

ANALYSIS OF THE PERCENTAGES OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF THE 2011 CENSUS IN ALBANIA

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the data of the religious percentages of the census conducted in Albania in 2011, based on the published data of the mini-census of the same year and cross-referencing them with other demographic data. The purpose of this review is to test the relationship between demographic data and religious affiliation and the potential impact they have had on changing the percentage of religious affiliation over the years.

Keywords: Census, religious affiliation, Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The census of inhabitants and houses conducted in 2011 in Albania, included for the first time after the fall of communism the declaration of religious affiliation by the citizens of the Republic of Albania. The result it drew (56.7% Muslim, 2.09% Bektashi, 10.03% Catholics, and 6.75% east Orthodox) showed a marked difference from the former percentages accepted by all communities.¹ The most lost census resulted from the East Orthodox community, followed by the Muslim community, while the Catholic community seemed to have maintained the same numerical positions of the census before the establishment of the communist regime. In an earlier article,² I compared between this census and a series of different surveys conducted over the years, since 1991, by various institutions, inside and outside Albania, which confirm a decrease in the percentage of east orthodox affiliation in general, confirmation of the percentage of Catholics in general and a fluctuation of the percentage of Muslims, which sometimes appear decreasing and sometimes increasing, if we refer to the accepted census figures of 1927. In that article I confirmed to some extent the accuracy of this census, based on comparisons with surveys conducted over the years. But the biggest question mark remains the affiliation of the percentage of those who have refused to declare their religious affiliation, which is claimed by the parties, especially by the Orthodox.³ In this article I will examine the data presented by the 2011 mini-census,⁴ testing the link between religious affiliation and other elements, which are generally thought to have influenced the change in religious percentages.

1.2 Methodology

The mini census data will be processed through the SPSS program using Descriptive Statistics analysis through Crosstabulation processing with two basic data, religion and

¹ Referring to the 1927 census, Muslims made up 67,67%, Orthodox 21,59%, and Catholics 10.75% of the country's population. See Selenica Teki, Shqipria in 1927, Shtypshkronja "Tirana", Tiranë 1929, p. 491.

² Topulli, Justinian, An overview of religious belonging percentage in Albania, Published in European Journal of Research in Social Sciences, Vol. 8 No. 5, 2020 ISSN 2056-5429

³ <https://orthodoxalbania.org/2020/kisha-jone-te-dhenat-e-censusit-2011-per-te-krishteret-orthodhokse-teshqiperise-jane-teresisht-te-pasakta-dhe-te-papranueshme/>

⁴ INSTAT official website: http://www.instat.gov.al/media/1548/censusi_i_popullsis_dhe_banesave_2011_-_mikrodata.rar

another demographic data, and extracting the resultant percentage for this data within each religious community. The data will then be interpreted based on other external findings.

1.3 Variables to be considered

One of the main reasons for the change in the religion of the people, and consequently of the percentages of the former religious affiliation, is the secularization process of societies, which can be measured by some elements, such as urbanization, due to the fact that rural areas are more conservative and less inclined to change tradition, among them the faith. Another measuring element is the number of members in a family. The traditional families that preserve the religion are those families that have even more members, which usually consist of three generations. Another important indicator element is the fertility rate, for the reason that modern, and secularized societies are characterized by a lower fertility and an aging population as well. Another measuring element is the level of education, because the school has been one of the most powerful secularizing centers of the modern age. These are some elements for which we can make correlations from the detailed demographic data available from the mini-census and examine which of the traditional religious communities in the country have been most affected by secularization processes, especially during the communist period regime. Here we will also include the issue of emigration, which is thought to have also influenced the change in the percentage of religious affiliations.

2.0 Traditional family and religious affiliation

The urbanization of society is associated with various social effects, among them the transition from a traditional family, with many members, to a more modern family with fewer members, and therefore even more secular. The high number of members in a family indicates the preservation of the traditional family with many individuals, often consisting of three generations and a large number of children, the latter obviously also indicates their high fertility, but such families have more premises to preserve religious identity as well. Based on this premise, we can test this by cross-referencing data on religious affiliation with the number of members of a family. Then referring to this logic through the SPSS program we have made the intersection of the variable of religious belief with that of the code number of the individual and we have this table:

