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Cornel LAZĂR[1], Mirela LAZĂR[2]

Abstract

The cultural diversity of the world we live requires increased attention to cultural freedoms (religious, ethnic, linguistic), because of their importance in human development, both socially and economically. Ignoring this reality, imposing certain behaviour which is not in keeping with the individual's beliefs or with those of the group he belongs to, generates exclusion and major conflicts, especially where ethnic and confessional structures are heterogeneous. For that purpose, appropriate multicultural policies are needed, to ensure unity in the existing diversity. To promote these policies are needed rigorous information which allows knowing and monitoring at first the structure and dynamics of population, from ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural points of view. The paper presents and analyzes comparatively, based on the information taken from the last two censuses of population and housing, the confessional structure of the Romania's population, its dynamics, its structural changes and existing particularities, according to various demographic, social and economic variables.

Keywords: religion; censuses; confessional structure; cultural freedom; religious freedom; human rights;

Introduction

The major changes in population number and structure occurred in the last decades all over the world, generated by its fast growing in certain areas and reduction in others, the increasing phenomenon of demographic ageing in de-

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veloped countries, increase of international migration etc. – all of these led to the increasing diversity of the world we live in. Therefore, according to the Human Development Report in 2004, which approached this issue, in terms of cultural diversity, more than two thirds of countries worldwide possess an ethnic or religious group that owns more than 10% of total population (HDR, 2004). In this context, ensuring the cultural freedoms of each individual or group should be a priority of social and economic policies, both globally and in every state that has a heterogeneous structure. The cultural rights, one of the five categories of human rights (civil, economic, social, political and cultural) have been less approached by the international organisations. The first resolution regarding cultural rights was adopted only in 2002 by the Commission on Human Rights and mentions the recognition of cultural rights and conformation to different cultural identities. Until 1989, in Romania, communism had tried and succeeded to a great extent to marginalize the religious phenomenon. After 1990, the Romanian state has understood the need to protect the religious freedom and adopted a legislation meant to encourage the development of religious life (*State and religions in Romania – a transparent relationship?* 2008). The same situation it's encountered in the others ex-communist countries, after the collapse of communist regime (Kocsis, 2009).

One of the most important laws adopted in Romania, in this direction is Law no. 489/2006, concerning the religious freedom and the general condition of cults, which offers a distinctive role to religion in the Romanian public space and which removes the former legislation by means of which the state maintained its influence in the religious domain. The context of Romania joining the European Union and the need to create a specific legal framework in this domain led to adopting this law. The law set a series of principles defined in the international human rights conventions, guaranteeing religious freedom, both for the individual and the collective community and officially admitting the existence of 18 religious cults and their role within society. Establishing the number of religious cults and associations that can be officially recognised as meeting the conditions imposed by the law, required the existence of real, actual, and accurate information regarding the religious structure of population. Tracking and supporting the religious phenomenon in all its aspects (social, cultural, economic, financial etc) constantly require new information that can provide a view as complete as possible over the size and intensity of manifestation (Isaic-Maniu, 2005; Lazăr, Lazăr, 2005). Also, for a correct approach in studying the religious phenomenon it's need a complete and coherent system of indicators (Herțeliu Isaic-Maniu, 2009; Herțeliu, 2007). In this sense, the achievement of both population and housing censuses of January 7, 1992 and March 18, 2002 brought valuable information on the confessional structure of the Romania's population, especially taking into consideration that the last census had been carried out before 1990, on January 5, 1977.

Concerning the religion, in the scientific literature there are many studies that realize a statistical approach of the subject. The analyse it's refer to the dynamic

