

# ROMANIA'S ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHY

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. According to the principles of contemporary statistics, the source of information concerning the ethnic groups or the nationalities living on the territory of a state is the *census*. This important statistical operation covers the entire population, registers certain characteristics that permit the identification of the ethnic groups or nationalities and then, after an adequate processing, offers a general image of the number and the territorial distribution of the respective ethnic groups. Registration into ethnic groups is by free statement, the authorities being obliged to guarantee the exercising of this right.

To obtain precise data, a *precise definition* of ethnic characteristics is necessary as well as the *complete registration* of the population, the *free statement* of the people concerning their belonging to the respective ethnic group.

2. *Nationality* and *mother tongue* are the characteristics generally registered. Also important is *religion*, as an additional element to ascertain the ethnic group.

At the census registrations in Romania carried out in the years 1930, 1948, 1956, 1966 and 1977 two characteristics were constantly used: *nationality* and *mother tongue*. The next census, fixed for January 7, 1992, specifies the "ethnic nationality" with exactly the same content as in the previous operations. The characteristic "*religion*" entered in 1930 was not registered after World War II, but will be again included in 1992.

3. Therefore, data about nationality and mother tongue as recorded in the census operations of 1930, 1948, 1956, 1966 and 1977 are comparable because the methodology used is the same. We shall insist on the last census organized almost 15 years ago, a circumstance that has to be taken into consideration, the more as important changes occurred, especially after December 1989, when a strong emigration took place.

4. Ethnic demography thus reduces itself to information about the *number* of the population by nationality and mother tongue, for the entire country, by urban and rural environment, as well as by *territorial distribution*, by county, thus permitting a systematization of the data (approximate) by *historical provinces*.

However, as it is a *differential demography*, ethnic demography should be able to give us information concerning the main demographic phenomena — death rate, birth rate, marriage rate, internal migration

— by nationality, thus evidencing demographic behaviours as manifestations of cultural models and explaining the numerical evolution of the said nationalities. These data are not available, except for the birth rate and death rate by nationality.

#### THE POPULATION OF ROMANIA BY NATIONALITY AND MOTHER TONGUE

1. For the period between the two World Wars, the most serious studies about ethnical aspects were carried out by Doctor Sabin Manuila (1894—1964) and Anton Golopenția (1909—1951), eminent statisticians and demographers, with excellent knowledge of the German and Hungarian languages and of the ethnic realities of Romania, in correlation with the other countries in this geo-political area.

The study of Doctor S. Manuila is classical. Unfortunately, we have no similar study for the period after World War II.

The situation is that of the 1930 census, for an area of 295,049 sq. km. and a population of 18,057,028. The data registered refer to 18 nationalities ("neamuri" i.e. "nations"), 15 maternal tongues and 13 religions. For the purpose of comparison, the data for the year 1930 were updated by the Central Direction of Statistics as a function of the present territory of the country — 237,500 sq.km. and published in a demographic yearbook (Table 1).

Table 1

The population of Romania by nationality at the censuses of 1930, 1956, 1966 and 1977

	1930	1956	1966	1977
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14280729</b>	<b>17489150</b>	<b>19103163</b>	<b>21559910</b>
Romanians	11118170	14996114	16746510	18999565
Hungarians	1423459	1587675	1619592	1713928
Germans	633388	381708	382595	359109
Gypsies	242656	104216	64197	227398
Ukrainians, Ruthenes, Hutsans	45875	60479	54705	55510
Serbs, Croats, Slovenes	50310	46517	44236	43180
Russians (incl. Lippovans)	50725	38731	39483	32696
Jews	451892	146264	42888	24667
Tatars	15580	20469	22151	23369
Slovaks	50772	23331	22221	21286
Turks	26080	14329	18040	23422
Bulgarians	66348	12040	11193	10372
Czechs	...	11821	9978	7683
Greeks	**	**	**	6262
Poles	**	**	**	4641
Armenians	**	**	**	2342
Other nationalities and undeclared	105374	42756	25374	4480

\* In 1930 — the Czechs are included to Slovaks

\*\* For the years 1930, 1956 and 1966 Greeks, Poles and Armenians are included to "Other nationalities".

In the interval of 21 years (from 1956 to 1977), the total number of Romania's population grew by 23.46%, that of the Romanians by 26.7%, of the Hungarians by 7.95%, for the Germans it was reduced by 6.65% and for the Jews by 83.14% (almost 6 times). Absolute reductions are recorded also for other nationalities. The most interesting case is that of the "Gypsy" nationality with the following evolution: in the year 1966 their number is by 38.4% lower than in 1956: in exchange, the number of Gypsies in 1977 is by 3.5 times greater than in 1966 and by 2.2 times greater than in 1956.