Religious Belief	Individual code (number of family members)																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Muslims	frequency	12251	11530	9228	7069	4130	2010	752	278	136	57	30	10	4	2	2	1	1
	%	25,8	24,3	19,4	14,9	8,7	4,2	1,6	0,6	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Bektashi	frequency	534	441	321	228	130	50	20	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	30,8	25,4	18,5	13,2	7,5	2,9	1,2	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Catholic	frequency	2110	2009	1595	1235	787	369	152	58	25	12	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
	%	25,2	24,0	19,1	14,8	9,4	4,4	1,8	0,7	0,3	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Eastern Orthodox	frequency	1861	1629	1076	684	308	117	19	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	32,7	28,6	18,9	12,0	5,4	2,1	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Evangelical	frequency	30	33	27	19	10	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	24,2	26,6	21,8	15,3	8,1	2,4	1,6	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Other Christians	frequency	17	25	13	9	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	24,3	35,7	18,6	12,9	5,7	2,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Unspecified believer	frequency	1181	1170	917	686	348	162	47	20	9	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	26,0	25,7	20,2	15,1	7,7	3,6	1,0	0,4	0,2	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Atheist	frequency	638	508	430	300	125	56	24	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	30,5	24,3	20,5	14,3	6,0	2,7	1,1	0,4	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Prefers not to answer	frequency	2743	2614	2457	1878	1013	444	128	56	26	12	7	3	3	2	1	1	0
	%	24,1	23,0	21,6	16,5	8,9	3,9	1,1	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Na/invalid	frequency	296	364	332	323	289	150	98	33	17	9	4	4	3	0	0	0	0
	%	15,4	18,9	17,3	16,8	15,0	7,8	5,1	1,7	0,9	0,5	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Other	frequency	4	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	36,4	27,3	18,2	18,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0

Referring to the table above, where number 1 represents the head of the household and other numbers up to 17 all other family members, if we take as reference number four, four members of a family, generally two parents and two children, which is also the level of population replacement, we will see that within Muslims, families with more than four people make up 15.6% of them, among the Bektashis 12.1% of them, among the Orthodox 7.8% of them, Catholics 16.9% of them, Evangelicals 12.1% of them, other Christians 8.5% of them, Unspecified believers 13% of them, Atheists 10.4% of them, those who did not answer 14.8% of them and in the others 0%. Meanwhile, families with the maximum number of members have Muslim ones with up to 17 members, preferring not to answer up to 16 members, Catholics up to 12 members, Bektashi and Unspecified believers up to 11 members, Orthodox and Atheists up to 9 members, Evangelical up to in 7 members, other Christians up to 6 members. So, it is seen that the families with more members are Muslim and Catholic and less Orthodox and other Christians. So, this explains the fact that modernization and separation from the traditional multi-member family has affected most Orthodox and least Catholics and Muslims. And obviously these families are more inclined to preserve and inherit the religious affiliation of the ancients, than those more modern families, with fewer members.

3.1 Fertility as a factor in preserving religious identity

Various scholars have noted that more religious populations tend to have higher fertility than less religious and more secular ones.⁵ For example, religiosity, migration, and fertility play an important role in the United States. Secular Americans have an average total fertility rate of 1.66, compared to Catholics who average 2.3, Protestants 2.21, and Muslims 2.84. Fertility among those with conservative religious views on abortion is on average two-thirds higher than among those who hold pro-abortion views.⁶ Studies also show that the religious composition of the United States by 2043 will be determined by "the low fertility of secular Americans and the religiosity of immigrants who provide a counter-force to secularization."⁷ The largest immigrant group, Hispanic Catholic, will be the one that will experience even greater growth than any other ethno-religious group, possibly reaching up to 18% of the American population by 2043.⁸

Eric Kaufmann describes this as the "crisis of secularism" that is coming. According to him, liberal intellectuals and politicians like to conceive the "decline" of religious beliefs and practices around the world as an inevitable step towards greater scientific and moral progress. According to this view, the survival of religion in secular societies is always declining. But Kaufmann argues that secularism contains in itself an invisible "demographic contradiction" that could undermine its dominance in the future. Demographers have noticed that as societies have become industrialized and contraception has become more prevalent, values and ideologies have become more important determinants in reproductive behavior. In countries going through this "second demographic transition", fertility is below the replacement level of the population (2.1 children per woman) and this is now the norm, led by secular and religious liberals. For these groups, individualism, gender equality, and environmental concerns tend to be more important in their goals than traditional goals, such

⁵ See for example Eric Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth? Demography and Politics in the Twenty-first Century*. 2011.

