

## Executive Summary

*Kosovo Under Autonomy (1974-1990)*, as a component of the larger Scholars' Initiative, endeavors to provide new analyses of several controversies surrounding the relationships between ethnic-Albanians and ethnic-Serbs living in Kosovo between 1974-1990: the causes of increasing demographic disparity, the extent of Albanian aspirations for autonomy within or separation from Yugoslavia, the causes of Serbian migration from Kosovo, the degree of influence of nationalist intellectuals on Serbian nationalism and its effect interethnic politics.

Of the four controversies addressed in this report, two are interrelated as they deal with the increase in the proportion of Albanians to Serbs between 1961 and 1981. The report first examines the claim that the increase in the proportion of Albanians in Kosovo and the decrease in the proportion of Serbs is due to intentionally rapid reproduction by Albanians designed to overwhelm ethnic Serbs living in Kosovo. The report concludes that this was not the case. First, the report calls into question the methods and reliability of the censuses taken between 1961 and 1981, and argues that one cannot simply take those statistics at face-value. While there is an increase in the proportion of ethnic-Albanians in Kosovo at this time, the cause is a natural byproduct of fertility in rural areas, rather than an intentional reproductive program. The report cites a number of external factors which account for this disparity, most notably the social norms of rural populations which generally sustain higher birthrates regardless of ethnicity. Moreover, in Kosovo, ethnic-Albanians constituted a significantly higher proportion of the rural population than ethnic-Serbs. Meanwhile, the birthrate of ethnic-Albanians in urban centers matched that of the rest of Yugoslavia. At the same time, however, there was an absolute decrease in the number of ethnic Serbs caused by a significant and sustained exodus from Kosovo that began in the 1970s.

The cause of this emigration of Kosov's Serbian population is another controversial topic that the report examines. Traditionally, the cause of the flight of the Serbs from Kosovo has been attributed to the destruction of Serbian property as well as physical and sexual violence against Serbian populations by ethnic-Albanians. The report concludes that such concerns for safety, or the perception of insecurity, were

indeed an influential part of the Serbian emigration. However, the report also calls into question the potential for retrospection on the part of the ethnic-Serbs who emigrated before 1975 in their response to the survey from which this research is drawn. The report makes clear that while personal security was a significant “pull factor” for ethnic-Serbs to leave Kosovo, this is not the only reason. The report suggests that Kosovo’s struggling economy and high unemployment constituted a second major incentive for the exodus. Ultimately, the report concludes that there were multiple reasons for the Serbian emigration from Kosovo, among which were economic concerns, although one cannot deny the influence that fear for personal safety had in the decision of many Serbs to leave Kosovo.

Two other controversies addressed in this report are political in nature. The first deals with the motivation behind the Albanian demonstrations and demands for expanded rights inside Yugoslavia, and the second addresses the nature of the mobilization of Serbian nationalism in response to these demonstrations. The report notes that after 1974, Belgrade interpreted Albanian agitation for greater rights as part of a design to secede from Yugoslavia. The report argues, however, that the real objective of these demonstrations was to achieve republican status for Kosovo. Indeed, it was not until after the 1981 demonstrations that Albanian nationalism began to motivate Kosovo’s Albanian population.

Finally, the other political controversy that the report examines is the degree to which officials of the Milosevic regime and/or Serbian nationalist led to the mobilization of Serbian nationalism within Kosovo. The report concludes that the mobilization of Serbian nationalism in Kosovo was a home-grown, grass roots efforts, and that it was not until local Serbian nationalist movements began to gain momentum that nationalist intellectuals (and eventually Milosevic) championed their cause. While the report gives every indication that nationalist intellectuals and the Milosevic regime were involved, it concludes that their involvement came after the movement was in place and did not have a hand in its inception.

In brief, the two decades between 1961 and 1981 were clearly a dynamic period in the history of Kosovo, as a significant proportion of the ethnic-Serb population left the region for economic and security reasons, while the Albanian majority was intensifying

its demands for republican status for Kosovo. The response at the local level was grass-roots efforts by ethnic-Serbs to ensure their security, and this eventually attracted the attention and support of the Serbian elites. The result was greater nationalist agitation in both camps as the Albanians eventually abandoned their republican platform in favor of secession, and the Serbian population in Kosovo abandoned its grass-roots efforts at protecting its own, and turned to nationalist elites in Serbia for support and protection.