and structure of different populations by religion in diverse area (Herțeliu, 2008; Muntele, 2008; Mărculeț, Mărculeț, 2009). Religious freedom represents one of the cultural freedoms whose role in both public and private lives can be not at all neglected. The importance and the diversity of the religious phenomenon made that the subject to be treated under many type of approaches by researchers of different field (sociology, psychology, philosophy, theology, demography, statistic etc.). Thus, many studies are dedicated to the analysis of the religion and religiosity and emphasize their important role played in the people's life, making comparisons between different areas and especially between Europe and United States (Habermas, 2006; Barro, McCleary, 2005). Religion it's important for the individual because is preparing and orienting people, motivating them for theirs action (Cojocaru, 2005; Cojocaru, 2006). The religion has not only an important role in private life but also in economic and social life, because of the different economic and social behaviour of the peoples of different religions. This aspect it's very often presented by many authors in their research (Roman, Goschin, 2011; Lehrer, 2004; Barro, McCleary, 2003). The influence of the religion it's present also in the demographic field. Thus, throughout the history some religious communities were seriously affected because of their faith, registering a higher mortality (Livi Bacci, 2003). The fertility it's another demographic phenomenon influenced by the religious affiliation; that if why a lot of studies focus on this aspect (Frejka, Westoff, 2008; Zhang, 2008; Barro, McCleary, 2005; McQuilan, 2004). Between the religion and others phenomenon (suicide, abortion, sexual education) there is also an interaction that have been analyzed in a lot of studies (Gearing, Lizardi, 2009; Haglund, Fehring, 2010; Stephens, Jordens, Kerridge, Ankeny, 2010). As we seen there are many subjects to study concerning the religion, but for any approach of the religious phenomenon first of all it's need a quantitative analyzes that can provide the primary information and after that can be done other appreciations. That if why, in the following we present the subject from the statistical point of view, performing an analysis of the dynamics, structure and structural changes of the population by religions in Romania, an analysis of the regional discrepancies and existing particularities, according to various demographic and social-economic characteristics, based on information taken from the last two censuses.

Dynamics and structure by religions of the Romania's population, after 1990

The dynamics and the distribution by religions of the Romania's population reveal a series of interesting aspects. Thus, analyzing the information contained in Table 1, referring to the total dynamics of the population and to religions, we sense different trends, as certain religions recorded decreases and other recorded increases, both of different intensity.

Table 1. The dynamics of population by religions, in Romania in 2002, as compared to 1992

- person -

Religions	January 7, 1992	March 18, 2002	Dynamic	
			%	Differences +/-
Total	**22810035**	**21680974**	95,1	-1129061
Orthodox	19802389	18817975	95,0	-984414
Romano-catholic	1161942	1026429	88,3	-135513
Reformat	802454	701077	87,4	-101377
Pentecostal	220824	324462	146,9	103638
Greek-catholic	223327	191556	85,8	-31771
Baptist	109462	126639	115,7	17177
Adventist of seventh day	77546	93670	120,8	16124
Muslim	55928	67257	120,3	11329
Unitarian	76708	66944	87,3	-9764
Christian by Gospel	49963	44476	89,0	-5487
Christian of old rite	28141	38147	135,6	10006
Evangelic Lutheran Synod - Presbyterian	21221	27112	127,8	5891
Evangelic and Evangelic of Augustan confession	39119	26894	68,7	-12225
Mosaic	9670	6057	62,6	-3613
Other religion	88557	89196	100,7	639
No religion	24314	12825	52,7	-11489
Atheists	10331	8524	82,5	-1807
Non-declared	8139	11734	144,2	3595

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

In terms of the dynamics expressed as percentage, the most important decrease was recorded for the Mosaic population (-37,4%), followed by Evangelic and Evangelic of Augustan Confession (-31,3%), Greek Catholic (-14,2%) and the Reformed, Roman Catholic, Unitarian and Christian by Gospel religions, which every one decreased by 11-12%.

During the analyzed period, a significant decrease was registered among people with no religion, their number being reduced by almost a half and also among atheists (-17.5%). The number of Orthodox population, who represent the majority in Romania, was reduced with 5%, which is a normal fact because the total number of population was also reduced by almost the same proportion. If these reductions were quite important for certain religions, the increases for other religions were equally important. Thus, the most spectacular growth, by almost 50%, was recorded for the Pentecostal religion population, followed by the Christian of Old Rite religion (+35,7%), Evangelical Lutheran Synod-Presbyterian

(+27,8%), Adventist of Seventh Day (+20,8%), Muslim (+20,3%) and Baptist (+15,7%). A significant increase (+44,2%) was also recorded among those who did not declare their religion. The different rhythms of dynamic of the Romania's population by religion were a consequence of the migration phenomenon (Roman, Goschin, 2011) and of different fertility rates of the religious communities (Gheṭău, 2008). It's interesting to mention the fact that the religion in Romania it's an important factor of the fertility, especially for women of some religious communities. The religion it's also important in the life of one-half of women from United States and in Europe, only for one of six women (Frejka, Westoff, 2008; Barro, McCleary, 2005).

