

# *Kosovo and Slovenia - Two Stories, Two Destinies, Different Challenges*

*Comparison of Demographic Trends in the Republic of Kosovo  
and the Republic of Slovenia over the Last Century*

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## *Abstract*

The paper compares the demographic development of the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Kosovo in the recent decades. Its main aim is to point out important differences and causes of different evolution of demographic transition in the two environments. In the former, it was completed at the end of the previous century, whereas in the latter it reached only its first phase. While the Republic of Slovenia finds itself today in a post-transition situation characterized by considerably changed intergenerational relations, the Republic of Kosovo is still a transition society, with its current data on population movement revealing that it will have to face unprecedented challenges (also) related to anticipated radical changes in natality patterns of its population.

**Keywords:** Republic of Kosovo, Republic of Slovenia, demographic transition, natality, mortality, infant mortality, masculinity, women.

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## *Summary*

Even if the Republic of Kosovo and the Republic of Slovenia were part of the same country from the end of WWI to the 1990s, they were separated not only by the greatest geographical distance in former Yugoslavia, but also by the tempo and orientation of their interior development, with the differences being clearly reflected in the demographic trends of the two regions. While in the Republic of Slovenia demographic transition began and ended in the last two hundred years, its evolution in the territory of today's Republic of Kosovo was rather different: it began later than in Slovenia, reached the peak of its first phase during the times of socialist Yugoslavia, and was radically marked by political developments in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All that time, it was significantly impeded largely by politically-grounded selective modernization.

The major hindrance faced by today's researchers into the demographic movements in the territory of today's Republic of Kosovo is the availability of statistical sources. While the Republic of Slovenia boasts a comprehensive statistical database kept for at least one hundred and fifty years, the Kosovar territory witnessed at least two large caesuras in data collection. The first occurred before the establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the second in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more precisely, after the census of 1981, in the time marked by the escalation of political riots. Today, one cannot ignore the remarkable endeavours of the Statistical Office of Kosovo to secure regular collection of (selected) statistical data on the population since 2002, nor it cannot not look forward to the forthcoming first census of the population in the young state. In view of the afore-mentioned troubles with data availability, the paper will focus on the most important trends in population movement and raise relevant questions which, however, will have to remain partly unanswered owing to the nature of the data available.

As a country with the highest rate of young population, high natural growth resulting from both (relatively) high natality and extremely low mortality, high nuptiality together with high extramarital natality of (largely) first-borns and high

masculinity, the Republic of Kosovo exhibits one of the most challenging population structures in today's Europe. The statistics for the past few years reveal some crucial changes pointing to an obvious shift in the further evolution of demographic transition. The country has been witnessing a considerable fall in natality, which has already approached the rate exhibited by few EU countries, such as Ireland. One can also observe the correlation between declining natality and declining infant mortality, with the two processes being interrelated both in terms of causality and time (according to the UNMIK data, the turning year was 1989/90, when Kosovo saw the escalation of violence). Furthermore, the statistics show a gradual decline in masculinity in all age groups, with one of the key elements of the changing sex ratio being the structure of the environment (the decline has been witnessed in urban environments).

The most significant factors indicating and facilitating radical changes in Kosovo's population movement are undoubtedly related to the process of modernization and to efficient diffusion and use of new knowledge and technologies. For a number of decades, the Kosovar reality was largely dominated by interethnic conflicts and rivalry, which left an indelible mark upon the life of literally each and every individual, and so today's main challenge of the Kosovar state is to create conditions for the realization of individual needs and plans. Given the fact that women and their specific needs have always proved to be an important indicator of the development and modernization of the given society regardless of the type of research environment, more attention should be paid to their position in the future. What we have in mind is not the issue of equal legal status, which is absolutely not questionable in the case of the Republic of Kosovo, but rather gender specific issues. After all, the modernization of certain society is also determined on the basis of its ability to take into consideration, acknowledge and support differences and needs, including gender-related, of its population.

It is not only the centennial coexistence within the same states that connects today's Republic of Slovenia and Republic of Kosovo. On the eve of the disintegration of former

Yugoslavia, that is in the 1980s when the former common state observed the highest political tensions, the two regions developed almost an intimate connection. One could even argue that it was the critical situation in Kosovo that spurred the Slovene nation and its political leadership to clearly articulate its disagreement with the central authorities in Belgrade for the first time, which eventually ended in Slovenia's secession from the federal state. The two regions, previously having little in common (except unilateral economic migration, trade in seasonal goods and, not to mention, confensionery), turned into one another's important reference point in the struggle with the central authorities. Within former Yugoslavia, they were separated by not only the greatest geographical distance, but also the tempo and orientation of their development, with the results of undeniable 20<sup>th</sup> century modernization shaping very different realities in the two environments, be it in the social, economic and political spheres or at the level of daily life and interpersonal relations.

The present paper will address trends in population movement that not only were very different in the two regions, but also produced completely different realities. Statistical sources will be used in order to compare them and to point out the most important differences between them, as well as to anticipate their potential future evolution. In order to account for certain differences, the investigation will shed light on the evolution of demographic transition of Kosovo - a territory where it has followed different patterns than in Slovenia (and in the major part of Europe) unforeseen by theories of transition - address the issues of natural growth of population in relation with trends in mortality and natality, and place special emphasis on stillbirth and infant mortality (as indicators of the level of modernization) and high masculinity. One of the greatest problems faced by researchers is the comparability of available sources and the data contained in them. The Republic of Slovenia boasts an extensive statistical database covering the period since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. since 1857 when the Austrian monarchy introduced regular censuses of the population, including Slovene, conducted in accordance with modern standards. In the case of Kosovo, one has to take into account at least two large

caesuras in data collection: the first occurred before the establishment of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the second during the escalation of political tension between Serbia and Kosovo. In addition, from the scientific point of view the data related to the period from the last Yugoslav census of 1981 until the present day are questionable and incomplete. The Statistical Office of the Republic of Kosovo (hereinafter: SOK) has been issuing (incomprehensive)<sup>1</sup> statistical reports since 2002 and completing the preparations for the first population census in the Republic of Kosovo. Another major problem is related to the obstruction of censuses and data gathering by individual ethnicities (Serbian and/or Albanian). For the last two decades, the problematical nature of adequate data gathering has been clearly reflected, for example, in the existence of different estimates for the size of the entire Kosovar population (different sources publish very different numbers), in the fact that certain data have not been collected or processed, etc. In the majority of cases, the paper will try to avoid such inadequacies by focusing on trends rather than specific data (e.g. natural growth of population) and by raising rather than answering questions when trying to account for the current state of affairs as reflected through statistical data and indicators (e.g. reasons for high masculinity).

(At least) within the European area, the demographic reality of the territory of today's Republic of Kosovo is highly specific, which makes it an extremely interesting research topic. Kosovo displays not only the fastest population growth (owing to natural reproduction) and the youngest population structure,

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<sup>1</sup> National statistics always unintentionally reflect the intimate interest of the given state (which makes the fact that the most developed countries, including Slovenia, are seriously considering the possibility of stopping acquiring statistical data through regular censuses even more meaningful); the population-related interests of the state are dependent on its awareness of national problems and neuralgic points. The state is thus predominantly interested in those issues that are believed to require its special attention in the given moment or in the future. For obvious reasons, it is for quite some time now that Kosovo has been paying full attention to ethnicity-related issues and only partial attention to those issues that we find interesting and of key importance for modernization-oriented development of Kosovar society.

but also high nuptiality together with (typically) high extramarital natality (of first-borns) and high masculinity. On the one hand, the demographic trends have a direct impact on two other segments in the population structure: the socio-economic and social ones; on the other, they are their “captives”. Even if the paper does not pay special attention to these questions, one should point out the most significant correlations and inter-relationships: high unemployment rate, unbalanced structure of individual sectors in national economy, low educational structure of the population. One could even embark on a case study of women in Kosovo: they form a minority group, are less schooled than men, often find themselves in a dependent position when it comes to making a living, are much more often unemployed than men, give birth at a young age and tend to marry only after the birth of (at least) their first child, their lives are largely endangered by childbirth. In comparison with other groups, it is always women who prove to be the best indicator of (un)successful modernization regardless of the type of research environment.

