

PROMOTING THE ETHNIC CULTURE IN THE RURAL AREA OF IASI REGION

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Abstract

The promotion of ethnic culture in rural areas is based on the traditions and customs of the place. The history of the demographic mosaic in Iasi County led me to the analysis of the economic, social, political, cultural and religious factors in the rural area. Starting from the motto of the European Union "United in diversity", I want to highlight the importance of the intercultural factor in the process of the minority integration in rural space. The multicultural space has an important role due to migratory waves from the East to the West, from the Caucasus to the European area. Once established in Iasi county, the minorities have helped to increase trade and folk crafts, becoming the most renowned merchants of this region. In this conditions, they have managed to preserve their national identity, promoting their own culture and civilization. The organization of rural space in Iași county leads to the formation of some communities through the eyes of some organizations that promote the inherited values of ancestors. The integration process is determined by the degree of collaboration between minorities and the Romanian majority. The process takes place gradually, starting with the assimilation of the Romanian language, establishing friendly relations, organizing cultural events or spending time for the proper development of the rural area of Iasi. By applying a statistical survey among the ethnicities belonging to the rural environment of Iași County, we were able to identify the main cultural features that are strongly visible in the local community. The collective mentality of the rural population, being in transition from the Traditional-Communist to the Modern-European, was considered an impediment in the analysis. The sampling of the ethnic population (according to the socio-demographic indicators) led to the identification of the main typologies of the rural communities in Iasi region. Essentially, culture becomes the mainstay of promoting national heritage in the rural area of this region. The abstract drafted in English (10-15 rows, with special reference to research results).

Key words: culture, rural space, migration, integration, minority

The process of minorities integration involves a gradual development of communities that are living in the same space and interacting permanently. The interdependence between ethnic groups that are sharing common values and

similar behavior, highlights an active engagement in the society. In this case, the ethnic integration leads to the production of a cultural mosaic in the European spirit of diversity.

■ Armenian	■ Jewish	■ Greek	■ Russian-Lippoyan
■ Rrome	■ Ukrainian	■ German	■ Arabic

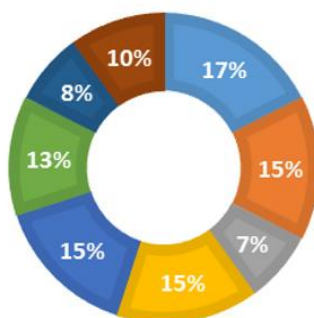


Figure 1 The distribution of minorities in the Iasi rural area

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Cultural diversity can be an innovative element in the European society due to long-term opportunities. In the first stage we wanted to identify the main minorities that we can find in Iasi country.

An interesting aspect to be analyzed was the migration wave. In this case we see the formation of a nation through the integration of minorities, in the opinion of John W. Berry being "a process of cultural and psychological exchange resulting from the continuous contact between people belonging to different cultures." (Berry J.W., 2006).

Attention of writer Karina Vargas Hernández focused on the term "cultural diversity" that emphasizes "diversity within and between states" (Hernández K.V., 2008). In her opinion, cultural diversity is focused on promoting culture among states. The need for an intercultural exchange with the role of balancing differences between minorities is thus achieved. Cultural identity from Carlos Perlo's perspective

plays a very important role in the integration process because "development cannot be achieved without cultural exchanges and interactions." (Perlo C., 2006).

Essential in the analysis was the genealogical factor. The respondent had to mention from which generation of his family he has inherited the ethnic side. Also are important the causes that led to their establishment/emigration in Romania are related to political/social conflicts, deportations or remote genetic legacy. The correlation between the genetic factor and the causes of steadiness in the rural area of the city have highlighted the desire for continuous evolution of the ethnic. 25% of the ethnic residents belong to the first generation, that settled in the Iasi rural area due to the political or social conflicts that took place in the big metropolises. 37% of this population that represents the second-generation, came as a result of deportations. 27% of them belong to the 3rd generation, presenting only some traits specific to the ethnicity of origin.

