

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION OF THE MUNICIPALITIES IN THE POLOG REGION**

**Mireme Rushiti<sup>1</sup>, Fauzi Skenderi<sup>1\*</sup>, Resul Hamiti<sup>1\*</sup>**

<sup>1\*</sup> *Department of Geography, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, University of Tetova, RNM*

*\*Corresponding author e-mail: mireme.rushiti@unite.edu.mk*

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### **Abstract**

In this paper we will deal with the administrative regulation of the Polog Planning Region and municipality's part of this region, focusing on their characteristics, including settlements and their number in the municipalities.

The administrative regulation of the Polog Region and the state has changed over the years, where according to the administrative division of the year 1991 in the Polog Region, there were two municipalities. In 1996 the administrative division was changed, and there were a total of 19 municipalities formed, 10 of which belonged to Lower Polog and to 9 Upper Polog.

The administrative regulation of the region changed again in 2004, where the number of the municipalities in the Polog Region is 9, of which 6 belong to Lower Polog and 3 Upper Polog. In this planning region, there are 2 urban municipalities: Tetovo and Gostivar, while the remaining 7 are rural municipalities: Jegunovce, Tearce, Zhelino, Bervenica, Bogovinje, Vrapçiste, and Mavrovo and Rostushe.

**Keywords:** *administrative regulation, region, municipality, settlement, population.*

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### **1. Introduction**

The Polog Region is located on the southeast side of the Republic of North Macedonia and it is one of the eight statistical regions, with the majority of the Albanian settlements. This region constitutes a geographical unit that, during the historical processes, has become the arena of confrontation between different peoples and combining their material and spiritual cultures, creating a complex demographic, socio-cultural and economic ensemble.

Nature, society, and economy, like everywhere, in all Polog municipalities are closely related, but the exact definition of this connection is a rather complex issue for both natural sciences and social sciences. The subject of the paper that we have defined relates to the "Administrative Regulation of the municipalities in the Polog Region". The main aim is to address in particular the characteristics of the municipalities, which give a clear picture of the region.

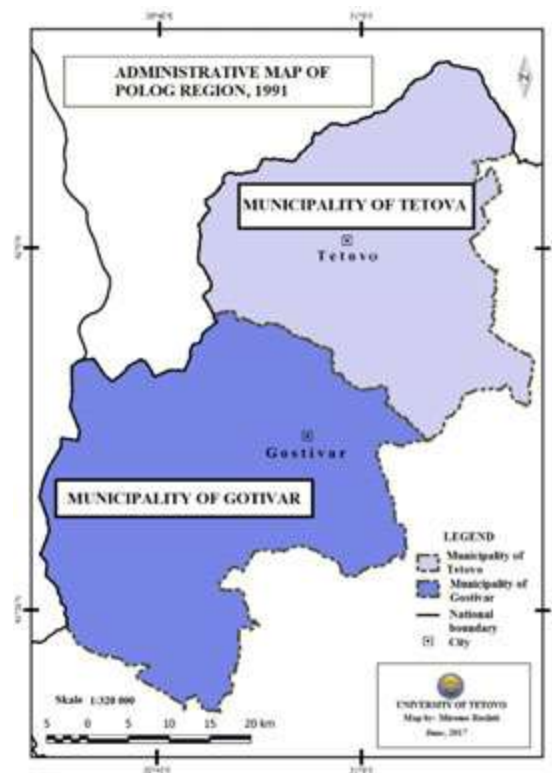
### **2. Administrative and territorial regulation after the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia**

Following the independence of the Republic of North Macedonia, the administrative and territorial organization remained the same (as 1977) until the year of 1996, where the

central unit of local government was the municipality, but most of the competencies were taken over by the central government [2]. Since 1991, under the conditions of political pluralism, efforts have been made to decentralize powers, democratize and enhance the competencies of the local government.