### *Demographic transition*

Having begun two hundred years ago, demographic transition<sup>2</sup> in the territory of today’s Republic of Slovenia ended in negative natural growth, with only the inflows of immigrants securing slow population growth. The data for the territory of today’s Republic of Kosovo, by contrast, show that demographic transition began

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<sup>2</sup> The term “demographic transition” denotes one of the dimensions typical of the transition from a traditional society to a modern one. In the field of demography, it is manifested as a shift of birth and death rates from high to low levels, with the transition period being characterized by natural growth of the population resulting from the fact that the decline in mortality usually precedes the decline in fertility. Demographic transition should therefore be considered together with two other transition processes: economic industrialization and political transformation. The major part of Europe witnessed the intensive intertwinement of these processes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which eventually reshaped European (as well as other) countries.

later on, reached the peak of its first phase – characterized by declining mortality and increasing natural growth – during the time of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and was deeply affected by the developments in the two last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The turn of the century saw the beginning of its second phase characterized by a gradual decline in natality.

Table 1: Demographic transition in Slovenia<sup>3</sup>

Period	Natality	Mortality	Natural growth/fall	Migration growth/fall	Extramarital births
1754-1779	36.3	32.8	3.5	-0.7	/
1780-1819	34.0	35.6	-1.6	-0.1	/
1818-1846	34.6	26.1	8.5	0.2	/
1846-1857	32.0	28.7	3.3	-3.7	/
1858-1869	33.4	26.5	6.9	-2.7	16.4
1870-1880	34.4	28.1	6.3	-2.1	10.5
1881-1890	35.1	27.0	8.1	-3.8	9.9
1891-1900	34.8	26.2	8.6	-5.9	8.5
1901-1910	34.0	23.5	10.5	-6.4	7.7
1911-1920	25.9	23.5	2.4	-4.2	/
1921-1930	28.7	17.7	11.0	-4.6	/
1931-1940	23.4	15.0	8.4	-4.4	9.9
1941-1947	20.3	16.1	4.2	-4.4	/
1948-1952	23.3	12.2	11.1	-2.3	11.7
1953-1961	19.7	9.7	10.0	-2.9	10.7
1961-1970	17.8	9.9	7.9	-2.5	9.2
1971-1980	16.8	10.2	6.6	2.4	10.5
1981-1990	13.8	10.4	3.5	0.5	19.3
1991-2000	9.7	9.8	-0.1	2.3	31.0
2001-2004	8.8	9.4	-0.6	1.3	41.7

The beginning of demographic transition in Slovenia can be set in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when mortality fell below 30%. Almost a hundred years later, following its increase in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Slovenia witnessed the decline in natality: at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, natality dropped below 30%. Since then, both natality and mortality were in constant decline until the end of the century when they both fell beneath 10%.

<sup>3</sup> Šircelj, Milivoja. 2006. *Rodnost v Sloveniji od 18. do 21. stoletja*. Ljubljana: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, 2006, p.46.

After a long period of positive natural growth, Slovenia entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century with negative natural growth.<sup>4</sup>

Table 2: Natural movement of the population in Kosovo<sup>5</sup>

Year	Number of people (000)	Natality	Mortality	Natural growth	Infant mortality
1934	592	37.6	20.6	17.0	161.7
1950	764	46.1	17.0	29.1	141.3
1955	842	43.6	18.2	25.4	164.0
1960	944	44.1	14.2	29.9	132.5
1965	1,075	40.5	10.9	29.6	122.6
1970	1,220	36.5	8.9	27.6	96.3
1975	1,406	35.1	7.1	28.0	80.3
1980	1,553	34.2	5.7	28.5	57.7
1985	1,760	30.6	6.7	23.9	56.1
1987	1,848	30.4	5.6	24.8	50.7
2002	1,985	18.2	2.8	15.4	11.1
2003	2,016	15.9	3.2	12.7	14.5
2004	2,041	17.2	3.1	14.1	11.8
2005	2,070	18.0	3.4	14.6	9.6
2006	2,100	16.3	3.6	12.7	12.0
2007	2,126	15.6	3.1	12.5	11.0

<sup>4</sup> In the past few years, the Republic of Slovenia witnessed a slight growth in natality: 9.1‰ in 2005, 9.4‰ in 2006, 9.8‰ in 2007, and 10.1‰ in 2008, while mortality stagnated at levels determined by the population pyramid and the general aging of population: 9.4‰ in 2005, 9.1‰ in 2006, 9.2‰ in 2007, and 9.1‰ in 2008. The cause of the increased natality should be sought in the concomitant increase in the age of mothers at their first childbirth, with the general fertility rate remaining low: 1.21 child per mother in 2001, 1.21 in 2002, 1.2 in 2003, 1.25 in 2004, 1.26 in 2005, 1.31 in 2006, and 1.38 in 2007. [http://www.stat.si/tema\\_demografsko\\_prebivalstvo.asp](http://www.stat.si/tema_demografsko_prebivalstvo.asp) (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Data for 1934: *Prilozi za izgradjivanje društvenih stavova o planiranju porodice i regulisanju uslova prekida trudnoće* (Beograd, 1968), Appendix 1, Osvrt na demografski razvitak jugoslovenskog stanovništva, Table p. 3.  
Data for 1950-1987: *Jugoslavija 1918-1988, Statistični godišnjak* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1989), Tables 3-8, Kretanje stanovništva po republikama i pokrajinama, pp. 42-43.  
Data for the 21<sup>st</sup> c.: SOK, *Analysis of the Vital Statistics for the Newest Period of Time* [http://www.ks-gov.net/ESK/eng/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=8&Itemid=8](http://www.ks-gov.net/ESK/eng/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=8&Itemid=8) (accessed June 17, 2009).



In Kosovo, mortality started decreasing already during the period of the first Yugoslav state and continued to do so throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By contrast to the situation in Slovenia, the intensive drop in mortality was concomitant with the rise in natality; this inverse trend was particularly evident during the first decades of socialist Yugoslavia. High natality and declining mortality could be observed up to the end of the century. In 2002, natality fell beneath 20‰ for the first time, while mortality reached its minimum of 2.8‰. To recapitulate: the relation between natality and mortality in 20<sup>th</sup> century Kosovo witnessed special dynamics marked by a continuous plunge in mortality, which decreased by almost ten times between 1934 and 2002, and by a slow and (above all) belated decline in natality, which was halved during the same period. In almost the same period, Slovenia underwent a different process: mortality decreased by one third, and natality by almost three times.<sup>6</sup>

While at the end of demographic transition Slovenia faces stagnation in both natality and mortality, negative natural growth, decrease in the number of young people and increase in the number of old people, and has to open questions related to the establishment of new intergenerational dialogue and the conception of migration policy, Kosovo, still in the process of demographic transition, has to confront different dilemmas, mostly related to the modernization of society. In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the indicators of natural population movement in Kosovo reveal significant changes in the following trends: decrease in natality, stagnation in mortality at extremely low rates and, consequently, stagnation in natural growth. Nevertheless, the Republic of Kosovo still exhibits the highest rates of natural growth and natality in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> From the point of view Yugoslavia, the two processes were much more balanced. Between 1931 and 1987, both rates were halved: that of mortality from 13.8‰ to 9.2‰, that of natality from 33.6‰ to 15.3‰ (*Jugoslavija 1918-1988*, 1989, 41, Table: Kretanje stanovništva).

<sup>7</sup> Within the EU, the Republic of Ireland is the only country with a higher natality rate (18.1‰). Moreover, Ireland also exhibits a similar natural growth (12‰), while its mortality is higher (6.1‰) than that of Kosovo; [http://www.stat.si/tema\\_demografsko\\_prebivalstvo.asp](http://www.stat.si/tema_demografsko_prebivalstvo.asp) (accessed June 20, 2009).

### *Transition factors*

Up to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, demographers believed that European demographic transition was most closely linked to changes in lifestyle brought about by industrialization and urbanization. Contemporary studies and research findings of both demography and historical demography, however, seriously question such presumptions since it has been scientifically established that there is no simple connection between socio-economic development and demographic changes. In addition to economic factors, increased attention has been paid to other factors such as the increasing importance of values advocating individualism and self-realization, the diffusion of the concept of nuclear family perceiving children as the net recipients of family wealth, and dissemination of knowledge and increased use of efficient contraception.<sup>8</sup> Yet the historical perspective within demographic studies raises doubts about the role of all the above-mentioned factors as they do not help us explain why the decline in mortality – the primary agent of demographic transition also in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia and its historical lands, e.g. Carniola – occurred well before the emergence of the above-mentioned factors. In order to understand the evolution of demographic transition, one has to know the reasons for the initial drop in mortality of the population in question.