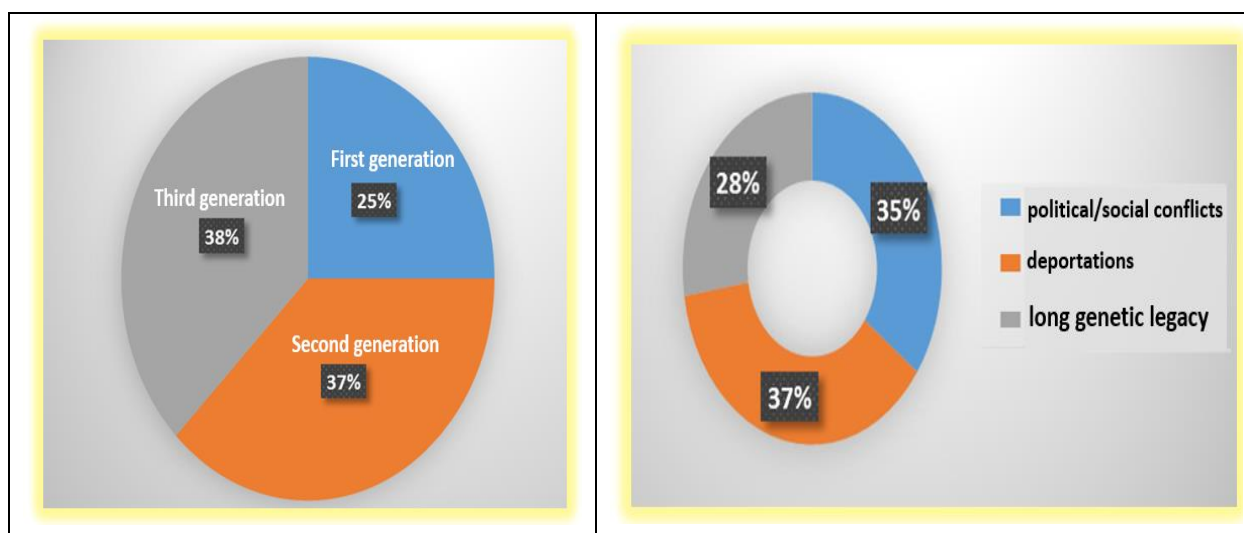


Figure 2 and 3 The correlation between the genetic factor and the causes of migration

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Sylvie de Tirilly defines minorities as "an ethnic group in a state that differs from the majority population by some of its characteristics: cultural, linguistic, national." (Tirilly S., 1995). To highlight the above-mentioned aspects, I used some statistical methods to identify a series of features of the members of the contemporary ethnic community living in the rural area of Iasi County. The demographic structure of the minority population gives us an overview of the evolution of the history of this community, depending on the level of education and the income obtained by the ethnic.

Geodemography becomes a classification tool for the minority population, depending on the type of area they live in. In the first instance, the

spatial and socio-economic aspects of infrastructure, as well as the facilitation of the development and implementation of an ethnic community model, highlight the "human capital behavior" (Otiman P.I., 2010).

The geodemographic analysis applied to the rural area involves several important stages, the area on which the analysis is being undertaken, the time period, and the demographic phenomenon studied (migration). "Geodemographic transformations determined the social conditions of the population in a specific region, these conditions being as reference for the relationship between the minorities and other social organizations (accessibility to social services of education, training and local infrastructure), functionality and economic situation in this space. Social conditions are closely linked to all economic,

cultural, political and ideological analysis" (Bar M. *et al*, 2010).

The most effective methods of economic development assessment are those based on the criteria: geographic (rural location opportunities - relief, location), demographic (population density), economic (enterprises, associations) and social (education, culture).

In order to determine the age of the ethnic respondent, we made a pyramid taking in account the variable gender. Taking into account the graph we can see observe that young people aged up to 20 years are predominantly female, instead, the

30-year-old achieves high values for men. On the gradual scale of ages, we can see that another maximum male value is 80 years, indicating that the life average expectancy for ethnic men from Iasi county is higher than that the women. Ethnic people coming from rural space from Iasi region are educated, with insignificant differences between people with college or faculty (bachelor, master, doctorate). The high level of preparedness of the minorities in the rural area leads us to a high income level. The reality in the Romanian rural area highlights the low level of wages obtained by ethnic (between 1600-2000 lei or 2001-2500 lei).