**Table 1.** Municipalities in the Polog Region (1991)

No.	Municipalities	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Number of inhabitants	Density inhabitants / km <sup>2</sup>	Number of settlements
1.	Municipality of Tetovo	1.080.70	172.171	159,3	89
2.	Municipality of Gostivar	1.352.00	109.881	81,2	93
	Polog Region	2.432.70	282.052	115,9	182



**Figure 1.** Administrative map of Polog region (1991)

The first administrative map had 34 municipalities, the centers of which were the cities. In the Polog region, there were two big municipalities: Tetovo (Lower Polog), with 89 rural settlements and the Tetovo as a center and the Municipality of Gostivar (Upper Polog and Mavrovo Area) with 93 rural settlements and the center Gostivar [1].

From the surface, the municipality of Gostivar was larger, and by the number of inhabitants and the population density, the municipality of Tetovo was more populated and

densely populated. After the establishment of the pluralistic political system, it was worked to create a more democratic and more efficient central and local government.

### 3. Administrative-territorial regulation of 1996

With the Law on the Administrative-Territorial Division of 1996, NMK was organized in 123 municipalities. This first map of local self-government was listed by R. of North Macedonia in the upper parts of countries with large municipalities.

In the Polog region, 19 municipalities were formed, more than in each of the eight statistical regions of the state. Early municipalities changed, Tetovo was divided into ten municipalities, while Gostivar, in nine municipalities. Municipalities differ by type (urban and rural), surface, number of settlements and population, population density, national structure, level of economic development, etc.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of the municipalities in Lower Polog (1996)

No.	Municipalities	Surface in km <sup>2</sup>	No. of inhabitants		No. of settlements
			1994	2002	
1.	Bogovinje	45.50	13 001	14 555	6
2.	Bervenica	162.80	14 797	15 855	10
3.	Vratnica	96.10	3 220	3 563	6
4.	Zhelino (Krojmir)	200.00	21 760	24 390	18
5.	Jegunovce	75.90	7 013	7 227	11
6.	Kamenjane	65.80	12 136	14 442	8
7.	Tearce	120.90	20 797	22 457	11
8.	Tetovo	69.00	65 318	70 841	8
9.	Džepčište	28.10	7 286	7 919	5
10.	Shipkovitsa	144.60	6 797	7 820	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1080.70</b>	<b>172 171</b>	<b>189 069</b>	<b>89</b>

*Source:* Ministry of self-government

**Table 3.** Characteristics of the municipalities in Upper Polog (1996)

No	Municipalities	Surface km <sup>2</sup>	No. of inhabitants		Number of settlements
			1994	2002	
1.	Negotino-Polog	98	14 992	16 813	8
2.	Vrapçisht	59	8 416	8 586	7
3.	Çegrane	67	11 764	12 310	4
4.	Gostivar	50	45 740	49 545	6
5.	Vrutok	89	5 460	5 705	8
6.	Mavrovo	445	1 349	984	25
7.	Lower Banjica	55	7 791	9 467	7
8.	Sermnovo	111	3 952	3 709	7
9.	Rostushe	332	10 366	9 451	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>109 881</b>	<b>116 570</b>	<b>93</b>

*Source:* Ministry of self-government

In terms of surface area, the municipalities had big differences: the largest was Mavrovo Anovi (445 km<sup>2</sup>) and Zhelino (Krojmir) (200 km<sup>2</sup>), while the smaller ones were the municipality of Xhepçisht (28.1 km<sup>2</sup>), Tetovo (68 km<sup>2</sup>) and Gostivar (50 km<sup>2</sup>).

The two largest municipalities had more settlements: The Mavrovo Anovi 25 settlements and Zhelino (Krojmir) 18 settlements <sup>[4]</sup>. There were more residents in the municipality of Tetovo (70,841), while less in Mavrovo (984). Four municipalities with a Macedonian population were formed in Polog.

The 1996 administrative division proved to be ineffective as it was compiled under the influence of political parties for electoral benefit and disregarded the scientific, practical, economic, functional criteria of geographic areas and natural and human resources. A large number of municipalities (123), the full centralization of power at the central level and the lack of administrative infrastructure in rural municipalities were an obstacle to the realization of citizens' rights as well as the choice of administrative and socio-economic problems of the Albanian population.