In the area of today's Republic of Slovenia, mortality irreversibly dropped beneath 30‰ in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars when the Austrians reconsolidated their power. If demographic transition is understood as transition from a period when population movement largely depends on factors of constraint<sup>9</sup> to a period when it is directed by factors of

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<sup>8</sup> Šircelj, Milivoja. 2006. *Rodnost v Sloveniji od 18. do 21. stoletja*. Ljubljana: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, p.30-34.

<sup>9</sup> According to Livi Bacci, Massimo, 2005, *Prebivalstvo v zgodovini Evrope* Ljubljana: \*cf., p.9., the major factors of constraint are "climate, space, land, population patterns, disease, energy, food resources" – which means those factors that are important to the entire population, that change only slowly or do not change at all, and to which the population has to adapt in the long or short run; in other words, those factors that call for adaptation to and harmonization of population growth with them.

choice<sup>10</sup> then the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of such transition in the Slovene territory: in 1817, the area witnessed the last famine, one of the major factors of constraint influencing the population movement in the old regime.<sup>11</sup> That was also the time when the agrarian revolution<sup>12</sup> spread across the whole Slovene territory, which brought better dynamics and production to the economic sector that remained of major importance for the survival of the population even throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Slovene territory, too, no longer suffered epidemics that had strongly affected the size of population not even a century ago, with the only exception being the cholera epidemic in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century causing another rise in mortality. The key changes that affected the further evolution of transition were also related to the new status of the peasantry (i.e. at that time the majority population) resulting from the abolition of serfdom in the 1780s and a number of changes introduced by the French administration (during the time of Illyrian Provinces, 1809-1813) such as the abolition of all personal services required to render to the lord, the abolition of obligatory services unrelated to the

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<sup>10</sup> As accelerators or decelerators of the growth of population, the factors of choice mostly influence the rhythm of the growth of population. They are “those changes in individual or collective behaviour that are of vital importance for demographic development and are related to unrestrained decisions:” nuptiality, fertility caused by both natural and intentional factors, mobility and migration. Livi Bacci, Massimo. 2005. *Prebivalstvo v zgodovini Evrope*. Ljubljana: \*cf.

<sup>11</sup> Across the whole western and central Europe, the 1816-17 period was marked by the last survival crisis caused by climate changes, rise in prices and the typhus epidemic. Subsequent crisis were of local character even if their result were disastrous (e.g. the Great Famine in Ireland in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>12</sup> In the Slovene lands, the agrarian revolution – initiated already by physiocratically oriented Maria Theresa and Joseph II in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, yet with no major success – was based on more intensive use of the land available, which was now no longer left to lie fallow, on the use of new plots of land, on the definite introduction of “new” cultures (potato, maize, buckwheat, turnip), industrial plants (flax, hemp) and forage crops (clover, alfalfa), on the shift from extensive pasture cattle-breeding to intensive indoor breeding, which enabled the use of natural fertilizers, and on the introduction of new agrarian techniques.

land, which brought benefits to peasants who owned no land, the abolition of guilds, and the introduction of land divisibility. All these changes increased inner differentiation and mobility of the peasantry. In the Slovene lands, the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also marked by early industrialization and restructuring of the national economy, with the latter being among the slowest to develop in the Austrian monarchy; it was in that time that first factories were built, first steamships launched, first mines opened and first railway constructed. Furthermore, it was anything but insignificant that 1868/69 saw the completion of an efficient schooling reform introducing compulsory primary education for all children regardless of their sex or parents' social status. Interestingly, the Slovene territory boasted high literacy (more than 80% of the population) even before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area witnessed high natural growth owing to the concomitant decline in mortality and constant high natality; individual regions, in particular those lying in the margins of better developed centres, became overpopulated in relation to available survival resources, and so the Slovene population started partaking in European migration and emigration flows. Even if the former brought new inhabitants to Slovene administration, commercial and industrial centres, where the population increased at considerably higher rates than reflected in the mean growth rate, the actual growth was considerably lower than the natural growth.<sup>13</sup> The attitude of the authorities towards emigration, that is the departure of population, changed in accordance with population growth: up until 1867, the immigrants-to-be obtained a special permit once they had paid the departure fee (*Abfahrtsgeld*), after that year it was enough for men to have

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<sup>13</sup> Carniola recorded the following natural and actual growth rates: 7.83% and 3.7% respectively between 1880 and 1890, 8.34% and 1.8% respectively between 1890 and 1900, and 9.59% and 3.5% respectively between 1900 and 1910. Žnidaršič Žagar, Sabina. 2000. *Ora et labora - in molči, ženska! Pregled demografije dežele Kranjske in pridobitnosti žensk v desetletjih 1880-1910*. Ljubljana: \*cf. p. 111.

performed their military service.<sup>14</sup> In general, the Austrians kept surprisingly poor<sup>15</sup> emigration statistics, which might indicate that emigration was also used as a social corrective within societies unable to cope with their population growth. “In merely sixty years before WWI, our motherland lost around 280,000 emigrants, which accounted for 23% of the entire population,” wrote the Slovene researcher Marjan Drnovšek in 1988 (206), while in 2006 Milivoja Šircelj added that “in that period, Slovene lost more than 60% of its natural growth through emigration.” (104) Migration flows are an important agent of population development because (and whenever) they are gender selective. As for the sex of Slovene immigrants before WWI, the Austrian statistics also leave us in dark, yet “the approximate ratio of Carniolan men to Carniolan women was 2:1 (more precisely, 1.7: 1).”<sup>16</sup> In periods and environments in which marriage is a prerequisite for sexual life of men and (in particular) women, the lack of men in age groups suitable for getting married is correlated with the fertility rate. Migration plays a decisive role in the disintegration of traditional social networks that is those social ties through which traditional life practices, (also) related to reproduction, are transmitted; within such a context, women are the key group.

In Kosovo, the population increased rapidly during the period of socialist Yugoslavia. For the first time, it doubled over a time span of thirty years (from the 1930s to the 1960s) to exceed one million for the first time in history, and continued to grow rapidly in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, totalling two millions by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Within seventy years, the Kosovar

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<sup>14</sup> Kalc, Aleks. 1996. »Ladijske potniške evidence kot vir za zgodovino izseljenstva, s posebnim ozirom na izseljenske sezname tržaškega pristanišča.« In: *Dve domovini*, št. 7, str. 51-69.

<sup>15</sup> “Surprisingly poor” because the Austrian national statistics can be regarded as exemplary in comparison with other national statistics in Europe, which was argued as early as in 1899 by Ferrin Weber and can be confirmed by whoever uses various national statistics as their research source. Cf. Kalc 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Žnidaršič Žagar, Sabina. 2000. *Ora et labora – in molči, ženska! Pregled demografije dežele Kranjske in pridobitnosti žensk v desetletjih 1880-1910*. Ljubljana: \*cf., p. 53.

population thus doubled twice.<sup>17</sup> In the former century, the Slovene territory, by contrast, witnessed considerably slower population growth: in accordance with the reconstruction of the data<sup>18</sup> obtained through the census of 1931, the territory of today's Republic of Slovenia was home to 1,266,604 people,<sup>19</sup> whereas in 2008 its population totalled 2,032,362 according to the data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, which means that over the past seventy years the Slovene population increased by good 60%. The rapid increase of the Kosovar population was spurred by individual migration flows, which left an indelible mark upon the historical development of the region in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> Hypothesis accounting for the evolution and consequences of migration flows in Kosovo (as well as Albania and western parts of Macedonia populated by Albanians) are extremely contradictory. It is mostly Serbian sources that shed light on heavy migration flows in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Šaranović<sup>21</sup> focuses on the emigration of Albanians to Kosovo and western Macedonia after WWII prompted by the tyranny of Enver Hoxha, while Trifunovski<sup>22</sup> "after several years of fieldwork proved that a number of Albanian extended families

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<sup>17</sup> Estimates of the growth of certain population naturally depend on the base year; if compared over longer time spans, the growth of Kosovar population proves even more dramatic: according to the SOK analysis of June 2008, over a time span of 123 years (i.e. from 1880 to 2004) the number of Kosovar population increased by 8.5 times (from 240,000 to 2,041,000 people); SOK *Analysis of the Vital Statistics for the Newest Period of Time 7/2008*, p. 5 [http://www.ks-gov.net/ESK/eng/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=8&Itemid=8](http://www.ks-gov.net/ESK/eng/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=8&Itemid=8) (accessed June 17, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> During the existence of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Slovene territory was divided among two states. In accordance with the secret part of the Treaty of London signed by the Kingdom of Italy and the Triple Entente in 1915, Italy annexed the western part of the Slovene territory in 1918. The area was reunited with its motherland only after the end of WWII in 1945.