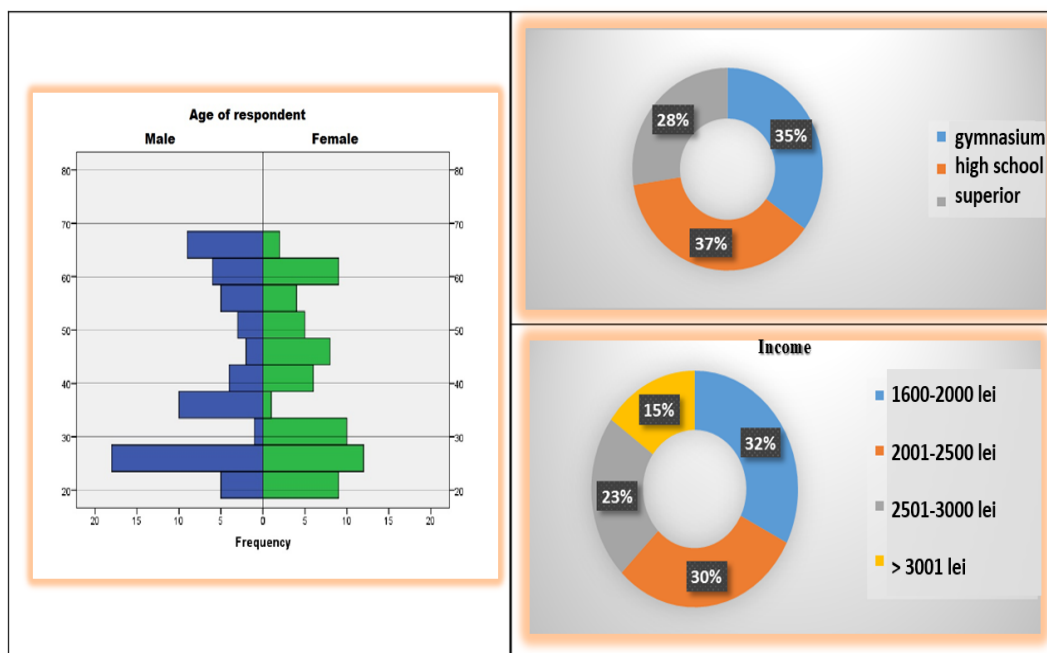


Figure 4 Socio-demographic analysis of the community

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The idea of rural space can easily be explained by Simon Maxwell's economic theories: "a certain kind of landscape, a territory in which rural activity is intense, which generally bears the mark of man: fields, orchards, pastures, '. In essence, it refers to two primordial elements, named space (the land/agricultural area) and the community (households/ethnic). Through various anthropic activities undertaken by minorities, both elements contribute to the development of the rural.

The economic transition process has brought many changes in agriculture and rural development in Iasi region. Specialists highlighted in some studies that a number of issues must be addressed at rural level: fragmentation of agricultural property, the existence of an aging population; the low degree of technical modernization and the lack of material resources.

Along the transition from the centralized market to the economy one, changing reforms have

begun the purpose in this sector. The first step was to create economic reforms aimed to support the structure of the agricultural market.

In rural areas, it is imperative to focus on advice, training, exchange of experience or the provision of agricultural credit, which can be effective in combating the existing rural difficulties.

Providing sustainable financial services, complemented by information and training services, we will motivate precarious people to develop economic and dynamic activities to meet subsistence needs. The major impediment is the lack of financial means, which is a difficult barrier to overcome in the contemporary era.

Currently, agriculture and rural development in Iasi continue to be in a crisis situation, with the economy being unstable. In order to ensure the future of the Iasi village, a realistic vision focused on the specialization and qualification of human capital is needed.

The problems presented above lead to the need for rural development models, starting from

the historical factor to the concrete one. The starting point of this study will be based on community concepts, and later on the analysis of

rural space, improving the functionality of the rural environment (modern mentality and advanced technology).