#### **4. Territorial-administrative reorganization of 2004**

Since the administrative division of 1996, with more municipalities and extreme centralization, resulted to be unpractical and irrational, the constitutional changes that emerged from the Ohrid Framework Agreement were a condition for the new administrative division and decentralization of local government. And so, in December 2004, the Macedonian Parliament adopted a law amending the administrative-territorial organization and powers, according to which the number of municipalities was reduced to 84 (nine in the Polog region).

The number of municipalities in the Lower Polog area was reduced to six, while in the Upper, in three. This organization aimed to preserve the spatial mobility of population and tradition, the distribution of assets, material goods, human resources, etc [1].

**Table 4.** The municipalities in the Polog region (2004)

No.	Municipalities	Surface in km <sup>2</sup>	Number of inhabitants			Settlements	Density inhabitants / km <sup>2</sup> -2017
			1994	2002	2017		
1.	Jegunovce	176.93	10 362	10 790	10 412	17	58.84
2.	Tearce	136.54	21 405	22 454	22 940	13	168.00
3.	Tetovo	261.89	80 275	86 580	91 988	20	351.24
4.	Zhelino (Krojmir)	201.04	22 051	24 390	28 114	18	139.84
5.	Bogovinje	141.65	25 618	28 997	30 964	14	218.59
6.	Bervenica	164.30	15 077	15 855	16 600	10	101.03
7.	Vrapçishte	157.98	24 465	25 399	27 550	15	174.39
8.	Gostivar	513.39	75 080	81 042	83 738	35	163.10
9.	Mavrova-Rostusha	663.19	10 418	8 618	8 893	42	13.40
	<b>Polog</b>	<b>2 416.94</b>	<b>284 751</b>	<b>304 125</b>	<b>321 199</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>132.89</b>

*Source:* Ministry of self-government

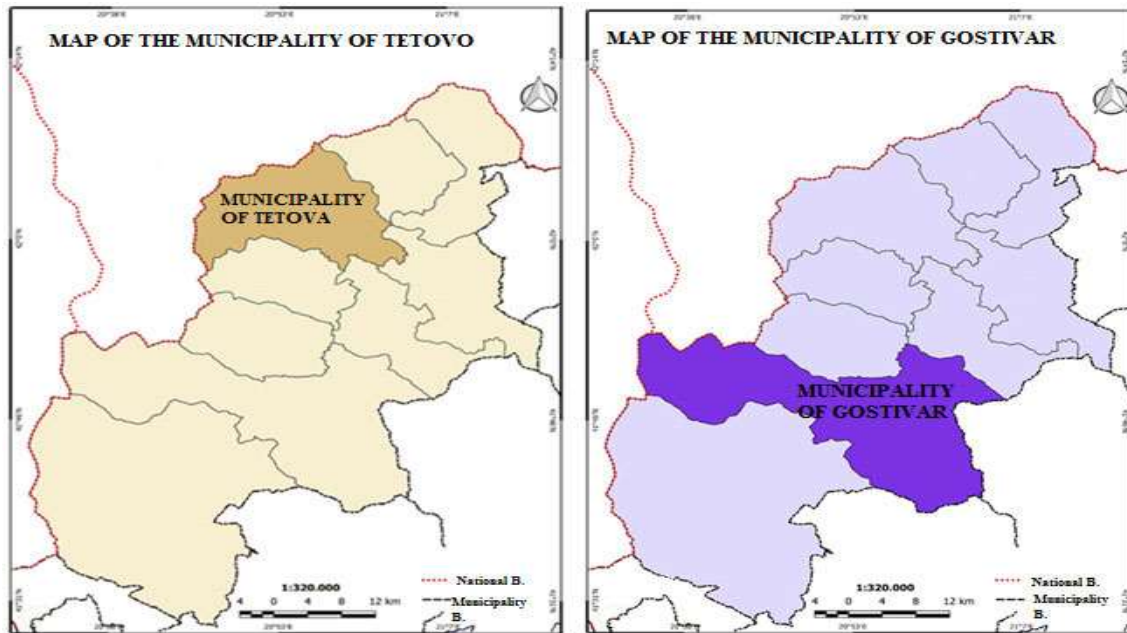
In 2004, all municipalities experienced changes in surface, population, settlements, national structure, etc. Tetovo's urban municipality joined the two rural municipalities of Xhepçisht and Shipkovic; the municipality of Bogovinje and that of Kamjane; while Vratnica, which was also run as a Macedonian-majority municipality, joined the Jegunovce municipality. Municipality of Gostivar was joined by the rural municipalities of Çegrane, Lower Banjica, and Sermova; the municipality of Vrapciste, that of Negotino; while Mavrovo Anovi municipality, that of Rostusha (majority Macedonian), municipality of higher altitude and larger area. Regarding the new Polog municipality, they differed from the surface, the number of settlements and population, the national structure, the level of economic development. The two Tetovo and Gostivar municipalities are mixed (urban-rural), while the other 7 rural ones. Municipalities also have large differences: the largest are the municipalities: Mavrovo-Rostusha (655 km<sup>2</sup>), Gostivar (408.60 km<sup>2</sup>) and Tetovo (264.80 km<sup>2</sup>), while the smaller ones are the municipality of Tearce (136 km<sup>2</sup>) and Bogovinje (141 km<sup>2</sup>). The two largest municipalities have more settlements: 41- Mavrovo-Rostusha and 35- Gostivar. According to the number of the population, there are more inhabitants of the municipality of Tetovo (86,580), with fewer inhabitants having Mavrovo and Rostusha (8,618) [5].