<sup>19</sup> Melik, Anton. 1963. *Slovenija. Geografski opis*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, p. 345 SURS, <http://www.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp> (accessed June 16, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Migration flows also played a vital role in the development of Kosovo during the preceding historical periods; cf. Cvijić 1966.

<sup>21</sup> Šaranović, Mihailo, ed. 1981. *Enver hodžina Albanija*. Beograd: Tanjug.

<sup>22</sup> Trifunovski, Jovan. 1988. *Albansko stanovništvo u Makedoniji*. Beograd: Književne Novine, p. 13-17.

in Polog (western Macedonia) are of immigrant origin”.<sup>23</sup> The arrival of largely young generations (mostly men), exhibiting high assimilation capacity,<sup>24</sup> undoubtedly spurred the rise in natality within the Albanian community and, given the age structure of the local population, contributed to the decline in mortality. The natural growth of the Kosovar population appears to be highly dependent on contemporary number ratios between different ethnicities living in the region; the fluctuating ratios between the numbers of the Albanian and non-Albanian populations support the hypothesis on incredible vitality of Albanians “whose high fertility makes them stand out in every country where they live either as a majority or minority group”.<sup>25</sup> The number ratio between different ethnicities in Kosovo has been under the constant influence of political measures and action plans by contemporary authorities the very aim of which was to change the ethnic structure in the region. Thus the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, once its assimilation attempts had failed, introduced various measures to oust the Albanians from Kosovo and western Macedonia. In the 1920s, Vase Čubrilović formulated an elaborated plan to deport them to Turkey which was willing to settle up to 400,000 people on the Anatolian Plateau in exchange for compensation. Even if the plan was not successfully completed, some estimates<sup>26</sup> claim that around 100,000 Albanians were deported from Yugoslavia. During WWII and the time of the Great Albania,<sup>27</sup> the Serbian population living in the occupied areas suffered considerable deterioration in living conditions. After the war, socialist Yugoslavia started to gradually build national federalism, with one of its aims being to avoid the

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<sup>23</sup> Zupančič, Jernej. 2008. »Albansko vprašanje v luči političnoteritorialne rekonstrukcije Balkana.« In: *Razprave in gradivo*, št. 55, str. 6-49. Ljubljana: Inštitut za narodnostna vprašanja, p. 25 <http://www2.arnes.si/~ljinv16/RIG/RIG%2055/Zupancic.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Malcolm, Noel. 2002. *Kosovo: A Short History*. London: Pan Books, p. 286.

<sup>27</sup> Established in the aftermath of the Italian occupation in 1941, the Great Albania was the first political entity whose territory approximately included all the areas expressing political aspirations to unite within a single state (Zupančič 2008).

resurrection of inherited interethnic conflicts; as far as the situation in Kosovo was concerned, major changes were brought about by the constitutional reform in 1974, giving Kosovo, at that time an autonomous province, internal autonomy and some attributes of statehood. In the aftermath of 1974 reform, Kosovo saw not only the formation of national institutions, but also the intensification of nationalist aspirations fostered by the prevailing Albanian population. Since the 1960s when more intensive industrialization was begun in the area, the demographic transition and its resulting decline in natality largely affected the non-Albanian, that is mostly Serbian population. Another factor reducing the latter was emigration: in the 1960s and 1970s, this segment of population left the area largely for economic reasons, while in the 1980s it also emigrated for political and safety reasons.<sup>28</sup> The Albanian community responded to socialist reforms in a completely different manner; it was in that period that it recorded the highest population growth resulting from better availability of survival resources, weakening of forces of constraint and positive effects of gradual, even if highly selective modernization.

As a region primarily oriented towards agrarian activities, Kosovo has been constantly confronted with the issue of overpopulation; even today, it records a relatively high population density.<sup>29</sup> The emigration of its population is therefore one of the major characteristics of the area today, with its causes, affecting all ethnic groups in the region, being both economic and political in nature. In socialist Yugoslavia, the

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<sup>28</sup> 1981 marked the beginning of open Albanian revolts. Another historical milestone was 1989 when the Serbian government abolished the autonomous status of Vojvodina and Kosovo. The escalation of armed conflicts in 1998/99 was followed by international intervention, and in 2000 Kosovo was granted its special status. At least for the Albanians, the process of separation from Serbia ended in the declaration of independence of the Republic of Kosovo in February 2008.

<sup>29</sup> With population density of 200 people per square kilometre, the Republic of Kosovo is one of the most densely populated European countries; according to the data for 2008, the Republic of Slovenia recorded the population density of around 100 people/km<sup>2</sup>. The most populated EU country is the Netherlands (484 people/km<sup>2</sup>), while the population density in Great Britain is 250 people/km<sup>2</sup> (*Slovenija v številkah* 2008, 74-75).



emigration of the Albanian population from Kosovo was mostly a result of the economic situation and lack of jobs given the population boom. Kosovo witnessed the largest discrepancy between job availability and the number of job seekers in former Yugoslavia, which spurred (mostly male) economic emigration and, in response to sharp survival conditions caused by overpopulation, preserved the traditional power of extended families.<sup>30</sup> It was such strategies of dealing with the population crisis that hindered more efficient modernization of society as the most important accelerator of demographic transition. According to largely Serbian interpretations, high fertility was misused as an instrument to fulfill the goals of the Albanian nationalist policy. Within this context, it is also significant that Kosovo was anything but keen to participate in the extensive family planning campaign taking place in Yugoslavia since the late 1960s.<sup>31</sup>

Even if characteristic of the initial stage of demographic transition, the decline in mortality itself does not automatically lead to the decline in natality as “the parents are not supposed

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<sup>30</sup> It is highly specific of the Albanian environment that it did not deal with the Malthusian crisis of overpopulation by restricting fertility, increasing the marriageable age or employing other means in order to limit population reproduction. Instead, it strengthened its survival strategies within the existing extended families and clan groups.

<sup>31</sup> The aim of the campaign was to “humanize” the reproduction of the Yugoslav population, to completely eradicate illegal abortion, to ensure married couples legal and supervised access to efficient contraception and medical abortion and to introduce the principle that it was a human right of married couples to plan how many children they would have, with the state being in charge of ensuring the services necessary. The idea for the campaign originated in Slovenia, and the whole project was launched under the ideological patronage of Vida Tomšič, an influential political personality in post-war Yugoslavia (not to mention Slovenia). Its first major success came in 1968 when Yugoslavia adopted the Resolution on Family Planning obliging the republics to introduce its provisions into their internal legislation and to develop the necessary infrastructure, while leaving them full autonomy to determine their own tempo and extension of implementation. After the constitutional reform of 1974, the articles stipulating planned reproduction as a human right were even included in constitutions of some republics, e.g. Slovenia.

to plan the number of born, but that of grown-up children".<sup>32</sup> When it comes to the decline in natality as the next phase in demographic transition, other factors, such as increased survival chances of infants and small children, play a more important role than the general decline in mortality. Infant mortality and natality are interrelated processes, evolving at intertwined levels: as a rule, increased neonatal and postneonatal infant mortality leads to earlier next pregnancy, causing the intergenetic interval to shorten, while higher number of surviving children increases the time and material resources invested in their care and education, which in turn increases their chances of survival.<sup>33</sup> In the territory of today's Republic of Slovenia, infant mortality started falling in the second half of the 19th century, dropping from 220‰ to 170‰ at the beginning of the 20th century when statistics also observed first major (and constant) drops in natality. Throughout the century, it decreased at a considerably higher pace, so that at the end of the century the Republic of Slovenia recorded one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world.<sup>34</sup> The process, however, did not evolve in one direction only: marked by economic recession, the 1970s saw a considerable growth in infant mortality (rising above 250‰) particularly in the agrarian region of Prekmurje where a large proportion of the population worked as hired labour force on farms and where both men and women had to get accustomed to seasonal labour migration<sup>35,36</sup>. The infant mortality rate was also

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<sup>32</sup> Šircelj, Milivoja. 2006. *Rodnost v Sloveniji od 18. do 21. stoletja*. Ljubljana: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, p. 96.