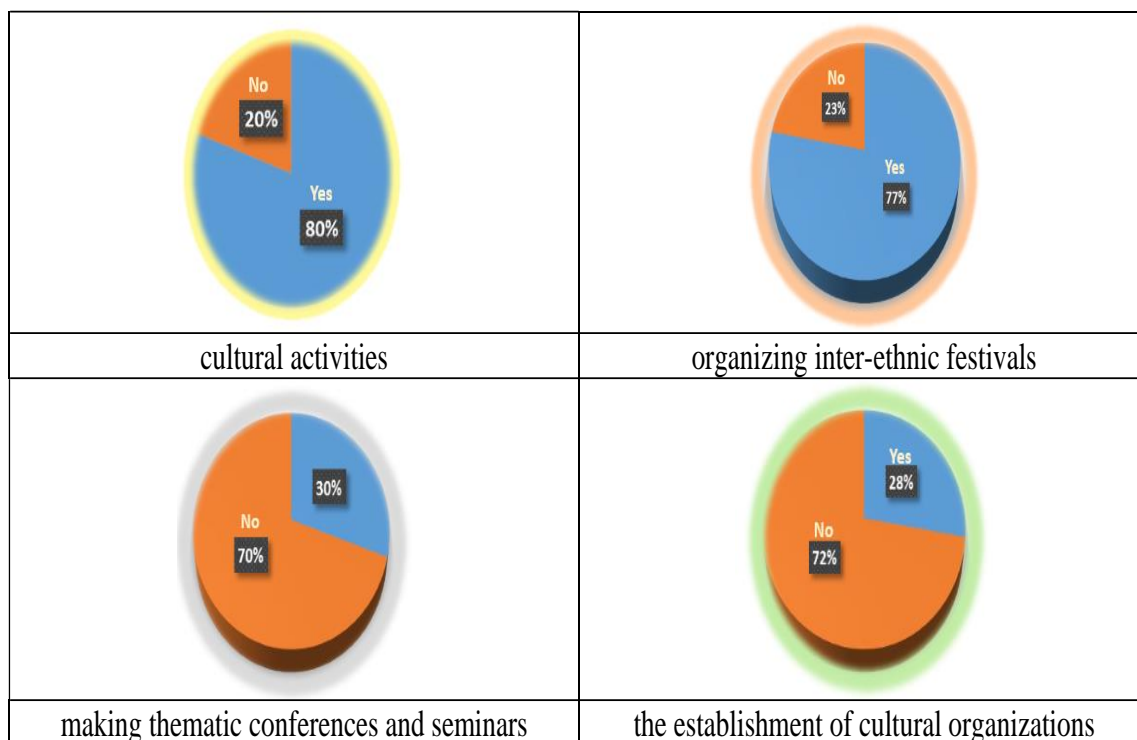


Figure 5 The methods of minorities cultural integration

Cultural integration is in line with the community's desire to promote culture, traditions and ethnic customs in the rural area of Iasi County. Local government support by organizing large-scale cultural activities facilitates the integration process. Another argument refers to collaboration with educational institutions, non-governmental organizations or minority groups.

Collaboration of the mixed ethnic community with its cultural partners represents an important source of promotion of the rural area. Culture can influence the difference between the social classes and this development of the ethnic community on the territory of Romania, the access to information becoming easier within the community and in relation to other minorities. The main pillars we can identify are language and religion, which can be considered a first form of integration. The integration of minorities in Iasi is analyzed in several aspects such as: cultural activities, organizing inter-ethnic festivals, making thematic conferences and seminars, the establishment of cultural organizations.

"The population of a territory is defined through its characteristics (number, education and occupation) influences the economic, social, and cultural aspects of that space." (Mardale I.V., 2014). Demographic studies conducted at the level of the European continent highlight the existence

of large minority communities. In this case we identify a series of dimensions that categorically influence the cultural integration of minorities in the Iasi area by promoting ethnic traditions and customs. The phenomenon of globalization captured ethnicities as a whole, their expressions becoming cultural footprints of the past, remaining visible due to demographic dynamics. The ethnic members, have become directly involved in the cultural activities undertaken by the local community. "During the communist period and after, the Romanian village has undergone major transformations, being in a continuous process of modifications, which have led to the change of the specificities of the localities, disturbing the demographic, economic and social balance" (Mardale I.V., 2014).

These events have the role of promoting ethnic culture in the Iasi rural area through partnerships with local authorities. All these aspects refer to the complex process of cultural minority integration. "In the case of the Romanian state, after the change of political and administrative regime in 1989, the Romanian society entered a complex transition process from a communist country to a European one.

A number of changes take place in all the components of Romanian society. The rural area, which is one of the main components of the

Romanian society, geodemographic transformations need to be achieved in rural areas

especially."(Mardale I.V., 2014).