The structure by religions of the Romania's population, registered in the last two censuses, presented in Table 2, reveal that the population of Orthodox religion represent the majority, owning a weight of 86,8% at both censuses. In descending order, with over 100000 people and weights between 0,5% and 5,1%, there are Roman Catholic, Reformed, Pentecostal, Greek Catholic and Baptist populations.
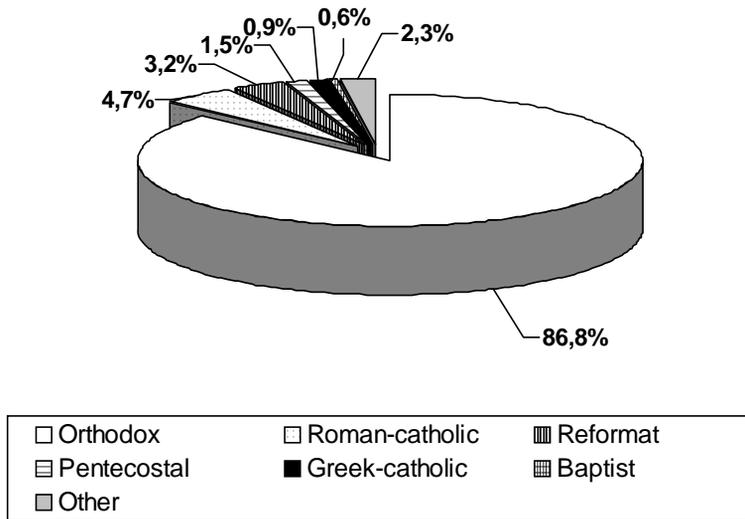
Table 2 Structure by religions of Romania's population in 1992 and 2002

Religions	January 7, 1992	March 18, 2002 %
Orthodox	**100,0**	**100,0**
Romano-catholic	86,8	86,8
Reformat	5,1	4,7
Pentecostal	3,5	3,2
Greek-catholic	1,0	1,5
Baptist	1,0	0,9
Adventist of seventh day	0,5	0,6
Muslim	0,3	0,4
Unitarian	0,3	0,3
Christian by Gospel	0,3	0,3
Christian of old rite	0,2	0,2
Evangelic Lutheran Synod -Presbyterian	0,1	0,2
Evangelic and Evangelic of Augustan confession	0,1	0,1
Mosaic	0,2	0,1
Other religion	-	-
No religion	0,4	0,4
Atheists	0,1	0,1
Non-declared	0,1	0,1
Orthodox	-	0,1

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site *www.insse.ro*

The remaining religions registered weights under 0,5% and together represent approximately 2% of the total population of Romania.

Figure 1: Structure by religions of Romania's population on March 18th, 2002

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site *www.insse.ro*

The structural changes between the two censuses are minor, the weights of different religions remaining almost unchanged, with few exceptions. The Pentecostal, Baptist, Adventist of Seventh Day and Christian of Old Rite religions are the only ones that registered increases of their weights in total. Even the confessional structure of the population it's maybe a good one from the point of view of the interethnic conflicts, from other points of view represents an impediment; for example concerning the existence in Romania, of the faith based organizations "that virtually, are not represented at all in the area of social services" (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, Sandu, 2011).

Territorial disparities of the Romania's population, by religion

Only one analysis of the dynamics and structure by religion of the Romania's population is not sufficient to completely characterize the religious phenomenon and to highlight the various particularities or the existing discrepancies. Therefore, it is necessary to deepen and extend the study also from the point of view of the territorial distribution of the population, according to their religion. Because, as we have previously stated, there are only a few significant religions from the effective of population's point of view, in the following we will only present these ones, the rest of them being highlighted in the category name' "Other". Thus, at

the last two censuses, the population by religion in urban/rural area was structured as follows:

Table 3: The structure of the Romania's population by religions and area in 1992 and 2002

- % -

Religions Area	Orthodox	Roman-catholic	Refor-mat	Pente-costal	Greek-catholic	Other
January 7, 1992						
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Urban area	54,4	54,2	54,7	43,8	63,2	53,7
Rural area	45,6	45,8	45,3	56,2	36,8	46,3
March 18, 2002						
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Urban area	53,0	50,7	51,2	40,0	61,8	53,7
Rural area	47,0	49,3	48,8	60,0	38,2	46,3

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site *www.insse.ro*

The distribution of religions by area highlights the following aspects:

- Except for the Pentecostal religion, the weight of the other religions of the population is higher in the urban area than in the rural one, according to both censuses;
- Pentecostal population is the only one who has a higher weight in the rural area than in the urban one;
- There is a tendency to reduce the weight of population in the urban area for all religions and one to increase in the rural area;
- There are no major differences regarding the distribution by area of the population of different religion, the situation being somehow balanced.