<sup>33</sup> Livi Bacci, Massimo. 2005. *Prebivalstvo v zgodovini Evrope*. Ljubljana: \*cf., p.183.

<sup>34</sup> In Slovenia, infant mortality started decreasing rapidly after WWI. In 1913 it was 170‰, in 1960 35.8‰, in 1985 13.1‰, in 1991 8‰, in 1999 4.5‰, in 2006 3.5‰, and in 2007 2.8‰, which makes Slovenia one of the most successful states in the world in this respect (SURS, <http://www.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp> (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Šircelj, Milivoja. 2006. *Rodnost v Sloveniji od 18. do 21. stoletja*. Ljubljana: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, p. 96-97.

<sup>36</sup> Melik, Anton. 1963. *Slovenija. Geografski opis*. Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, p. 344.

dependent on social factors tightly linked to socio-economic factors, with intensive urbanization, industrialization and professionalization of working women (mothers) playing the most important role. It was the latter that proved crucial in its initial phase; thus the following observation also applied to Slovene or, more precisely, Carniolan towns such as Ljubljana-City: "The essential reason of excessive infant mortality in cities is poor nourishment /.../ A supply of poor milk, fed through non-rubber tubes, is absolutely necessary where wetnurses are lacking; even with proper precautions the infant death-rate always increases in the summer-time when the mother works out".<sup>37</sup>

Infant mortality is tightly linked to both time and material resources "invested" in children's nursing, care and education, which has largely been a women's preoccupation in the majority of cultures. "In general, it can be presumed that until the advent of the Bacteriological Era the level of knowledge did not enable to keep infant mortality below 150‰ – with the exception of extreme social and environmental conditions".<sup>38</sup> Up until the modern age, the key factors were therefore the mothers' time availability and their breastfeeding practices; in general, the introduction and diffusion of the Enlightenment views upon maternity in Europe also brought about the (re-)introduction of regular early breastfeeding. Yet in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, breastfeeding underwent new segmentation irrespective of local cultural practices; the importance of traditional local and social practices decreased, while that of women's participation in the developing capitalist labour market increased. The statistics for the Slovene land Carniola from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century indicate that predominantly agrarian and, as regards the lifestyle, traditional environments where women earned their livings by working at home were much more infant-friendly than towns and industrial centres where women as a rule entered paid-labour markets outside the

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<sup>37</sup> Ferrin Weber, Adna. 1965. *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century. A Study in Statistics*. New York: Cornell University Press, p. 361.

<sup>38</sup> Livi Bacci, Massimo. 2005. *Prebivalstvo v zgodovini Evrope*. Ljubljana: \*cf., p. 185.

house.<sup>39</sup> In the latter, the question of how to successfully combine maternal and housekeeping duties with professional ones posed serious problems to working mothers until the stabilization of the situation in socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>40</sup> Another key factor in the infant mortality decline in Slovenia was the gradual introduction of preventive vaccination against children's infectious diseases; following the smallpox epidemic, compulsory vaccination against it was introduced in 1921, against scarlet fever in 1932, diphtheria in the 1930s, tetanus in 1951, whooping cough and child paralysis in 1957, measles in 1968, mumps and rubella in 1972 for girls and in 1991 for boys.<sup>41</sup>

In Kosovo, it is the decline in infant mortality that has proved to be an important initiator of the decline in natality. Even if unquestioned, the connection between the two trends is not entirely clear, especially when it comes to its primariness.

In Kosovo, natality started plunging continuously when infant mortality fell below 50‰. According to the UNMIK data,<sup>42</sup> the turning period was that of 1989/90 when infant mortality suddenly decreased by half from 51.2‰ in 1989 to 34.4‰ in 1990. In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it kept rocketing down to reach below 10‰ in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2005). Its decline forms one of the most dramatic processes within the context of Kosovar population movement in the last decades; if 1934 is taken as the base year of our

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<sup>39</sup> In 1896, the following mortality rates of infants aged 0-9 months were recorded in various Slovene places: Ljubljana-City 200‰, Ljubljana environs 216‰, the predominantly agrarian district of Črnomelj 125‰ (which was the lowest rate in Carniola), while the Carniolan mean infant mortality rate amounted to 169‰ (Žnidaršič Žagar 2000, 94).

<sup>40</sup> In inter-war Slovenia, it was much more common for poor working class mothers than for those from wealthier social classes to put their infants and small children in foster care or to have them breastfed; not surprisingly, high neonatal and postneonatal infant mortality correlated with foster care. (Žnidaršič Žagar 2008)

<sup>41</sup> Šircelj, Milivoja. 2006. *Rodnost v Sloveniji od 18. do 21. stoletja*. Ljubljana: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, p. 99.

<sup>42</sup> (<http://enrin.grida.no/htmls/kosovo/SoE/popullat.htm>, Diagram 3 (accessed June 20, 2009).

comparison, then infant mortality decreased by fifteen times by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, falling from 161‰ in 1934 to 11‰ in 2007. Owing to insufficient knowledge of the situation in Kosovo, it is difficult to explain why such a drastic decline was witnessed right during the period of worst political tensions. Nevertheless, two presumptions can be proposed: such a state of affairs is a result of either inadequate data collection on neonatal and postneonatal infant mortality as a consequence of unfavourable political conditions or radical changes in neonatal and postneonatal infant care, which substantially increased the infants' chances of survival. Given the fact that low infant mortality rates have also been recorded in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one is justified in opting for the second one: i.e. that at the turn of the century, Kosovo underwent radical changes in investment in newborn and infant care, which improved infants' chances of survival. The presumption can be complemented with the assumption that increased newborn care is tightly related to the concomitant natality decline; a fewer number of newborn babies means larger investments in previous babies and the latter's better chances of survival. Our presumption that reduced neonatal and postneonatal infant mortality in Kosovo (too) is directly connected with increased and more appropriate infant care is also confirmed by the SOK data<sup>43</sup> according to which the majority of dead infants (94.5%) were aged less than two months, of which a third (36%) were first-borns who were mostly (61.2%) born to young mothers aged between twenty and twenty-nine.<sup>44</sup> Naturally, it is not possible to determine the exact sequence of processes: did the decline in natality brought about by the escalation of military conflicts lead to improvements in infant care or did the decline in infant mortality lead to the decline in natality? Owing to the immediate closeness of the two trends, it would most probably

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<sup>43</sup> SOK *Analysis of the Vital Statistic, June 2008*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> It would also be interesting to observe how, within the same time span, infant mortality declined in relation to the age of mothers and what groups of mothers recorded the highest decline in infant mortality. The findings would most probably improve our understanding of what processes and/or measures caused the decline.

make sense to back the first option according to which lower natality enables better care of existing babies and, consequently, strengthens the trend in downward natality (at least) by lengthening the intergenerative intervals.

The factors that significantly increase the infant survival chances are largely classified under the factors of modernization: diffusion and availability of modern knowledge and technologies. The research conducted by Elizabeth Horman in the summer of 1999 among nine hundred women in Kosovo revealed that the women were not too keen on breastfeeding, largely owing to the lack of knowledge of the most recent scientific findings and guidelines. The findings on breastfeeding practice in Kosovo – an environment ascribing paramount importance to traditional attitudes, relations and practices – are surprising and in total contradiction with the situation in Slovenia where, as mentioned above, there was a clear connection between the traditionally-oriented environment, well-spread breastfeeding practice and the resulting lower infant vulnerability.

“Kosovo has traditionally been a culture in which breastfeeding was practiced and strongly supported. To a large extent this is still true, but exclusive breastfeeding, even in the early months, is the exception rather than the rule. Supplementary feeding with tea, sugared water and infant formula has begun in the hospital during the baby’s first 24 hours of life. Complementary feeding begins very early and frequently does not take advantage of the most nutritious foods locally available. Recently infant formula has begun to make more and more inroads. Breastfeeding practice in Kosovo does not reflect the international standard of exclusive breastfeeding for about six months and continued breastfeeding with timely, appropriate and adequate complementary foods up to 2 years of age or beyond.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> According to Horman, 11% of women never breastfeed their babies, less than 35% breastfeed them for less than six months, only 12.2% of infants are exclusively breastfed for the first four months, 25% of women do not begin breastfeeding on the first day after childbirth, 68% of infants are fed with cow's milk before the age of six months, as many as 97% of infants

Staffs in many international NGOs and some in UN agencies are also frequently unaware of or unfamiliar with their own agencies' policies and recommendations for breastfeeding practice.