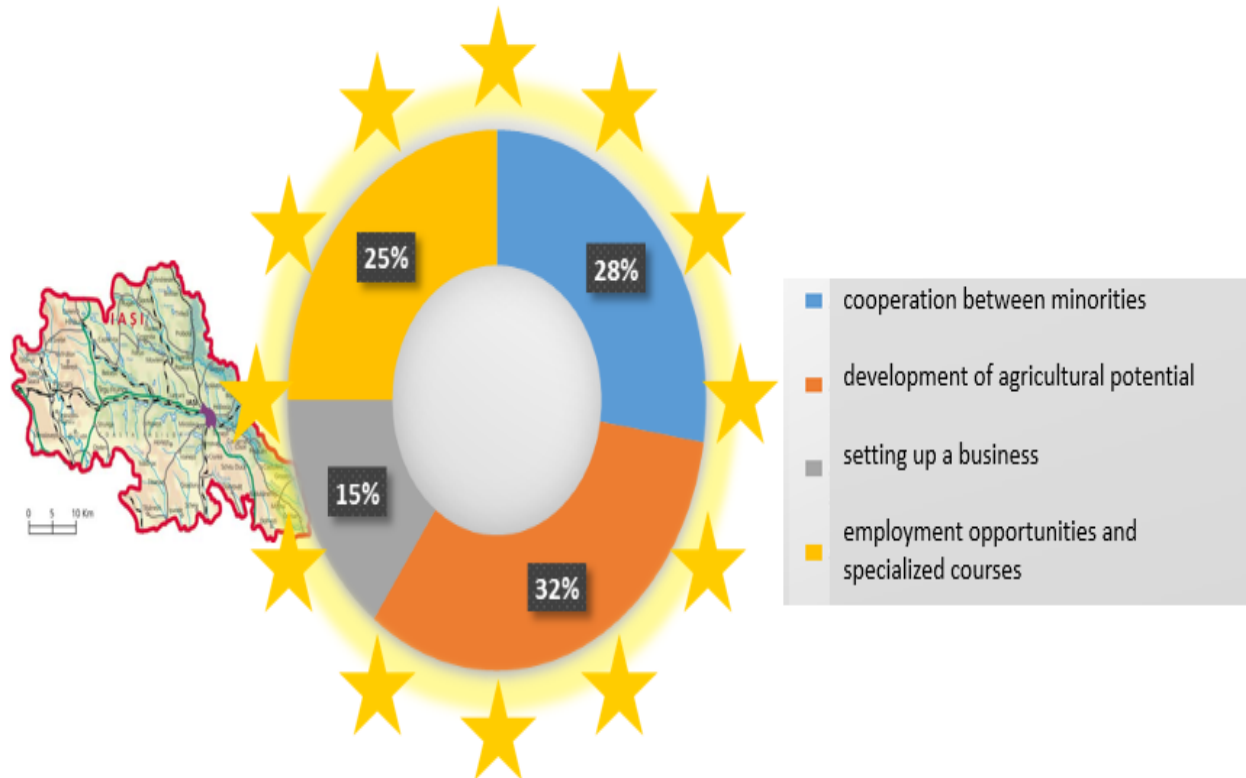


Figure 6 The minorities perspective of in the contemporary era

The activities carried out in the Iasi rural area are limited to the social and cultural factors. The result is to obtain some models of sustainable development of the unique and complex ethnic community in the analysis of the rural space. The minorities' perspective on community development shows: 28% communication among citizens, 32% retirement of agricultural potential, 15% establishment of a business and 25% employment opportunities and specialization courses. In building the cultural development models we will take into account the traditional-customary side. It has been found that if some traditions have disappeared as an effect of "modernization of large production", in the rural area are still preserved the ethnography and folklore treasures, crafts that constitute great wealth.

CONCLUSIONS

The issue of promoting ethnic culture in Iasi County is an important issue in the context in which the development of rural space has three components: land, labor and human capital. Ban-Ki Moon, the United Nations Secretary-General, said that "the young people of today's world are the ones who can be the leaders of a global movement that will lead to the patterns of the past and are the ones who can guide the world towards a sustainable future".

In this context, the promoters of the ethnic culture will be the new generations, which will lead to the perpetuation of ancient traditions and customs. Achieving the proposed objectives in promoting minority culture in the rural area also implies a change in the collective mentality. Resources must be used in a rational and effective way in order to maintain the potential of economic development by ensuring prosperity, environment protection and social cohesion.

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