Since the growth rate of the population of the various nationalities considerably varies — some with a positive others with a negative sign — and within this growth the rates are different — the problems raised to explain these variations are as follows:

- a) the natural increase (the difference between births and death) for each nationality;
- b) international migration.

The cumulated effect of the influence of all factors is seen in the share of each nationality at the three census operations (Table 2).

Table 2

The share of nationalities in the population of Romania, in 1956, 1966 and 1977

	1956	1966	1977	Absolute increase (positive (+), negative (-))
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Romanians	85.74	87.66	88.12	+
Hungarians	9.08	8.48	7.95	+
Germans	2.20	2.00	1.67	-
Gypsies	0.60	0.34	1.05	+
Ukrainians, Ruthenes, Hutsans	0.35	0.29	0.26	-
Serbs, Croats, Slovenes	0.27	0.23	0.20	-
Russians (incl. Lippovans)	0.22	0.21	0.15	-
Jews	0.84	0.22	0.11	-
Tatars	0.12	0.12	0.11	+
Slovaks	0.13	0.12	0.10	-
Turks	0.08	0.09	0.11	+
Bulgarians	0.07	0.06	0.05	-
Czechs	0.07	0.05	0.04	-
Greeks	...	...	0.03	...
Poles	...	...	0.02	...
Armenians	...	...	0.01	...
Other nationalities and non-declared	0.24	0.13	0.02	-

The Romanians show an increase of their share in the total population from 85.7% in 1956 to 88.1% in 1977. The increase of the absolute number in this interval reached 4 million. The absolute number of the Hungarians grew with 126,253 but their specific share went down from 9.1% in 1956 to about 8.0% in 1977. Absolute decreases are noted

for the Germans, Jews and other nationalities with the exception of the Turks and the Tatars whose number grew from 34,798 in 1956 to 46,791 in 1977.

The distribution according to the mother tongue at the 1977 census that we present here was also corrected to include, where the case arises, the "Swabian" and "Saxon" tongues in the German language, the "Ukrainian" joined the "Ruthenian", the "Lippovan" the "Russian" and the "Macedonian" and "Aromanian" the "Romanian" etc. (Table no. 3).

Table 3

## The Population of Romania by the mother tongue (1977)

Mather tongue	Absolute data	% versus total
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,559,910</b>	<b>100,00</b>
Romanian	19,184,401	88.98
Hungarian	1,720,480	7.98
German	353,026	1.64
Romany (Gypsy)	77,373	0.36
Ukrainian	56,054	0.26
Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian	40,528	0.19
Russian	30,651	0.14
Turkish	21,909	0.10
Tatar	21,299	0.10
Slovakian	20,034	0.09
Bulgarian	9,685	0.04
Czech	5,741	0.03
Greek	5,643	0.03
Polish	3,800	0.02
Yiddish	3,429	0.02
Armenian	1,517	0.01
Other mother tongues	2,643	0.01
Undeclared mother tongue	2,492	0.01

We find that a number of 184,840 people who are not of Romanian nationality stated that their mother tongue is Romanian, a number of 6,752 people who are not of Hungarian nationality declare Hungarian as their mother tongue, while for Germans there is practically identity between nationality and mother tongue. In exchange, for other ethnic groups, the situation is reversed: a fair share of their members have another mother tongue than that of their nationality. Linguists and ethnolinguists will have to state their opinion in this question.

Let us bear in mind a fact. Out of the total population of Romania by nationality 99.2% consists of Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Gypsies, Ukrainians, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as well as Russians. The other nationalities represent only 0.8% of the total, some having only between 2,000 and 10,000 members. As regards culture, language and cultural identity they are as important as those having a large membership including the Romanians.

## THE TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE NATIONALITIES

Historical circumstances brought about a certain settlement of the nationalities in the territory, modified by migratory moves. Obviously we cannot discuss this problem in our paper. All the same we shall present the distribution of the population by counties at the date of the 1977 census, some references being made to urban and rural population.

The urban population (cities and towns) represented 43.6% of the population of Romania and the rural population was 56.4%. There was a number of 40 counties the city of Bucharest being included in this number. The reconstruction of the historical provinces based on the addition of the respective districts is approximate and it is not wholly comparable to the historical provinces in 1930 (Table 4).