Awareness and interest in the role which breast-feeding plays in pediatric, primary and public health is remarkably low. Even among otherwise well-qualified health care providers, breastfeeding may be approached in an unscientific, negative way, heavily colored by emotion. This places great obstacles in the way of implementation.

If breastfeeding is to be protected, promoted and supported as envisioned by the wide range of policy documents issued by WHO and other UN agencies, a holistic integrated approach is needed. The core child survival strategy of GOBI-FFF is one useful model which unifies several life saving strategies – growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breastfeeding, immunization, family planning, female education and food distribution. Breastfeeding alone is not the answer, but without breastfeeding – appropriately practiced – none of the other strategies works as well".<sup>46</sup>

Non-intensive breastfeeding is undoubtedly an important factor in shortening intergenetic intervals and, accompanied by the non-use of contraception, in increasing natality,<sup>47</sup> while

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are fed with black tea before the age of one year, 11% of infants are complementary fed with a mixture of biscuits and cow's milk before the age of two months and 42% before the age of six months, only 43% of infants is fed with fruits and vegetables in the age between six and eighteen months when their complementary feeding should be begun, only 39% of children is fed with meat, fish and eggs, and 10.7% of children younger than five years show signs of chronic malnutrition.

<sup>46</sup> Horman, Elizabeth. 1999. »Report on Breastfeeding Consultancy in Kosovo. September-December 1999, p.11. <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/Nut/infantkosovo.pdf>, (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> In socialist Yugoslavia, it was Kosovo that recorded very low use of contraception and the lowest rate of women familiar with at least one contraceptive means or method. According to the data gathered by the Centre for Demographic Research, in 1970 only 39% of women in Kosovo was familiar with at least one contraceptive means or method, while in Slovenia there were more than 90%. In the same period, only 15% of married women in the area used any contraceptions means at all, while in

inappropriate feeding of newborns and infants has a direct impact on the infant mortality increase. The well-spread traditional practices of infant breastfeeding and feeding in Kosovo as observed by Horman in 1999 are undoubtedly a factor that could not exert a crucial impact on the decline in infant mortality in the decade before Horman's investigation. It seems that modernization in this field was still lagging behind as the traditional practices typical of the models of wasteful fertility were still prevalent.

During socialism, modernization was undoubtedly successful in the field of health care of women and small children. The proportion of Kosovar women who gave birth in medical institutions and were given medical assistance gradually increased even if at an extremely slow rate if compared with that of the whole country. According to the data of the Federal Institute for Health Protection in Belgrade, in 1961 more than half (to be precise, 53.6%) of all Yugoslav women gave birth with medical assistance, while in Kosovo their number accounted for only 17% (less than a sixth); a decade later, the latter's proportion almost doubled to 31.3%, but it still remained considerably lower than the Yugoslav mean, which was 73.4% (*Socialni aspekti planiranja porodice u Jugoslaviji* 1974, 103, Table 2).<sup>48</sup> The reason for such a low

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Slovenia their rate surpassed 60% (*Socialni aspekti planiranja porodice u Jugoslaviji* 1974, 108, 110, Table 8, Table 10). Unfortunately, we could not find data on the contemporary use of contraception among women in Kosovo.

<sup>48</sup> In 1961 and 1971, the highest proportions of women who gave birth with medical assistance were recorded by Slovenia (98.4% and 99% respectively), Vojvodina (93.8% and 97.7% respectively) and Croatia (80.3% and 94.9% respectively). In the Slovene territory, gradual "institutionalization" of childbirth began at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; at the end of the 1930s, as many as 80% of Ljubljana newborns were born in the Ljubljana maternity ward, while in the margins of the Slovene territory women felt the need to give birth at home with or without professional assistance of certified midwives well into the 1960s. The proportion of women who gave birth in maternity wards was on the increase out of various reasons: because the number of certified midwives was in constant decline, because in-home assistance by a doctor was too expensive for the majority of women and because maternity wards were



proportion of births delivered with medical assistance in professional institutions definitely lay in the (un)availability of medical institutions and staff.<sup>49</sup> As early as in the 1970s, Kosovo was the region with the highest number of women and the lowest number of qualified staff per gynaecological institution in Yugoslavia.<sup>50</sup> Today, 93.7% of all births in Kosovo take place in a medical institution and 99.6% with medical assistance.<sup>51</sup> According to the SOK data for 2007, in the majority of Kosovar municipalities' babies were delivered in maternity wards or medical centres, while only five municipalities recorded high rates of births outside medical institutions, ranging from 8% to 30% of all births in the given municipality. Nevertheless, the majority of them were medically assisted.<sup>52</sup>

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turning into centres where the process of childbirth was much safer for both mothers and babies. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, childbirth with the best professional assistance available became a generally encouraged and accepted social standard (Žnidaršič Žagar 2008; Rožman 2004).

<sup>49</sup> The causes of such unavailability in Kosovo are a story per se. In Slovenia, the construction of infrastructure intended for women and their specific needs was one of the priorities of the women's movement since the time of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; women were organized to persistently demand first from the state to work for their weal, too. They themselves contributed to that cause through voluntary work, material contributions, etc. In Kosovo, the lack of women's movement manifested itself as one of the major characteristics of the region's comparative underdevelopment in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>50</sup> In 1971, one gynaecological ward or counselling centre in Kosovo treated more than nine thousand women in fertility period (the ratio in Slovenia was three times better); the conditions were worse only in "narrow Serbia", with the ratio amounting to eleven thousand women per institution. Needless to say, in 1971 Kosovo also exhibited unfavourable indicators of personnel's caseload: one doctor had to treat almost four thousand people (vs. three thousand in Slovenia), while one nurse had to take care of almost one thousand people (around five hundred in Slovenia). Moreover, Kosovo recorded the lowest number of specialists, i.e. gynaecologists: in 1971, there were only 19, which means that one gynaecologist treated 18,724 Kosovar women in fertility period (*Socialni aspekti planiranja porodice* 1974, 104-106, Table 3, Table 5, Table 6).

<sup>51</sup> SOK, *Statistics of Births in Kosovo, 7/2008*, Table 1.2.

<sup>52</sup> In 2007, the following municipalities recorded the highest rates of births outside medical institutions: Dragashi (25.6%), Kacaniku (37.6%), Klina

As for stillbirths, the SOK data show that in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century its rate has remained stable (below 10‰) if compared with that of live births.<sup>53</sup> Slovenia recorded lower rates: in 2000, for example, 3.7‰ of all births were stillbirths; their rates fell below 10‰ in the 1960s.<sup>54</sup> Both Kosovo and Slovenia exhibit similar interdependence: the level of stillbirths increases together with the age of mothers, with a special group being formed by the youngest mothers who also record high stillbirth rates. In both countries, the age of 40 proves to be an important age boundary: after that age, the rate of stillbirths is considerably higher than in younger groups.<sup>55</sup> What is characteristic only of Kosovo is the unusual high rate of stillbirths in the category of first-borns. In 2007, the following rates were recorded: 15.2‰ out of all first-borns, who are the largest group of newborns, 3.3‰ out of all second-borns, 3.4‰ out of all third-borns, and 20‰ out of all fourth-borns, which is the second highest rate, most probably correlated with the age of the mother.<sup>56</sup> Judging from the statistics, it seems reasonable

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(14.9%), Rahoveci (21.1%) and Melisheva (18.7%). With the mean stillbirth rate in Kosovo being 8‰ for 2007, some of them also recorded considerably higher stillbirth rates: Kacanik and Klini (9.1‰), Rahoveci (12.6‰) (SOK, *Statistics of Births in Kosovo*, 7/2008, Table 1.9).

<sup>53</sup> In 2004 and 2007, the following stillbirth rates were recorded: 5.3‰ and 8.5‰ respectively (SOK, *Analysis of the Vital Statistics for the Newest Period of Time*, 7/2008, 23; SOK, *Statistics of Births in Kosovo*, 7/2008, 19, Table 1.9).

