

## **ANNEX: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF YUGOSLAVIA IN THE LATE 1980s**

The following information about population characteristics is based upon the situation in Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1990. The information presented here is the basic reference for the analysis in this chapter.

**Name:** The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

**Nature of government:** Modified communist system in a federal state with extensive powers held by the constituent republics; the federal parliament (the Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) consisted of two chambers: the Federal Chamber and the Chamber of Republics and Provinces. The Federal Chamber had most of the lawmaking functions; the Chamber of Republics and Provinces provided an additional check by the republics on the federal government.

**Organization of the state:** The state comprised six “socialist republics”: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. In addition, Serbia contained two “autonomous provinces” (with rights similar to those of republics): Kosovo and Vojvodina.

**Date of constitution:** 1974.

**Population:** 22,418,331 (1981 census).

**Major ethnic groups:** Official “nations”: Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Slovenes, Macedonians, Montenegrins; official “nationalities”: Albanians, Hungarians (and nine others, ranging from 10,000–150,000: Roma, Turks, Slovaks, Romanians, Bulgarians, Ruthenians, Czechs, Italians, and Ukrainians); as well as numerous smaller groups.

**Languages:** Official languages: Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, Slovene (all belonging to the South Slavic language group). Serbo-Croatian was the dominant language.

**Religions:** Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Islam.

**Population statistics.** The principal ethnic groups were South Slavic: Serb, Croat, Montenegrin, Slovene, Macedonian, and (Slavic) Muslim. Of the non-Slavic ethnic groups, the Albanians (who formed a majority in the Kosovo province) and the Hungarians (concentrated in the Vojvodina province) were the largest. Yugoslavia was divided into administrative units based on ethnicity, with each republic named after its eponymous ethnic group. The exception was Bosnia-Herzegovina (a nonethnic name), which had a population comprised of Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. In Yugoslavia the term “Muslim,” especially when used in official discourse, had ethnic rather than religious connotations. The majority of Yugoslavia’s Muslims resided in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the adjoining part of central-western Serbia (Sanjak). The two autonomous provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina) had non-ethnically-derived names (based on historical provinces).

Table 3.16

Population of Yugoslavia by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Population (in thousands)
Serbs	8,141
Croats	4,428
Muslims	2,000
Albanians	1,731
Slovenes	1,754
Macedonians	1,342
Montenegrins	579
“Yugoslavs”	1,209
Hungarians	427
Others	818
Total	22,428

SOURCE: 1981 census.

Other than possible undercounting of Albanians, and the tendency for any republic or province to have incentives in place for people to claim its principal ethnicity, there appear not to have been any major problems with the accuracy of the census. The self-identification of “Yugoslav” was most commonly selected by offspring of interethnic marriages (1.2 million people declared this to be their nationality in the 1981 census—only just over 200,000 did so a decade earlier—out of a total population of 22.4 million).<sup>35</sup>

Population growth rates varied greatly, depending on the ethnic group. The high fertility rate among the Albanians was responsible for a 23 percent rate of population increase in Kosovo (the poorest region) between 1981 and 1990. Conversely, the wealthiest and developed republics (Slovenia and Croatia) showed the country’s lowest rate of population increase.

**Table 3.17**  
**Ethnic Groups by Republic and Province**

Republic or Province	Percent of Population by Ethnicity								
	Monte-negrin	Croat	Mace-donian	Muslim	Slovene	Serb	Alban-ian	Yugo-slav	Other
Yugoslavia	2.58	19.75	5.97	8.92	7.82	36.30	7.72	5.44	5.51
Bosnia-Herz.	0.34	18.38	0.05	39.52	0.07	32.02	0.11	7.91	1.60
Montenegro	68.54	1.18	0.15	13.36	0.10	3.32	6.46	5.35	1.54
Croatia	0.21	75.08	0.12	0.52	0.55	11.55	0.13	8.24	3.61
Macedonia	0.21	0.17	67.01	2.07	0.03	2.33	19.76	0.75	7.67
Slovenia	0.17	2.94	0.17	0.71	90.52	2.23	0.10	1.39	1.77
Serbia Proper	1.35	0.55	0.51	2.66	0.14	85.44	1.27	4.78	3.29
Kosovo	1.71	0.55	0.07	3.70	0.02	13.22	77.42	0.17	3.14
Vojvodina	2.13	5.37	0.93	0.24	0.17	54.42	0.19	8.22	28.33

SOURCE: 1981 census.