**Figure 2.** Administrative map of Polog region (2004)

## 5. Administrative Regulation of 2015

In the Republic of North Macedonia, in 2015 we have reduced the number of municipalities from 84 municipalities in 80 municipalities, while in Polog there is the same administrative division. Only in the municipality of Kicevo are included 4 rural municipalities such as: Vraneshtica, Drugovo, Oslomej, and Zajas.



**Figure 3.** Municipality of Tetovo and Gostivar as part of Polog Region

## 6. Municipality of Tetovo

The municipality of Tetovo is a relatively small urban municipality and is located in the Northwestern part of the Republic of North Macedonia at an altitude of 824 m and has an area of 264.8 km<sup>2</sup>. The municipality of Tetovo in the north, northwest, and west is bordered by the municipality of Tearce and the areas belonging to the municipalities of Dragash and Prizren in Kosovo, northeast, east and southeast with the municipalities of Tearce, Jegunovce, and Zhelino (Krojmiri), north with the municipalities of Bogovinje and Bervenica. The central settlement, Tetovo, is the main hub of the E-852 motorway, as well as the Skopje-Tetovo-Mavrovo-Debar-Struga-Qafë e Thanës road. Skopje is only 40 km away [3].

The municipality has settlements, of which 10 are flat, 6 hilly and 4 mountainous settlements. In it live 91 988 inhabitants (2017) with a density of 351 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>. The total number of household is 20,094, or in every household there is an average of 4.3 members, while the total number of dwellings is 22,592, or in each dwelling average of 3.8 people.

The new territorial division of this municipality was joined by the former municipalities of Shipkovicica with six settlements and Xhepçisht Municipality, also with six settlements.