<sup>54</sup> (<http://www.stat.si/doc/pub/rr798-2003/5/T05-02-01.htm>) (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> In 2001 when the rate of stillbirths amounted to 4.9‰ in relation to all live births in Slovenia, the following rates by age were recorded: 9.1‰ in mothers aged 15-19, 4.3‰ in 20-24, 4.7‰ in 25-29, 3.8‰ in 30-34, 7.3‰ in 35-40, and 18.2‰ in mothers aged 40+; (<http://www.stat.si/doc/pub/rr798-2003/5/T05-07-01.htm>) (accessed June 20, 2009). In order to understand the impact of mother's age on stillbirth, it is of vital importance to establish the rates of stillbirths in relation to all live births in a certain mother's age group. Such reading of statistical data reveals that in Kosovo, too, the rate of stillbirths considerably increases in proportion to the mother's age at childbirth. In 2007, the following rates were recorded: 4.2‰ in mothers aged up to 19, 5.9‰ in 20-24, 6.8‰ in 25-29, 11.6‰ in 30-34, 10.9‰ in 35-39, 24‰ in 40-44, and 32.8‰ in 45+ (SOK, *Statistics of Births in Kosovo*, 7/2007, Table 1.15 and Table 1.22).

<sup>56</sup> Given the low natality rate in Slovenia, the majority of stillbirths occur

to point out that just like in the case of infant mortality the lives of first-borns are the most endangered in comparison with other newborns; the reasons for such a situation call for an in-depth investigation taking into account many factors, including maternity education given the fact that inadequate traditional practices have been handed down from generation to generation and the impact of mother's age (more precisely, too young age and immaturity). Moreover, special attention should be paid to research on high extramarital births among first-borns as the data indicate that the majority of marriages do not take place after the consummation of sexual relationship, but only once the man has received "proof" of woman's fertility. The importance of the woman's fertility capacity for the establishment and existence of marriage can also be inferred from the data on divorce, which is frequent in younger groups of population, in groups where the marriage has been short-lived.<sup>57</sup> That it was the children who were one of the major reasons for the existence and quality of marriages was also

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among first-borns; out of all first-borns, there were 9.9‰ stillbirths, [http://www.stat.si/letopis/1992/1992\\_04.pdf](http://www.stat.si/letopis/1992/1992_04.pdf), Table 4-14 (accessed June 20, 2009). (SOK, *Statistics of Births in Kosovo, June 2007*, Table 1.22, Table 1.14.

<sup>57</sup> According to the SOK data, in recent years the divorce rate has been on the increase (for a more realistic estimate, long-term data would be needed). In 2004, it amounted to 7.9% in relation to all the marriages, and in 2006 and 2007 to 9.3%. Almost half (48.5%) of all women divorced were women aged up to 29, out of which 4.6% were younger than 20 when divorced, 45.1% younger than 25, and 50.3% younger than 30 (SOK, *Women and Men in Kosovo 4/2009*; Table: Marriages and Divorces, 2002-007, p. 24; Table: Divorces Classified by Sex and Age-Groups, 2006 and 2007, p. 25). Slovenia has been witnessing constant decline in the number of marriages, so that it ranks last among the EU member states as regards new marriages; the age of brides and grooms has been rising (in 2005, average bride's age was 28.2 years, while average groom's age was 30.6 years), also increasing is the number of divorces: in 1980, the ratio between the number of divorces and that of new marriages was 18.7%, in 1990 21.8%, in 2004 36.8%, and in 2005 45.9%. In 2005, the divorces occurred after an average of 16 years of marriage [http://www.stat.si/novica\\_prikazi.aspx?ID=363](http://www.stat.si/novica_prikazi.aspx?ID=363) (accessed June 20, 2009).

confirmed by fieldwork carried out among mothers in Kosovo.<sup>58</sup>

Other elements typical of the modernization process are poorly detectable in Kosovo: there is no current information available on manners of family planning and birth control (e.g. the use of contraception, frequency of legal abortion, etc.). Moreover, the indicators that proved crucially related to demographic transition in Slovenia, such as women's education, employment and economic independence, record very unfavourable values in Kosovo. Nevertheless, these spheres do point to decisive change in the future: the rates of women enrolled in educational programmes are on the increase, which in turn leads to better employment opportunities.<sup>59</sup>

### *Masculinity*

Towards the end, we should also point out another comparative specific of the structure of Kosovar population: women are in minority in the entire population. According to the SOK data, men have always formed the major part of the population,<sup>60</sup> which makes Kosovo a real exception among European states as there is no other country in Europe where men would be in majority.<sup>61</sup> Kosovo has been recording the

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<sup>58</sup> Rašević, Mirjana, ed. 2000. »Žena i rađanje na Kosovu i Metohiji.« In: *Stanovništvo*, št. 1-4, str. 188-194. Beograd: Centar za demografka istraživanja Instituta društvenih nauka. <http://scindeks-clanci.nb.rs/data/pdf/0038-982X/2000/0038-982X0001188B.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>59</sup> SOK, *Women and Men in Kosovo 4/2009*, Education, 27-36; Labor Market, 37-45.

<sup>60</sup> In 2002, men accounted for 50.5% of the entire population in Kosovo, in 2003 for 51%, in 2004 for 50.8%, in 2005 for 51.2%, in 2006 and 2007 for 50.5% (SOK, *Women and Man in Kosovo, 3/2009*, Table: Total population in Kosovo (in 1000's), p. 12).

<sup>61</sup> In Europe masculinity, measured per 100 women, varies between 85 (Ukraine, Estonia) and 99 (Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro), and reaches an equal ratio (100:100) only in Macedonia and Iceland. High masculinity is recorded by several non-European countries, with the highest being in the United Arab Emirates (214:100), Kuwait

comparatively highest masculinity since at least the time of socialist Yugoslavia; in 1961, for example, it amounted to as many as 1045 men per 1000 women, while in Slovenia it reached the Yugoslav minimum of 916.<sup>62</sup> When discussing the sex ratio within populations where men are in minority, one observes an interesting fact: in all such environments, male infants are prevalent among newborns, yet their rates start decreasing already at birth. Men of all age groups display higher mortality than women, the same applies to stillborn babies.<sup>63</sup> In the last fifty years, Kosovo saw a decline in masculinity, which in the past few years ranged between 1021 (in 2002 and 2007) and 1050 (in 2005). The data on the sex of newborns in Kosovo show that in 2004 masculinity amounted to 108, which accounted for almost 52% of all newborns. From the comparative point of view, this is an interesting piece of data as according to demographic statistics the constant ratio between newborn boys and girls, also used for demographic projections, is 105:100,<sup>64</sup> which means that in Kosovo there are

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(150:100), Oman (128:100), Pakistan and China (106:100), India (105:100), Iran and Iraq (103:100) (UN Report for 2004, Table: VIII.1, Total population by sex and sex ratio, by country [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPP2004/2004Highlights\\_finalrevised.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WPP2004/2004Highlights_finalrevised.pdf) (accessed June 20, 2009).

<sup>62</sup> Vogelnik, Dolfe. 1979. *Uvod v socialnoekonomsko statistiko*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Ekonomska fakulteta Borisa Kidriča, p. 98.

<sup>63</sup> According to statistical data available since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, western and central European states constantly display the prevalence of women; a similar situation also rapidly developed in the USA. The prevalence of men is usually observed in southeastern and eastern European countries. The reasons for such a state of affairs should most probably be sought not in natural but cultural specifics; fieldwork has shown that exceedingly patriarchal communities tend not to report the number of daughters as it is only sons who are worth mentioning (Wagner 1992; Todorova 1990). In Yugoslavia, the sex ratio turned in favour of women in Serbia, while it stayed the same in Kosovo and Macedonia, even if the proportion of women gradually increased. The following question remains: Why are certain cultures more “successful” when it comes to the survival of boys and why contemporary industrializing societies prove to be less “boy-friendly”? Žnidaršič Žagar 2000, 47-61)

<sup>64</sup> Vogelnik, Dolfe. 1979. *Uvod v socialnoekonomsko statistiko*. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, Ekonomska fakulteta Borisa Kidriča, p. 170.

comparatively more male births than in other European countries. The *Analysis of the Vital Statistics* also points out that the masculinity rate depends on parents' ethnic affiliation, with the non-Albanian, i.e. largely Serbian, population recording considerably lower rates,<sup>65</sup> and on the type of environment, with urban environments scoring lower and rural higher rates.