⁶ Eric Kaufmann and Vegard Skirbekk "Go Forth and Multiply", *Political Demography*, 204.

⁷ Skirbekk, Vegard, Eric Kaufmann and Anne Goujon, "Secularism, Fundamentalism or Catholicism? The religious composition of the United States to 2043 *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 49(2): 293-310 (June 2010), 293.

⁸ *Ibid* f. 304.

as childbearing, especially in a globalized economy that often requires two-way family income, man and woman. In contrast, religious conservatives in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism have opposed many of these cultural tendencies by continuing to have more children than non-religious ones.⁹

The reasons for this demographic decline are therefore first ideological, they are the result of the liberalization of values that came through the processes of modernization and secularization, which have superimposed the morality of cultural individualism and self-realization as a sublime value, a fact that affects fertility between people. This fertility attitude has been transmitted through cultural media models, initially as a high- and middle-class practice in Western countries, then becoming a global phenomenon. Exceptions to this behavior, however, are religious societies, whose fertility rate remains at or higher than the replacement level. Religious people around the world are resisting the trend toward declining fertility levels because they are characterized by a popular spirit that facilitates and welcomes fertility, rooted in holy scripture teachings and pre-modern traditions that support and encourage high fertility. This fertility advantage among religious people will exponentially increase their share of the population, thus posing a challenge to secular values.¹⁰ In short, we can say that, in every major world religion there is a strong pro-natalist tendency, and demographically it is predicted that the religious will surpass the non-religious, so much so that a possible, of course modest, reversal of the secularizing processes within United States and Europe around 2050.¹¹

3.2 Albania and fertility according to religious affiliation

Referring to the detailed data of the 2011 mini-census, published by INSTAT and since they are almost completely consistent with the census and reflect it at the micro level, then we are given the opportunity to see the link between religious affiliation and fertility. Using the SPSS program, we have this data table:

Number of children born alive		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Percentage within religious faiths	Muslims	11,0	32,1	24,1	12,8	7,2	5,2	3,0	2,3	1,2	0,6	0,2	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	Bektashi	10,2	36,0	22,7	12,5	6,8	3,8	3,2	2,3	2,3	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	Catholic	10,7	25,2	25,0	13,7	8,0	6,1	4,2	3,4	1,9	1,2	0,4	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0
	Eastern Orthodox	11,8	45,6	21,6	9,3	5,3	2,8	1,9	0,6	0,7	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0
	Evangelical	15,2	54,5	15,2	9,1	3,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	3,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	Other Christians	21,9	34,4	25,0	12,5	6,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	Unspecified believer	13,4	33,6	24,1	11,5	6,5	4,3	3,0	1,7	0,9	0,7	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0
	Atheist	12,7	45,9	20,1	6,9	5,1	4,2	1,8	1,2	1,1	0,2	0,7	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	No response	13,4	38,5	23,5	10,9	5,5	3,6	1,7	1,2	0,9	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
	Na/invalid	9,9	29,9	26,0	17,4	5,3	4,3	1,6	2,6	1,6	1,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0

Based on the table above, if we take as a reference point the number 2, which indicates the birth of two children per woman, which is also the number of replacement population, we can see that women who have been identified as Muslim, who have given birth more than two children make up 56.9% of this community, Bektashi women 53.8% of this community, Catholic women 64.1% of this community, Orthodox women 42.6% of this community, Evangelical women 30.3% of this community, other Christians 43.7% of them, Unspecified

⁹ David McClendon, (2013). Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth? Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century. *Sociology of Religion*, 74(3), 417–419.

¹⁰ Ramos, Joshua. Demographics as Destiny: Globalization and the Resurgence of Religion Through Fertility,” in *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* vol. 12. no. 3 (Spring 2013)

¹¹ Eric Kaufmann and Vegard Skirbekk “Go Forth and Multiply”, *Political Demography*, 209.

believer 53% of this group, Atheists 41.4% of them and those who did not respond 48.1% of this group. Meanwhile, the average fertility per woman, based on religious belief, falls to:

Religion	Number of women	Number of children born	Average
Muslims	13843	45361	3,28
Bektashi	528	1693	3,21
Eastern Orthodox	1906	5277	2,77
Catholic	2337	8424	3,6
Evangelical	33	82	2,48
Other Christians	32	79	2,49
Unspecified believer	1385	4301	3,11
Atheist	567	1619	2,86
No response	2933	8552	2,92