**Table 5.** Geographical characteristics of settlements in the municipality of Tetovo

No	Municipality and settlement	Altitude	Surface in km <sup>2</sup>	Inhabitants		Agrarian structure			
				1994	2002	Fertile land	Pastures	Forests	Total
	<b>Tetovo</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>264,8</b>	<b>80 275</b>	<b>86 582</b>	<b>7 303</b>	<b>9 726</b>	<b>6 837</b>	<b>23 866</b>
1.	Bozovtse	1 300	56,8	1 086	924	506	3 559	1 123	5 188
2.	Brodec	1 060	14,9	559	1 136	278	433	661	1 372
3.	Vejtse	1 200	24,6	381	1 127	339	1 573	473	2 385
4.	Veshalla	1 195	31,6	1 132	1 222	605	1 546	906	3 057
5.	Gajre	950	7,3	843	1 020	240	189	271	700
6.	G. Reçica	508	5,7	3 841	3 977	430	27	61	518
7.	Xherma	1 100	13,3	989	962	233	540	530	1 303
8.	Jedoartse	560	1,5	13	5	49	24	68	141
9.	Llaca	780	5,5	277	298	169	55	305	529
10.	Lisjani	1 200	13,7	831	692	371	667	331	1 369
11.	S. Reçica	490	3,5	7 069	8 353	141	8	20	169
12.	Otuja	985	5,8	-	-	*	*	*	*
13.	Poroj	500	5,2	2 705	2 899	250	22	155	427
14.	Sarakino	415	6,2	944	1087	521	13	45	579
15.	Seltse	800	14,4	2 119	2 538	452	170	766	1 388
16.	Setola	985	3,7	7	2	78	91	194	363
17.	Falishe	438	4,0	558	546	366	16	4	386
18.	Džepčište	480	4,5	3 964	4 051	324	25	55	404
19.	Shipkovitca	1 030	20,2	2 581	2 826	432	727	822	1 981
20.	Tetovo	505	22,4	50 376	52 915	1 519	41	47	1 607

\*No cadastral data.

Source: (Popovski, V. & Selmani, A. & Panov, N. 2006)

## 7. Municipality of Gostivar

Municipality of Gostivar is one of the largest urban municipalities and is located in the northwestern part of the Republic of North Macedonia. The municipality lies at an altitude of 780 m, with a surface of 408.6 km<sup>2</sup>. In the north is bordered by Rastelica in Kosovo and the municipalities of Vrapciste and Bogovinje, east of the municipality of Makedonski Brod, in the southeast and south with the municipalities of Kicevo and Mavrovo - Rostushe and in the west with Bushtran and neighboring Albania. It has a convenient geographic position and good traffic links, as the E-852 highway passes through its central part.

The municipality has 35 settlements, of which 9 are hilly, 22 flat, while mountainous are only the settlements of Upper Jellovca, Korita, Strajani and Qafa. There are 83,738 inhabitants (2017), out of which 55,174 or 67% are Albanians, 15,866, or 19% Macedonians, 7,991, or 10% Turks. Population density reaches 163 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>, (2017). The total number of households is 7,136, or in every household living on average by more than 11 members, which is a record for our country, while the total number of

dwelling is 9,450, or in every dwelling average of 8.6 inhabitants, which is also a record for our country [6].

**Table 6.** Geographical characteristics of settlements in the municipality of Gostivar

No.	Municipality and settlement	Altitude	Surface in km <sup>2</sup>	Inhabitants		Agrarian structure			
				1994	2002	Fertile land	Pastures	Forests	Total
	<b>Gostivar</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>408,6</b>	<b>75 080</b>	<b>81 734</b>	<b>7 509</b>	<b>10 945</b>	<b>20 905</b>	<b>39 359</b>
1.	Gostivar	530	7,4	30 494	35 847	419	410	4	833
2.	Balindoll	560	4,0	2 990	2 501	173	12	188	373
3.	Belovishte	580	8,9	2 551	2 267	276	156	391	823
4.	Brodets	1 060	14,9	533	1 136	279	2 436	661	3 374
5.	Vrutok	654	10,9	1 176	1 127	344	27	622	993
6.	U. Banjica	585	**	1 738	4 423	**	**	**	**
7.	U. Gjenovica	810	14,3	20	4	110	462	835	1 407
8.	U. Jellovca	1 220	35,4	2	2	278	1 919	1 279	3 476
9.	Debreshe	615	10,0	4 422	4 847	564	134	188	886
10.	L.Banjitsa	543	12,9	5 005	4 356	193	49	824	1 066
11.	L. Gjenovica	680	**	244	242	**	**	**	**
12.	L. Jellovca	960	11,4	18	10	270	248	593	1 111
13.	Zelezna R.	960	26,2	200	98	222	31	2 359	2 612
14.	Zdunje	590	3,2	1 206	2 140	163	59	59	281
15.	Korito	1 420	31,7	754	675	200	1 252	731	2 183
16.	Kounovo	960	9,5	19	11	117	145	684	946
17.	Lakavitsa	540	12,5	955	994	176	9	1 039	1 224
18.	Leshnica	700	2,6	133		69	66	120	386
19.	S. Tuchane	600	1,4	630	1 013	56	5	73	134
20.	Mitroj Kersti	840	4,0	87	-	56	17	310	383
21.	Padalishte	840	16,9	1 001	721	213	378	1 089	1 680
22.	Pechkovo	930	11,2	56	48	139	349	566	1 054
23.	Raven	640	4,3	1 571	1 615	122	47	299	398
24.	Simnica	720	13,1	464	-	430	291	775	1 302
25.	Serbinova	670	17,8	1 028	1 039	157	461	1 141	1 759
26.	Strajane	1 100	8,3	354	307	144	63	615	822
27.	Sushica	625	10,8	26	8	58	172	856	1 086
28.	Trnova	920	19,5	573	539	312	39	1 578	1 928
29.	Tumçevisht	490	3,2	252	235	285	11	11	307
30.	Qafa	1 440	10,4	34	5	94	42	902	1 038
31.	Forina	500	11,0	4 229	4 652	509	42	397	1 018
32.	Chajle	520	18,2	2 480	3 070	316	1 073	388	1 777
33.	Chegrane	498	21,6	7 054	6 748	716	510	636	1 862
34.	Rechane	740	9,9	1 043	1 054	243	32	692	967
35.	Mirdita								