"Municipalities with the high participation of the Serb population have low values of the coefficient of the masculinity while the coefficient of the feminity is high. Mainly, at the municipalities with the participation of the Albanian population, the coefficient of the masculinity is higher than otherwise, while the municipalities in the urban areas have the medium coefficient of the masculinity and the feminity of the children. Map 6 shows that the majority of the municipalities (25) had the coefficient of the masculinity between 100 and 125 or 1000 and 1250. Municipalities with majority of Serb population (despite the reduced data) show low coefficient of the masculinity comparing them with the municipalities with Albanian population. These data need to be deeply analyzed in order to find if the reason for this is the impact of natural or any other factor".<sup>66</sup>

The last remark is undoubtedly reasonable, yet the findings of the analysis apply to all environments, not only to that of Kosovo: in general, the number of newborn boys is higher than that of newborn girls in all populations, with the exception of those that practice methods of gendercide, such as female infanticide or sex-selective abortion characteristic of today's south-east Asia. The question of why it is the Albanian population that displays a comparatively high rate of masculinity is indeed very interesting for researchers, on the condition, of course, that one renounces the presumption that higher rates of men are a product of "natural" specifics of the Albanian population; the presumption of "natural" specifics is

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<sup>65</sup> It would be interesting to compare the masculinity rates by ethnicity over a longer time span as one could presume that masculinity started increasing after the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia, concomitantly with the gradual rise in the Albanian population in Kosovo.

<sup>66</sup> SOK, *Analysis of the Vital Statistics* 7/2008, 24.

even more questionable if one takes into account the fact that Kosovo has always been an exceedingly transitional territory and a meeting point of several ethnicities and that Albanian men have always demonstrated high assimilation capacity. The reasons for unusually high rates of masculinity should therefore be sought among cultural specifics, which is exactly what makes this issue sensitive and calls for the compilation of different currently unavailable data. The data, for example, related to the sex of stillborns are unreliable and inadequate, be it from the point of view of selection or other determinants; what would also be good to know for the purpose of this research is the ethnic affiliation of mothers. Both the analysis of births in Kosovo<sup>67</sup> and the introductory table “Vital occurrences in Kosovo by years” (7) do not show data on the number of stillbirths even if the latter envisages it; according to Table 1.21, displaying stillborns by sex, the total number of stillborn boys and girls amounted to 160 and 120 respectively (27), while according to Table 1.23, showing only stillborns by month and sex, the total number of stillborn girls and boys amounted to 160 and 120 respectively (29). By comparing different analyses, one can reach the conclusion that Table 1.23 shows incorrect data and that Kosovo (too) displays higher rates of male than female stillbirths. As for the process of “balancing” different sex ratios influenced not only by higher masculinity in the group of newborns, but also – as it is the case in Slovenia (and other countries) – higher male mortality in all age groups, Kosovo reveals an idiosyncratic situation, which might be related to data inadequacy: according to the data on infant mortality, female infant mortality was higher up to 2005 when the trend reversed.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, the author of the analysis proposes the following hypothesis that also applies to other environments and remains unaccounted for: “In years, infant mortality of children less than one year old indicates that boy’s immunity is lower and not stable compared to the girls” (p. 20) or “It is said that the female babies are immune during the first days or

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<sup>67</sup> SOK, *Statistics of Births in Kosovo*, 7/2008.

<sup>68</sup> SOK, *Women and Men in Kosovo*, 4/2009, 19.

months of the life; data for 2004 show that from 415 dead babies, 43.9% were males and 56.1% females".<sup>69</sup> The data quoted by the author is incorrect if compared with another source; while according to the SOK data<sup>70</sup> in 2004 the numbers of dead female and male babies amounted to 233 (56%) and 182 (44%) respectively. In any case, the above-mentioned quotation shows that its author supports the general belief that newborn girls have better "natural" immunity than newborn boys, which can have tragic consequences for girls. In-depth research into causes of both stillbirth and infant mortality would be therefore more than welcome.

What one can infer from the comparison between male and female mortality in different age groups is that the most dangerous periods for women are related with birth, first with their own, then with their children's,<sup>71</sup> while the male rhythm of dying is reversed, with the first most dangerous period being youth and young adulthood, and the second the one around the age of fifty. The data available definitely suggest that in Kosovo maternal mortality is still a problem and an important element in determining the sex ratio.<sup>72</sup> As for the sex ratio between different age groups, it is not possible to get a clear picture as all statistical statements only reveal the distribution of a certain sex by age; according to such data,<sup>73</sup> Diagram: Population by age-groups (%), 14), the largest group of women is aged between 25 and 54, which is also the case for men, yet to a

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<sup>69</sup> SOK, *Analysis of the Vital Statistics*, 7/2008, 32.

<sup>70</sup> *Women and Men in Kosovo*, 4/2009, 19.

<sup>71</sup> In Kosovo, the female mortality rate is the highest at birth, then it falls drastically and starts increasing at the age of 20 when the majority of women enter the maternity period. After the age of 45 when the maternity period is over, it witnesses another drop followed by a constant growth (SOK, *Analysis of the Vital Statistics*, 7/2008; Diagram 29, 32).

<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, no data were available on maternal mortality in Kosovo; in Slovenia, the death of women caused by complications during pregnancy, labour or postnatal period is extremely rare: from 1985 to 2007, a maximum of 3 such instances were recorded annually; <http://www.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp> (accessed June 20, 2009) Table: Deaths by cause of death and sex.

<sup>73</sup> SOK, *Women and Men in Kosovo*, 4/2009.



slightly lower extent as there are slightly more men than women in younger age groups. If one tries to estimate proportions of women and men within individual age groups by taking into account the population pyramid<sup>74</sup>, it notices that the number of women is lower than that of men in all age groups below the age 50 or, more precisely, 55.

### *Conclusion*

There is no doubt that it is a real challenge to research the Kosovar population and its movement. The region displays a unique population structure incomparable with any situation in the European area. In Kosovo, demographic transition, which has been completed, for example, in Slovenia, came to a halt, which gave rise to an extremely peculiar situation. While its evolution and completion in Slovenia were directed by the modernization of society, which encompassed the transformation of not only economy and society but also daily life, its evolution and halt in Kosovo were influenced by political developments marked and spurred largely by interethnic conflicts as the key element in the process of national emancipation of the Albanian community in Kosovo. What the majority of European, including Slovene, political arena witnessed mostly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century evolved in Kosovo in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in completely different circumstances. The main outcome of this process, which was one of the main neuralgic points in socialist Yugoslavia, was the stagnation of modernization, which was in Kosovo stigmatized as intervention forced from the outside and as a threat to national interests of the Albanian community. The Albanian insistence on their allegedly traditional (and ethnically distinctive) values and lifestyle impeded successful transfer and diffusion of new scientific findings and technologies that would radically intervene in the lives of individuals and change their expectations. It is difficult to

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.censusbureau.biz/ipc/www/idb/country.php>, accessed June 20, 2009, Population pyramids.

say to what extent natality was used as one of the instruments to attain comparative ethnic and, consequently, general domination of the Albanians in Kosovo; what it can be said for sure is that the argument of numerical superiority of the Albanian community in Kosovo was often used (and misused). It is largely women who paid the obvious price as they were renounced the possibility of organizing their lives in a more independent and safer way. Therefore it is the improvement of women's living conditions that is of vital importance for the future of Kosovo as an independent state. What is problematical is not births per se, but the fact that the individual's - in particular woman's - possibility of free choice is limited. It is in this sphere, in our opinion, that the modernization of the Kosovar and Albanian society was (most probably) intentionally impeded in the former century.

Today, Kosovo is a demographically, economically and socially specific area on the verge of great transformation. Given its demographic trends, it has reached the point when demographic transition will (most probably) begin evolving at an accelerated pace, eventually transforming the whole society. According to our study, the process will be accelerated by the trends clearly observed in the past few years: the decline in natality, the decline in certain mortality rates, in particular those related to stillbirth and to neonatal and postneonatal mortality, the "balancing" of the sex ratio, especially as a result of the declines in maternal mortality and male mortality in younger age groups, and the gradual transformation of the age structure of the population. It is these demographic trends that will be important for Kosovo's further development and that bring the country closer to its European counterparts already today. Their evolution will call for social and economic changes: the rise in the general education of the population, particularly women, the amendment, adoption and opening of legislation and support services, in particular in the fields of health care and welfare, with the aim of increasing the living standard of the population, particularly women, the development of economic sectors promising new jobs to surplus labour force, especially women, and the development of a more harmonized economic structure. Kosovo is a young country not owing to the proximity of its

establishment but largely owing to the age of its population, which is undoubtedly its main development potential and (perhaps even more importantly) challenge.

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