The above results clearly show that the highest fertility, according to the data of the 2011 mini-census, have Catholic women, followed by Muslim and Bektashi women, while the lowest non-traditional Christian, Orthodox and Atheist women. This confirms once again the fact that even in Albania the highest birth rate has those people who are identified as belonging to a faith in contrast to the atheists who have the lowest. Meanwhile, the low birth rate among those identified as Orthodox and other non-traditional Christians (evangelical, etc.), can be explained by the fact that Orthodox have the highest level of urbanization and modernization, although they belong to a traditional belief in Albania, while for the rest of the Christians who do not belong to the traditional Albanian faiths, it is more than understandable that since they are later feeds, mainly after the 90's they are even more urbanized and modernized, so they are born less children. In fact, even before the 2011 census, scholars such as Nathalie Clayer have pointed out that if we refer to the affiliation of the origin of individuals, the Orthodox population has declined and the Catholic and Muslim population has increased, starting from the demographic growth during the 70-80s, which have suffered the northern areas.¹² This fact is confirmed by the census of 2011, although after the 90's Albania underwent major demographic changes, mainly due to migration. Thus e.g. INSTAT states that:

The county with the highest average number of children, as we check for other intrusive factors, is Kukes, which has more than 20% higher CEB numbers than Vlora. The lowest number of children per woman can be found in Korça, which has a 10% lower CEB number than Vlora. After checking the urban / rural settlement, it turned out that Tirana has a CEB of only 2.7% lower than Vlora. Other regions that

¹² Përpkjka, Center Edition Përpkjka, no. 20, Tirana 2005 p. 13. She gives as an illustration, in the footnote, saying: "For example in the Catholic district of Mirdita the rate of population growth between 1970-1980 was 93% in Puka (Catholics and Muslims) and Skrapar (Bektashi) was over 70%, in Kukës and Tropojë (Muslim) it was over 60% while in Gjirokastrë, Korçë and Kolonjë it was about 30%. See Monographie par pays, Albania 1993 (Statistisches Bundesamt Eurostat, Brüssel/Luxembourg 1994) 37."

have higher fertility than Vlora are: Dibra (11% higher), Durrës (1% higher), Lezha (4% higher) and Shkodra (6% higher).¹³

So what we can say in this case is the fact that the southern and central areas of Albania, which are characterized in terms of religious affiliation mostly by Muslims and Orthodox, are also areas with lower fertility, but in the meantime the northern area, which is most characterized in terms of religious affiliation by Muslims and Catholics, has the highest fertility, so the loss suffered by Muslim affiliation in the south and in central Albania, due to low fertility, is compensated to some extent by the high fertility in the north of the country, especially in the north-eastern area, which also has the highest fertility at the state level. While the Orthodox, not having a large spread in the north of the country, are the most affected, in terms of fertility.

4.0 Age and religious affiliation

Another element that can explain the percentages of religious affiliations today is its distribution by age group. To test this, we divided the age groups by decades and then cross-checked the religious beliefs data, extracting the percentage of each age group within the particular religious community itself. So, from data processing we have this table:

Age	Muslims %	Bektashes %	Catholics %	Orthodox %	Evangelicals %	Other Christians %	Unspecified believers %	Atheists %	No response %	Invalid %	Other %
0-10	13,7	11,4	13,7	8,6	18,4	12,8	12,5	13,3	17,6	19,5	0,0
11-20	18,4	14,0	19,9	13,1	13,6	11,4	19,2	15,6	18,4	20,6	18,2
21-30	15,0	14,7	14,6	12,2	20,8	12,9	15,2	14,6	14,9	19,9	0,0
31-40	12,3	10,4	11,8	11,0	24,8	20,0	12,7	11,6	11,4	9,0	9,1
41-50	14,0	15,6	14,1	13,4	4,8	18,6	14,9	13,8	13,3	8,6	36,4
51-60	11,9	15,7	10,8	16,8	11,2	12,9	12,7	14,8	12,5	9,3	9,1
61-70	7,9	10,3	7,5	12,5	4,0	5,8	7,4	9,6	7,1	6,1	18,2
71-80	5,0	6,4	5,3	9,4	0,8	4,2	3,7	4,5	3,6	4,8	0,0
81-90	1,4	1,4	1,9	3,0	0,8	1,4	1,4	1,2	1,4	1,8	9,1
91-100	0,1	0,4	0,1	0,5	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,5	0,0

As can be seen among Muslims aged 20 and under make up 32.1% of this community, while among Catholics 33.6% of them and among Orthodox 21.7% of them. While the age of 50 and up makes 42.2% of Orthodox, 26.5% of Catholics and 26.3% of Muslims. These data show that the younger communities are Catholic and Muslim, and the older community is Eastern Orthodox.