\*\* Gjenovica and Lower Banjica (no data for Mirdita)

Source: (Popovski, V. & Selmani, A. & Panov, N. 2006)



## **8. Conclusion**

In today's political and socio-economic conditions, there is a need for an administrative-territorial organization that guarantees sustainable development and prospects for regional integration and beyond. The 1996 administrative-territorial reorganization, where the Republic of North Macedonia was divided into 123 municipalities and Polog in 19, was a failed experiment of some individuals and political parties for the realization of electoral politics that centralized power, local government and made it difficult to realize the human and administrative rights of citizens, especially the Albanian population. The 1996 administrative division was not practical. It was compiled under the influence of political parties for electoral benefit and disregarded the scientific, practical, economic, functional criteria of geographic areas also natural and human resources.

In 2004, all municipalities experienced changes in surface, population, settlements, national structure, etc. Tetovo's urban municipality joined the two rural municipalities of Xhepçisht and Shipkovica; the municipality of Bogovinje and that of Kamjane; while Vratnica, which was also run as a Macedonian-majority municipality, joined the Jegunovce municipality.

Municipality of Gostivar was joined by the rural municipalities of Çegrane, L. Banjica, and Sermova; the municipality of Vrapciste, that of Negotino; while Mavrovo municipality, that of Rostusha (majority Macedonian), commune of higher altitude and larger area.

The new Pollog Municipalities differed from the surface, the number of settlements and population, the national structure, the level of economic development. The two Tetovo and Gostivar municipalities are mixed (urban-rural), while the other 7 rural ones.

In terms of area, the municipalities have big differences: the largest are the municipalities: Mavrovo-Rostusha (655 km<sup>2</sup>), Gostivar (408.60 km<sup>2</sup>) and Tetovo (264.80 km<sup>2</sup>), while the smaller ones are the municipality of Tearce (136 km<sup>2</sup>) and that of Bogovinje (141 km<sup>2</sup>).

The two largest municipalities have more settlements: 41- Mavrovo-Rostusha and 35- Gostivar. According to the number of the population, there are more inhabitants of the municipality of Tetovo (86,580), with fewer inhabitants having Mavrovo and Rostusha (8,618).

According to the national structure, we have seven municipalities with majority Albanian population and two municipalities with the majority Macedonian population (Jegunovca and Mavrovo and Rostusha).

Of particular importance in the social policies of the Polog region is the improvement of the level of education, especially for women; increased health care, especially for mothers and children; guaranteeing access to social services for all categories of population regardless of race, skin color, gender, nationality, age, etc.

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