<sup>35</sup>A census was held in the former Yugoslavia in early 1991. Although the data are available, they are not used here, since the tense interethnic situation at the time seems to have biased the results. In ethnically divided societies, a census takes on a highly political role. To paraphrase Horowitz, a census in an ethnically divided society is an election and an election is a census (Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985). In any event, the aim of this case study is to look at the situation as it existed in January 1990. At that time, only the 1981 census figures were available.

Ethnicity and religion were closely related in Yugoslavia. Slovenes, Croats, and Hungarians have been associated traditionally with Roman Catholicism. The Serbian Orthodox Church has been associated traditionally with Serbs and Montenegrins. Macedonians also have been associated with Orthodoxy (before the establishment of the independent Macedonian Orthodox Church in the 1960s, the religious affiliation of the Macedonians was with the Serbian Orthodox church). Islam was associated primarily with Albanians and Slavic Muslims inhabiting the central part of the country (Bosnia-Herzegovina, southwestern Serbia, and northwestern Macedonia).

Language and ethnicity were also closely related. The language spoken by Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, and Muslims was essentially the same South Slavic language: Serbo-Croatian (with only dialectic differences between them, primarily pronunciation stress and some vocabulary). The Croats used the Latin alphabet, whereas the others used the Cyrillic alphabet (the Muslims used both, depending on

**Table 3.18**  
**Population Distribution of Yugoslavia, 1981–1990 (est.)**

Republics	Land Area (km <sup>2</sup> × 1000)	Population 1981 (1,000s)	Density (persons per km <sup>2</sup> )	Population 1990 (1,000s) (estimated)	Density (persons per km <sup>2</sup> )	Population Change, 1981–1990 (percent)
Serbia	88.4	9,279	104	9,815	111	5.46
Serbia Proper	56.0	5,666	101	5,717	102	0.89
Vojvodina	21.5	2,028	94	2,042	95	0.69
Kosovo	10.9	1,585	147	2,056	189	22.91
Croatia	56.5	4,578	82	4,726	84	3.13
Slovenia	20.3	1,884	90	1,924	95	2.08
Bosnia-Herz.	51.5	4,116	83	4,795	93	14.16
Macedonia	25.7	1,914	73	2,193	85	12.70
Montenegro	13.8	583	43	664	48	12.20
Total	255.8	22,354	87	24,117	94	7.31

SOURCES: Statistical Yearbook of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; Taken from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) Yugoslavia Country Profile, August 27, 1991.

their geographical residence). Slovene and Macedonian were distinct South Slavic languages related to Serbo-Croatian. Slovenes used the Latin alphabet, Macedonians used the Cyrillic alphabet. Albanians and Hungarians used their own, non-Slavic languages.

Serbia was the most populous of the Yugoslav republics. Including the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, Serbia's population was roughly 10 million—almost twice as large as the second most populous republic, Bosnia-Herzegovina—and 40 percent of Yugoslavia's total population. In addition, Montenegrins were seen as close "ethnic cousins" of the Serbs.

Slovenia was the most ethnically homogenous republic, and Bosnia-Herzegovina was the most diverse (with no one ethnic group having a majority). Besides forming the majority of population of Serbia proper and Vojvodina, Serbs made up significant minorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Croatia. In addition, the Serbs living outside of Serbia tended to be concentrated geographically, placing them in a position of local ethnic majority group.