5.0 Religious affiliation and urbanization

Albanian society for historical, geographical, social, cultural reasons, etc., for centuries has been a deeply rural society. Even after the establishment of the Albanian state in 1912 and with all the steps towards its urbanization and industrialization, in all the regimes it passed, it remains mostly rural. The 2011 census show for the first time, after almost a century, that the

¹³ Population and its Dynamics in Albania. New demographic horizons? May 2014, INSTAT p.55

ratio of the population living in the city to that living in the village had changed, in favor of the former. For understandable reasons of the conservative nature of rural life, even religious belief is preserved more in it than in the city. The same thing has happened before, e.g. in the mass conversion of Albanians to Muslim. Initially, Islam was a religion that was concentrated in urban areas, starting with the country's nobility, which began to be Islamized in the second half of the fourteenth century, while in rural areas much later.¹⁴ The same thing happens with the secularization and spread of modern secular ideologies, which were originally spread in urban areas. Based on this fact, by processing the mini-census data, cross-referencing the data between religious affiliation and residential area, rural and urban, to see how each religious belief is divided between village and city. The intersection of these two data gives us this table:

Religion	Urban %	Rural %
Muslims	50,5	49,5
Bektashi	58,3	41,7
Catholic	49,1	50,9
Eastern Orthodox	62,7	37,3
Evangelical	68,5	31,5
Other Christians	87,1	12,9
Unspecified believers	52,9	47,1
Atheists	71,6	28,4
No response	63,0	37,0
Na/invalid	51,1	48,9

From the table we notice that Muslims have divided their community almost equally between rural and urban area, with a very small difference (0.5%) in favor of the urban one, even Catholics with a slightly larger difference (0.9%), but in favor of the rural area. We must not forget that this almost equality between rural and urban areas for both communities, but also others, is a product of the process of urbanization after the 90's mostly, but still shows us one of the reasons why religion is preserved more in these communities, especially in the Catholic one. The Orthodox are the ones who are the most urbanized among the traditional religious communities, with a significant difference of 25.4%. Of course, their urbanization started even before the 90's, although obviously after these years the massive urbanization affected all communities. As can be seen from the table, the highest percentage in urban areas is held by atheists and undoubtedly non-traditional Christians. The former due to the influence of atheist education during communism and the latter as mainly new inputs after the 1990s.

6.0 Religious affiliation and education

It is often said that the more educated people are the less religious. And this is true, but the issue is not essentially the fact that acquiring knowledge makes you less religious, but the fact that this kind of knowledge is not only atheistic, but often also anti-religious. So, education is not neutral in fact, but it is described by a general philosophical spirit that nurtures antipathy to religion, or at least indifference to it, considering it mostly, if not as part of myths and folklore, as part of the individual subjective tastes and choices of each person. It is a fact that in the history of mankind it is the religious institutions that have first established schools and educated people, not only with religious knowledge, but also with mundane ones. The fact is

¹⁴ See Duka, Ferit, Shekujt Osmanë në hapësirën shqiptare (studime dhe dokumente), UET Press, 2009, f. 42-45.

that, even among Albanians the first schools where people were educated, although few, were those set up by religious institutions, be they Christian or Muslim.¹⁵ And in these schools not only religion was taught, but also mundane knowledge. Meanwhile, the overthrow of the traditional and the modern brought to power secular thought, which transformed the educational system, where special emphasis was placed on religion and belief, into a system that as a new religion had science and positivist denial of religion. So, school basically makes you more knowledgeable, but more religious or not makes you philosophical spirit contained in this education and not just knowledge to know the world around us. However, here we will cross two data, that of religious belief and the level of education of individuals to see which community is the most educated. Next, we have this table:

Religion	Education level in %					
	No degree	Elementary	Secondary	High school	First level of university	Second level of university
Muslims	1,3	17,3	45,2	27,5	8,6	0,1
Bektashi	1,0	15,6	34,4	33,5	15,4	0,2
Catholic	1,3	18,1	43,9	27,6	8,9	0,1
Eastern Orthodox	0,9	13,4	27,6	37,2	20,6	0,3
Evangelical	0,0	10,7	15,5	30,1	43,7	0,0
Other Christians	0,0	9,8	31,1	49,2	9,8	0,0
Unspecified believers	1,2	15,9	41,4	30,8	10,4	0,2
Atheists	0,8	13,5	28,7	34,8	21,70	0,4
No response	1,3	14,8	37,1	31,9	14,7	0,1
Na/invalid	2,0	19,0	39,9	29,5	9,4	0,2
Other	0,0	9,1	36,4	36,4	18,2	0,0

Even from this table we notice, if we refer to the first level of university education, that the highest percentage within their community have the evangelicals with 43.7%, followed by atheists with 21.7%, and then the eastern orthodox with 20.6%, others with 18.2%, Bektashis with 15.4%, Unspecified believers with 10.4%, other Christians with 9.8%, Catholics with 8.9% and then Muslims by 8.6%. At the second level of higher education, atheists lead with 0.4%, followed by Orthodox with 0.3%, Bektashis and non-believers with 0.2% each, and Muslims and Catholics with 0.1% each. This data also confirms what we said above that among the traditional communities the most secularized and integrated in the modern Albanian society are the Orthodox and then the Muslims and the Catholics, also due to the level of their education. Of course, here we are talking about the religious community, based on the general figures, but we must not forget that the religious communities among Albanians are generally not divided strictly, but share more or less the same socio-cultural environment, so even these differences are often not so obvious in everyday life.

7.0 Religious affiliation and emigration

A very important element to better understand the composition of the religious affiliation of Albanians after the 90's is emigration. In 2011, according to Eurostat data in EU countries during the census were counted over 964 thousand Albanian citizens, of which over 480 thousand in Greece and over 451 thousand in Italy.¹⁶ As these countries do not include religious affiliation in the Census answers, it is not easy to know what faith Albanian

¹⁵ Although these schools were not in the Albanian language, but here we are talking about the level of education in general that affects the mental and intellectual formation of each person. Meanwhile, as it is known, with the birth of Albanian nationalism, the establishment of schools in the Albanian language begins, which included more or less representatives from all religious communities in the country.

¹⁶ Official website of Eurostat <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

emigrants around the world have. But given the fact that many of these emigrants have moved and often returned to Albania, we can use this as an indirect element. For example, the 2011 census asks if you were born outside Albania, we can cross this data with religious affiliation and we will have this table:

Religion	Birthplace in %	
	In Albania	Abroad
Muslims	99,0	1,0
Bektashi	99,3	0,7
Catholic	98,5	1,5
Eastern Orthodox	97,7	2,3
Evangelical	97,6	2,4
Other Christians	97,1	2,9
Unspecified believers	98,9	1,1
Atheists	98,8	1,2
No response	98,1	1,9
Other	100,0	0,0
Na/invalid	76,5	23,5

As can be seen, the highest number of births outside Albania within a religious faith has other Christians and evangelicals, respectively with 2.9% and 2.4% and the third come the Orthodox with 2.3%, and the number of births with Bektashis have the lowest outside Albania with 0.7%, followed by Muslims with 1%.

Another question is the location at the time of registration. Here we present those who were outside Albania at the time of registration, based on their religious beliefs:

Religion	Location at the time of registration (night 30 September-1 October)		
	In the same ordinary residence	Elsewhere in Albania	Abroad
Muslims	96,7	2,5	0,8
Bektashi	96,2	2,9	0,9
Catholics	96,8	2,6	0,6
Eastern Orthodox	95,6	2,8	1,6
Evangelical	87,9	11,3	0,8
Other Christians	100,0	0,0	0,0
Unspecified believers	96,6	2,2	1,2
Atheists	96,9	2,0	1,1
No response	96,4	2,7	0,9
Na/invalid	97,0	2,4	0,6
Other	100,0	0,0	0,0

As can be seen from these data, the population identified as Orthodox is the one that has the highest percentage of location abroad at the time of the Census with 1,6%, followed by unqualified believers and atheists, respectively with 1,2% and 1,1%. While the lowest other Christians with zero, followed by Catholics with 0,6% and Muslims and evangelicals with 0,8%.