If the structure by area did not emphasize the existence of some discrepancies, the same cannot be said about the distribution of different religious population by regions of development.

The Orthodox population is the only one whose structure by regions of development does not show major discrepancies, having a more uniform distribution. The only regions where its weight is lower are those from the West and Centre. For the remaining religions, it can be seen their concentration especially in the regions North-West, West and Centre. The region with the highest diversity, as shown in the table above, is that from the North-West, where almost 50% of the Reformed population, 60% of the Greek-Catholic, over 30% of the Pentecostal and almost 20% of the Roman Catholic, live there. Referring to the other religions, grouped in the category "Other", it's important ti specify that, for example, almost 80% of the Muslim population and over 50% of the Christian of Old Rite are located in the region of South-East and about 85% of the Unitarian and 70% of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod-Presbyterian populations are located in the Centre region.

Table 4. The structure by religions and by regions of development of the population of Romania on March 18th, 2002

- % -

Religions / Regions	Orthodox	Roman-catholic	Refor-mat	Pente-costal	Greek-catholic	Other
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
NORTH-EST	17,5	23,0	0,1	20,3	1,5	12,3
SOUTH-EST	14,5	1,5	0,1	3,0	0,6	15,1
SOUTH	17,6	0,5	0,1	4,7	0,6	8,5
SOUTH-WEST	12,2	0,5	0,1	2,2	0,5	2,9
WEST	8,3	16,0	5,5	25,5	11,1	13,6
NORTH-WEST	10,0	18,3	49,6	33,0	60,0	17,5
CENTRE	8,6	37,3	44,2	9,5	21,5	23,5
BUCHAREST	11,4	2,9	0,3	2,0	4,0	6,5

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

There are also significant discrepancies in the religious distribution of population by *counties*, given their large number (42 counties). Whereas the Orthodox population has an uniform repartition, with percentages ranging from 0,2% in Harghita county to 9,8% in Bucharest, the situation of other religions is completely different. Thus, the Roman-catholic population is mainly concentrated in Harghita (20,7%) and Bacau counties (11,7%), the Reformed population in Mures (22,4%), Bihor (15,5%), Cluj (12,4%) and Covasna (10,6%), the Greek-catholic population in Cluj (15,7%), Satu Mare (15,2%) and Maramures counties (14,1%), and the Pentecostal population in Suceava (13,4%) and Bihor counties (10,6%).

Particularities and structural changes of Romania's population by religion and by various demographic and social-economic characteristics

The data collected from the population and housing census offer the possibility of a fairly detailed analysis of the distribution of population by religion, on different demographic and social-economic characteristics, which can provide a useful, suggestive and interesting view over this topic. *The structure by gender* of the population of different religions does not show significant changes or particularities, remaining almost unchanged between the two censuses, presenting a slight preponderance of female population (percentages ranging between 50% and 54%), that holds good for all religions. *The structure by age group* reveals a series of typical aspects, different form religion to religion.
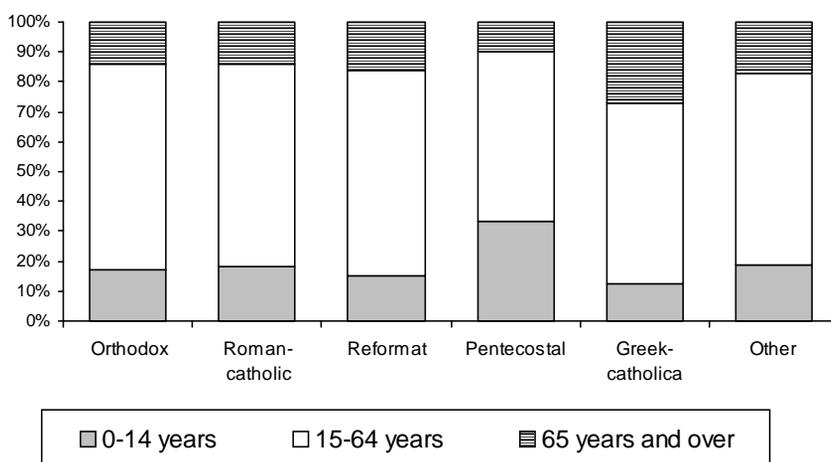
Table 5 The structure by religions and age groups of the population of Romania in 1992 and 2002

