census or further destabilization due to a loss of legitimacy in an international community that was already permitting Macedonia's economic strangulation while continuing to prevent the full realization of its sovereignty, chose the census.<sup>28</sup> But they then imposed their own condition, namely that the funding be sufficient to cover not just the nationality question, which was the only one Europe sought to resolve and the only one which Albanian ethnopoliticians could use to legitimize their claims on the international scene, but also all those features of the Macedonian economy that form part of a complete census but had been omitted from the 1991 census because of insufficient funding.

The 1994 census was a statistical success but a political failure. Although it legitimated the data collected in the 1991 census, it did nothing to resolve the issues of political hegemony and access to resources that continue to plague Macedonia. It also helped to reify a conflict whose roots in Macedonian history are not as deep as some political actors would pretend.<sup>29</sup> In seeking to impose a vision of nationality that does not correspond to Macedonia's complex cultural context, political Europe reproduced its vision of Balkan otherness and marginality in Macedonia more than it contributed to Macedonian stabilization.

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23. Gal, "Diversity and Contestation in Linguistic Ideologies," 344-45, discusses how the 1873 Statistical Congress insistence on the requirement of a language question in censuses forced people in Austria-Hungary to think of nationality in terms of language instead of citizenship. Then, in the 1941 Hungarian census, a separate nationality question was added, which was even more overtly politically manipulated.

24. An example of how national feelings in Macedonia are more complex than portrayed by ethnopolitical (or international) organizations is the Serbian husband of a Macedonian who, unbeknownst to his wife, had always declared himself a Yugoslav in national censuses. He went through a great personal crisis in connection with the 1994 census, since he did not wish to identify with current Serbian policies and did not consider Yugoslav to be a valid category any longer. He chose to declare himself a Macedonian.

25. The problem of identity in relation to both the census and Macedonian foreign relations received the following expression in the satirical journal *Osten* (95/07/08): "I'm going to declare myself as a Martian in the census." "Can you speak Martian?" "No need to. Here you can declare yourself a Turk or Albanian without knowing Turkish or Albanian. It's enough to be a Muslim. And as a Martian, no one can negate me. The Martians were never Greeks or involved in a Serbo-Bulgarian quarrel." "I dig it, buddy. You'll go far in life." (my translation)

26. A Greek colleague of mine who was born in 1950 told me that when he was growing up, people routinely referred to Western Europe as "Europe," saying, for example, "I'm going to Europe for my vacation," as if Greece were not part of that entity.

27. The image of Europe as a political and/or cultural entity that represents a desired or rejected "other" has been and is widespread in the economically peripheral nations of geographic Europe. See Susan Gal, "Bartók's Funeral: Representations of Europe in Hungarian Political Rhetoric," *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 3 (1991): 440-58 for a Hungarian example of the same types of attitudes with additional references.

28. At the time the census was conducted, Macedonia was observing the UN sanctions against Serbia while being economically blockaded by Greece. According to my sources in the Macedonian government, despite the fact that the UN had passed a resolution specifying that Macedonia would be compensated monetarily for economic losses incurred by observation of the sanctions against Serbia, which had been its major trading partner, such compensation was never paid. The trial of Greece in the European Court under the accusation that its unilateral blockade of Macedonia was illegal was rendered moot by the signing of the Interim Accord in October 1995.

29. The grammatical structures of the Balkan languages attest to centuries of multilingualism and interethnic contact at the most intimate levels. Thus, for example, the development of perfects using the auxiliary 'have' or the replacement of infinitives with subjunctive clauses shared by Balkan Slavic, Balkan Romance, Albanian, Greek, and even some Balkan Turkish dialects result from people speaking each others' languages. During the 1994 census, Debar proved to be the most intractable commune (for reasons relating more to competition between the periphery and the center than between ethnicities) and in the end was the only commune in which the census was not completed. Yet the Albanian and Macedonian dialects of Debar provide a striking example of phonological similarity that results from centuries of bilingualism, and older residents of Debar are proud of their multilingual tradition.



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