Table 4

The share of nationalities in urban and rural areas (1977)

in %

	Urban	Rural
TOTAL	43.6	56.4
Romanians	43.0	57.0
Hungarians	50.5	49.5
Germans	50.0	50.0
Gypsies	30.5	69.5
Ukrainians	11.2	88.8
Serbs, Croats, Slovenes	35.0	65.0
Russians (incl. Lippovans)	35.3	64.7
Jews	98.4	1.6
Tatars	50.8	49.2
Slovaks	37.9	62.1
Turks	73.2	26.8
Bulgarians	29.3	70.7
Czechs	47.9	52.1
Greeks	96.8	3.2
Poles	48.6	51.4
Armenians	98.6	1.4

Some nationalities are pre-eminently "urban": the Armenians (98.6%), the Jews (98.4%) and the Greeks (96.8%) while others are "rural" like the Ukrainians (11.2%), Bulgarians (29.3%), Gypsies (30.5%), Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (35.0%), Russians and Slovaks. The share of the rural population may be an indication for their occupation (mainly agriculture). A proven statement could be made only by the processing of the economic characteristics mentioned in the census.

The distribution of the nationalities by counties and historical provinces points out some significant particularities.

The *Romanians*, numbering 18,999,565, i.e. 88.12% of the entire population, hold a share of up to 99% in many counties of Oltenia, Valachia and Moldavia. This is lower in Transylvania (66.89), Crişana-Maramureş (69.26%) and the Banat (73.54%), representing still the ma-

majority (more than two thirds) in the above-mentioned provinces. It is only in the Transylvanian counties that the share of the Romanians is under 50% of the total population of the said counties: Harghita (13.73%), Covasna (19.57%) and Mureș (49.10%). In the counties of Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad, Brașov, Cluj, Sălaj, Timiș, this share varies between 57.8% (Satu Mare) and 78.5% (Brașov).

The *Hungarians* with a number of 1,713,928 i.e. 7.95% in the population of Romania (1977), hold a share of 98.67% in the counties of Transylvania, Banat and Crișana-Maramureș. The rest (22,867) with a share of 1.33% are located in other counties including the city of Bucharest (almost 10,000). Related to the population of the respective counties the share of the Hungarians represents: 85.07% (Harghita), 78.45% (Covasna), 44.31% (Mureș), 38.78% (Satu Mare), 31.53% (Bihor), 24.20% (Sălaj), 23.96% (Cluj). According to the historical provinces, the share of the Hungarians was 24.95% in Transylvania, 23.87% in Crișana-Maramureș and 8.02% in the Banat.

The *Germans* in number of 359,109 (1977) with a share of 96.98% live in Transylvania (49.27%), the Banat (33.41%) and Crișana-Maramureș (14.20%); the others (3.12%), live in Bucharest (5,500), the counties of Suceava (2,265) and in other counties. If we consider the number of the Germans related to the total population of the respective counties their share is as follows: 20.01% in the county of Sibiu, 14.11% in the county of Timiș, 7.75% in the county of Arad, 6.63% in the county of Brașov, 5.62% in Caraș-Severin, 3.11% in Mureș, 3.01% in the county of Alba. According to the historical provinces their share is 3.94% in Transylvania, 2.51% in Crișana-Maramureș and 11.08% in the Banat.

The *Gypsies* numbering 227,398 with a share of 1.05% in the population of Romania are more evenly distributed throughout the country. Almost 54% are in Transylvania, the Banat and Crișana-Maramureș and the other 46% in Oltenia, Valachia, Moldavia and Dobrogea. In Bucharest itself they reached a number of almost 10,000. In absolute figures the situation is as follows: 20,019 Gypsies in Mureș county, 16,586 in the former Ilfov county, 12,014 in Bihor county, 12,803 in Sibiu county, 12,033 in Brașov county, 9,828 in the county of Timiș and 9,216 in the county of Arad.

The *Ukrainians*, who number 55,510, and hold a share of 0.26% in the population of Romania are grouped in the counties of Maramureș where 32,723 i.e. 58.9% of the total live, Suceava (8,943), Caraș-Severin (3,944), Timiș (3,773), Tulcea (2,537).

The *Serbs, Croats and Slovenians* numbering 43,180 with a share of 0.20% in the population of Romania are grouped in the counties of Timiș (21,782), Caraș-Severin (15,587), Arad (2,427). There are very few in the provinces of Oltenia, Valachia and Moldavia, with the exception of the Mehedinți county where their number amounts to 1,405.

The *Russians* (including the *Lippotans*) are 32,696 (0.15%) of the population of Romania. Their number is somewhat higher in the counties of Tulcea (20,000), Constanța (4,090), Suceava (1,624).

The *Jews* in number of 24,667, living mostly in the urban areas, are to be found as follows: 9,199 in the city of Bucharest, 2,185 in

Iasi county, 1,799 in Timiș county, 1,171 in Botoșani county, 1,167 in Cluj county, 1,065 in Suceava.

The *Tatars*, who number 23,369 people are almost exclusively concentrated in the county of Constanța (22,552 i.e. 96.5%).

The *Turks*, with 23,422 members are also living mostly in the county of Constanța (19,108) but also in Tulcea (2,558). In the city of Bucharest, the 1977 census registered 178 Tatars and 809 Turks.