- % -

Age groups / Religions	Orthodox	Roman-catholic	Refor-mat	Pente-costal	Greek-catholic	Other
January 7, 1992						
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
0 – 14 years	22,9	22,6	19,4	35,1	12,7	21,2
15 – 64 years	66,5	65,7	67,1	55,5	64,2	63,3
65 years and over	10,6	11,7	13,6	9,4	23,1	15,5
March 18, 2002						
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
0 – 14 years	17,4	18,0	15,2	33,4	12,6	18,6
15 – 64 years	68,7	68,1	68,7	56,7	60,3	64,4
65 years and over	13,8	13,9	16,1	9,9	27,0	17,0

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

As a first observation, it can be remarked the prevalence of the age group 15-64 years in all cases. Another general remark is that the weight of young population (0-14 years) was reduced and that of the elderly (65 years and over) increased, for all religions. This is due to the trend of demographic ageing of total population of Romania, a phenomenon that has alarmingly accentuated for the last two decades. As particularities, it can be seen the fact that the Greek-catholic population has the highest weight for the age group 65 years and over (27% on March 18, 2002), being twice or even three times higher than other religions.

Figure 2 The structure by religions and age groups of the population of Romania on March 18, 2002

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

Another particularity is the high weight of young population (0-14 years) for the Pentecostal population (33,4% on March 18, 2002), a rate whose level is almost double than that of the other religions. *The structure by the occupational status* of population of different religions also reveals some interesting aspects.

Table 6 The structure by religions and occupational status of the Romania's population in 1992 and 2002
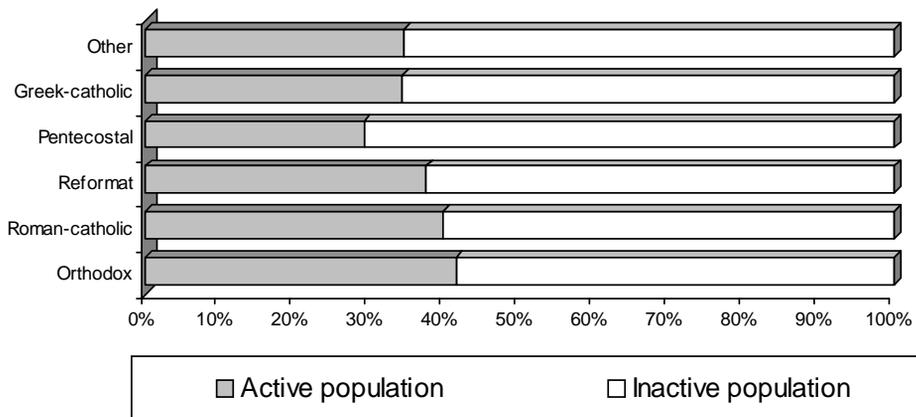
- % -

Religions / Occupational status	Orthodox	Roman-catholic	Refor-mat	Pente-costal	Greek-catholic	Other
January 7, 1992						
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Active population	46,6	43,5	43,0	34,7	37,8	39,0
Inactive population	53,4	56,5	57,0	65,3	62,2	61,0
March 18, 2002						
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Active population	41,5	39,8	37,5	29,2	34,3	34,5
Inactive population	58,5	60,2	62,5	70,8	65,7	65,5

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

Following the structure of population by different religions, according to the occupational status, it can be remarked, as a general statement, a higher and increasing weight of the inactive population, to the detriment of the active population. Obviously, the situation is part of the existing national trend and it is explained by the demographic ageing phenomenon.

Figure 3 The structure by religions and occupational status of the Romania's population on March 18, 2002

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

Comparing the situation of the occupational status by religions, we can see that the highest rate of activity (active population/total population) is found among

the Orthodox population (41,5% on March 18, 2002), whereas the lowest rate is found among the Pentecostal population (29,2% on March 18, 2002). Even the situation presented above, does not emphasize big differences between populations of different religions in Romania, concerning the rate of activity, some authors made studies on several countries covering five groups of predominant religions and observed that there is a relationship between religion and employment rate (Plopeanu, Bălan, 2011).

The structure by the educational level of the population of different religions, at the age of 10 years old and above, was analyzed using the data from the Population and Housing Census on March 18, 2002 and the outlined aspects are closely related to those previously emphasized, justifying them or being justified by them. The most favourable structure in terms of educational level was recorded for the Greek-catholic population. This one has the highest weights in total, of population with tertiary education (16,1%), being much more above the other religions in this regard, with post high school and foreman education (4,1%) and high school education (21,9%).