Another question is whether the respondent has lived abroad for more than a year, and once again cross-referencing the data with religious affiliation we have:

Religion	Has ever lived abroad for more than a year	
	Yes	No
Muslims	1,2	98,8
Bektashi	1,7	98,3
Catholics	1,7	98,3
Eastern Orthodox	3,7	96,3
Evangelical	6,2	93,8
Other Christians	3,2	96,8
Unspecified believers	1,7	98,3
Atheists	3,2	96,8
No response	1,5	98,5
Other	0,0	100,0
Na/invalid	1,0	99,0

As can be seen, the highest percentage has the evangelicals with 6.2%, followed by the Orthodox with 3.7%, while the lowest Muslims with 1.2%, followed by the Catholics and the Bektashis with 1.7% each. All these indirect data prove that emigration among the Orthodox community has been relatively greater than that of the Muslim and Catholic.

8.0 CONCLUSION

In summary, we can say that the secularizing processes of Albanian modernity have affected the entire population, regardless of religion, but despite this fact, the religious community least affected by this process is the Catholic one, which is positioned mainly in the north-west of the country, after him comes the Muslim, who due to its distribution throughout the country and because it constitutes the largest community in the country has been affected differently from area to area, where the northern areas are the least affected, unlike in the middle and southern ones. While the community most affected by the phenomenon of secularization seems to be the Orthodox and somewhat less the Muslim and much less the Catholic. Some voices even point out that even during the past period the Orthodox element was integrated into the administration and the elite ranks to an unprecedented degree.¹⁷ Prof. Artan Fuga even claims that:

According to our very accurate data, in the ranks of senior officials of culture, education, propaganda, diplomacy, media, historically had a very large weight of individuals with orthodox family religious traditions; in the ranks of the party's top leaders there was a prominent mix of individuals of Muslim and Orthodox descent; while the top executives were dominated by individuals of Muslim religious background. This fact becomes even more interesting if we take into account that all these individuals had cultural formation and an atheistic worldview.¹⁸

¹⁷ See e.g. Tonin Gjuraj, A model of an ecumenical state? How can religions become political issues in Albania? In East European Quarterly 34 (March 2000) 1, 21-49 (see p. 40). Nathaly Clair, Religion in the Land of the Mercedes. In the magazine Përpjekja, no. 20, Year 2005, p.14. Hysamendin Ferraj, in Sketch of Albanian Political Thought, Skopje 1999, see p. 342, 344, 346.

¹⁸ Religions and Civilizations in the New Millennium - The Case of Albania - International Conference, Tirana 14-15 November 2003, publication of the Albanian Center for Human Rights, Tirana 2004, p.112.

Also during the communist regime, although no religious differences were made in the prohibition of the faith, the Orthodox clergy turned out to be less persecuted than others.¹⁹ Likewise, the cult objects that were mostly selected as cultural monuments were the Eastern Orthodox ones, where out of 77, 63 were Orthodox.²⁰ In terms of ideological attacks, the Catholic clergy is the most attacked and harmed, followed by the Muslim clergy and much less the Orthodox. Thus e.g. according to Viron Koka in his pamphlet "The reactionary ideology of the clergy in the 30s of the twentieth century" he analyzes writings and quotations only from Catholics and Muslims, while from the Orthodox none. And he justifies this by stating that: "The Orthodox clergy did not at that time deal with the discussion of current socio-political problems... However, his position was no less reactionary than that of other clergy."²¹

These and other factors, which were not done essentially to favor the Eastern Orthodox religion or belief, but for other reasons, resulted in a relatively less aggressive climate towards the Orthodox community by the communist regime and consequently created a less hostile spirit on the part of the latter, and this then has led to the greatest secularization among them, in contrast to the Catholic part which precisely from the fiercest attacks on it, in response has preserved even more strongly its identity, while the Muslim part has varied according to areas. This may explain why the percentage of orthodox people in the country has decreased, either according to the census or even according to the polls we have presented earlier, since the accepted census of 1927.

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¹⁹ See the statement on the persecution of the Orthodox clergy by Metropolitan Andon Merdani, <https://interreligiouscenter.com/martiret-e-besimes-deshmi-atdhedashurie/>

²⁰ AQSh, F. Ministry of Education and Culture, no. 511, year 1967, d. 58, p. 4–9. Quoted by Artan R. Hoxha, in "Relations between the Communist Regime and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania in the years 1945–1967", p. 194. <http://www.doktoratura.unitir.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Doktoratura-Artan-Hoxha-Fakulteti-i-Histori-Filologjise-Departamenti-i-Historise.pdf>

²¹ Published by the publishing house "Naim Frashri" Tirana 1969, p.4

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