The *Slovaks*, numbering 21,286 people are in the Banat and Crișana-Maramureș, thus : 15,629 in the counties of Arad and Bihor, 2,909 in the counties of Caraș-Severin and Timiș, 1,929 in Salaj county.

The *Bulgarians* who total 10,372 live in larger numbers in the counties of Timiș (7,151) and Arad (1,473) and in Bucharest (586).

The *Czechs*, who are 7,683 in the Banat (5,344) as well as in the county of Mehedinți (927).

The *Greeks*, in number of 6,262, live in the counties of Brăila (1,103), Constanța (479), Galați (399); in 1977 their number in Bucharest reached 1,255.

The *Poles* who number 4,641 live mainly in the county of Suceava (2,527), the others are in Transylvania, the Banat, Crișana-Maramureș; 469 were registered in Bucharest.

The *Armenians* in number of 2,342 at the date of the 1977 census, are almost one half in Bucharest (48.2%), then in the county of Constanța (699) and in smaller numbers in other counties.

## DISCUSSION

I stated precisely that the situation regarding the nationalities is that registered at the 1977 census, therefore the data are more or less obsolete.

No estimations were made for the period from 1977 to 1988 although the information about the natural increase and external migration is available. However, there does exist such an estimation made by Dr. Vasile Ghețău an expert demographer and statistician, but only for the main nationalities (Table 5).

Table 5

The Population of Romania on January 1, 1988 according to the main nationalities

	Absolute data (thousands)	%
TOTAL	23004.0	100.0
of whom:		
Romanians	20731.7	90.1
Hungarians	1733.2	7.6
Germans	276.4	1.2

The author states that the figures were obtained by adding the natural increase to the situation existing at the 1977 census. The number of the Hungarians grows absolutely but their specific share in the population slightly falls. The explanation given by the author is that the population of Romanian nationality has a higher birth rate than the population of Hungarian nationality. We shall see the answers in the census scheduled for January 7, 1992.

As in any other statistical operation, census data are discussed, commented and sometimes contested. Recent cases in the census registrations in the U.S.A., West Germany, the Netherlands and Austria are extremely instructive. Some criticism was also directed against the 1977 census although the methodology, the concepts applied, the registration system were strictly scientific.

If the figures are contested, the author of the reviewed data should follow the principle of the Roman law: *ejus assertio ejus probatio*.

It is not our intention to start a discussion on this subject. An event, seldom met with in the history of statistics, offers us an unexpected "test" to demonstrate that the data of the 1977 census are correct. This opportunity was created by the legislative elections held on May 20, 1990. A large majority of electors of Hungarian origin voted for the candidates of the Magyar Democratic Union of Romania.

Let us confront two series of data: the share of the Hungarian population in the respective counties and the number of votes given to the candidates of the M.D.U.R. Because the Hungarian population from Romania is found in a share of 98.67% in Transylvania, Crişana-Maramureş and the Banat we shall include only the 16 counties (Table 6).

Table 6

The Share of the Hungarian Population (1977) and of votes given to the M.D.U.R. (1990)

County	% Hungarians	% votes for M.D.U.R.
ROMANIA	7.95	7.23
Alba	6.64	5.36
Arad	14.47	12.56
Bihor	31.53	28.28
Bistriţa-Năsăud	7.50	6.54
Braşov	12.52	9.06
Caras-Severin	2.39	1.26
Cluj	23.96	19.85
Covasna	78.45	77.10
Harghita	85.07	85.23
Hunedoara	7.45	4.68
Maramureş	11.88	10.08
Mureş	44.31	41.96
Satu Mare	38.78	38.16
Sălaj	24.20	23.68
Sibiu	4.54	2.90
Timiş	11.12	7.61

The data are proportional, the slight differences being -- probably -- explained by the fact that not all Hungarians voted for the M.D.U.R. An elementary index -- the Spearman coefficient of correlation of ranks -- whose value is of 90%, shows how close is the correlation between the two rows of figures.

The next census of Romania's population which enjoys the support and the technical and methodologic assistance of the U.N. will give us the data necessary to know the situation in 1991, that is 15 years after the previous census.

For the success of this important statistical operation it is absolutely necessary to explain it and inform the public opinion. The political and cultural organizations of the various nationalities could render immense service by explaining that the replies to questions about "ethnic nationality", "mother tongue" and "religion" specified in the census program must be sincere and true.

The ethnic demography of Romania, who still owes us many answers, will be able to carry out studies concerning the differential demography by nationality, the demographic transition, the demographic behaviour, as expression of cultural models and to offer assistance to several sciences such as cultural anthropology, ethnology, ethnolinguistics, social psychology and politology.