Table 7 The structure by religions and by the educational level of the population of 10 years old and over, on March 18, 2002

- % -

Religions / Educational level	Orthodox	Roman-catholic	Refor-mat	Pente-costal	Greek-catholic	Other
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Tertiary education	7,2	5,5	4,7	1,5	16,1	6,4
Post high school and foreman education	3,0	2,7	2,7	1,2	4,1	2,5
High school education	21,7	20,0	20,8	12,3	21,9	19,5
Vocational and apprenticeship education	15,2	17,1	17,6	13,7	10,8	12,9
Secondary education	27,2	30,7	32,1	33,4	24,9	29,8
Primary education	20,0	19,2	18,3	27,6	17,5	21,6
Other situations (without graduated school or non-declared)	5,6	4,9	3,9	10,3	4,8	7,2

Data sources: Calculation based on data taken from the site www.insse.ro

The Orthodox population presents also a more favourable structure by education comparatively to other religions and an weight of 7,2% for the tertiary education puts it on the second place after the Greek-Catholics. The least favourable structure is found in the Pentecostal religion where only 1,5% of the total population has tertiary education, and almost 70 % has at most secondary

education. Its seems that the situation concerning the different level of education between the different religions it's commune in the other countries too and many studies relieved that the religion play an important role in education, maybe more important that gender, race or income (Sherkat, 2011). But, between the religion and education there is an interaction because the education can also influence the people attitude concerning the religion, the freedom, the right to have a faith.

The structure by nationalities reveals a strong connection between them and religion. Thus, 97% of the Orthodox population is Romanian and 57,2% of the Roman Catholic and 94,9% of the Reformat religions are Hungarian. Interesting is the fact that 84% of the Greek-Catholics are Romanians, and Romanians are also the majority (over 80%) for the Pentecostal, Baptist, Adventist of Seventh Day and Christian by Gospel religions. Also, a great number of Romanians are person without religion (61,6%) and atheists (78,3). As expected, Turks and Tartars represent 81,5% of the Muslim population, nearly 80% of the Mosaic population is Jews, 67,3% of the Christian of Old Rite is Russian-Lipovenian and 97,1% of the Unitarian is Hungarian.

Conclusions

In every country, religious freedom represents one of the cultural freedoms with a very important role, both in the public and private lives of the individual. The recommended solutions to overcome any religious challenges can find their source in studying the religions and the religious movements and groups. Therefore, it should pay more attention to the content and evolution of the religious phenomenon, "along with encouraging intercultural and ecumenical dialogues, that will not mean ignoring the differences or giving up the own values and beliefs, but the openness to diversity, tolerance and cooperation" (Dinu, 2009). In this context, knowing the number and the population's structure by religion, its chronological evolution, represents a necessity for the deliberative authorities, at both macro and microeconomics levels.

The statistical analysis of Romania's population by the confessional status, based on data from population and housing censuses in 1992 and 2002, outlines first, the high weight of Orthodox population (86,8% of total population) and also maintains it unchanged during the analyzed period. The fact that the Orthodox population accounts such a high weight, whereas the other religions (except for the Roman Catholic and the Reformed) have very law weights among population (under 1%) and are relatively uniform distributed from the territorial point of view, had determined a peaceful religious climate without important tensions.

The analysis also reveals a series of specific aspects, particularities and discrepancies in the structure of population by religion, correlated to various

demographic and social-economic characteristics. As a general remark, for almost all religions, the female population accounts a higher percentage and also, the percentage for the urban environment is higher than that of the rural one and about 60% of the people of different religions are aged between 15 - 64 years.

The religious structure of the population is in close correlation to the structure of nationalities and to their territorial distribution. Thus, the Centre, West and North-West regions, where most Hungarians and Germans live, also have the highest number of Roman Catholic and Reformed people. As we seen, more or less, religion influences the economic situation, the educational level, but also other characteristics of a country (Iannaccone, 1998; Turner, 1999). This correlation can also be seen the other way round, because on can discuss about a certain influence of the economics, of the educational and cultural levels over religion.

Because of the importance of the subject concerning the religious structure of the populations there are many other things and correlations that could be analysed but the lack of data make this a very difficult or even impossible approach (Herțeliu, 2009). Maybe the recent Population and Household Census from 2011 will bring new possibilities of research and a better accessibility to the information. It's also needed specific methodologies for qualitative surveys concerning the religious phenomenon because of the important aspects that can be emphasized; the study of religions doesn't mean only quantitative information but also qualitative (Andrei, Isaic-Maniu, Florescu, 2010). There are many way, methods and reasons to study the religions, as we presented above, but if we doesn't take into consideration all this, the religions worth to be studied at lest because there are a part of our cultural patrimony (Vert, 2001).

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