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**INTERCULTURAL AND INTER-
CONFESSIONAL RELATIONS IN A ROMANIAN
COUNTRYSIDE**

The paper advances a theory of the relationship between multi-ethnicity and inter-confessional communication, based on the results of a survey conducted in a typical multicultural, multiethnic Romanian village, Valea Dacilor. The structured questionnaires and the direct interviews, which the authors considered the most appropriate method for the research project, were applied during October-December 2006 to a sample of 120 inhabitants, aged 18 to 84. Our main objective consisted in constructing a typical interethnic and inter-confessional relationship profile, in an apparently non-homogeneous community. The results have shown the existence of a very well structured network of relationships, accounting for a good level of communication across ethnic and confessional borders.

Introduction. Contextual analysis

A nexus of geographic and historical facts have placed Romania in what Claudio Magris¹ has called *l'Est bigarrée* (the colourful East), where one comes across multiple ways of thinking, multiple traditions, nations, languages and religions. Although George Simons² speaks of *eurodiversity*, a “vast range of cultural differences that have become factors needing attention if we are to live and work together cooperatively”, the Balkans remain, as Maria Todorova³ remarked, “the Volksmuseum of Europe”. Romania belongs to this region with its southern part, the Dobrudja province, space of historical controversies, fluid borders, and different religions, considered as faiths, beliefs or spiritual options, in either the public sphere, of ideological debates, or the private sphere, of intimate perceptions⁴. The

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various intersections of these spaces create, among other factors, islands of identity, whose disposal may generate either a multinational or a poly ethnical state⁵, characterized by multicultural interaction.

One of the oldest definitions of culture as a concept, from an anthropological point of view, was provided in 1889 by E.B. Taylor: "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, traditions, and other capabilities or habits acquired by a member of a society."⁶ Hofstede⁷ defines culture as "the collective programming of mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another." In other words, "any culture is primarily a system for creating, sending, storing, and processing information... *communication underlies everything*. Culture can be likened to an enormous, subtle, extraordinarily complex computer"⁸. Culture, than, is a matter of inputs and of interrelations, whose harmony dictates its well-functioning.

In this context, the issue of interethnic and inter-confessional communication becomes a key aspect of understanding culture. According to Jackson⁹, in line with Samuel Huntington's thesis of the cultural wars, resulting from civilizations' clash, "dysfunctional intergroup relations are undoubtedly among the most crucial threats facing our species". In order to avoid dysfunctional relations, communities have to be aware of what diversity means, and in which way it can be managed in a liberal vision.

Carpinschi¹⁰ attempts to define culture from the ethnic point of view. In the web of perceptions shaping the ethnic identity, religion plays a leading role. As ethnic groups are formed, mainly, in the poly-ethnic state¹¹, as an effect of migration, or military conflicts, there are significant differences between the generation that actually lived the event having dislocated the group, and the following generations. The second generation gets an ethnic identity through the mediation of religion¹².

Still, postmodernism is characterized by negotiators who pursue win-win solutions in ethnical debates. The multicultural liberalism paradigm proposed by Levente Salat, following Will Kymlicka, advocates the myth of a *happy Babel*¹³, by acceptance and cohabitation, together with a customization of human rights, to cover the specific needs of minorities.

Salat acknowledges the existence of 200 official states of the world, for 10,000 ethnic groups, which gives rise to tensions, to a curvature of the ethno-political order¹⁴. One way out that Salat theorizes is the multicultural liberalism¹⁵, which highlights the idea of living apart together, like in some sort of postmodern marriage, where respecting the *otherness* is the key principle.

Although, apparently, there is an opposition between liberalism and the nation, this can be avoided in the modern societies even populated by very religious people. Miscoiu¹⁶ states that the opposition between nation and liberalism is nothing else but a false conflict. Although conservatism is naturally associated with tradition, religion, culture, *status quo*, restoration, which all point to the idea of nation, Miscoiu argues that liberalism, with

its plurality of interests and ideas, serves equally well the modern concept of nation, regarded as the political space where a collective, integrative identity is expressed. It is, in our opinion, a modern concept of nation. The ethnic mosaic of our times in modern liberal democracies relaxes the danger of monomanias. Thus, although cultural harmony still is, in great respect, a matter of laws, freedoms, civil rights, etc. the micro-abrasion processes taking place at the interface of the various groups, or between individuals belonging to different groups, open a new field of study.

Ethnic situation in Romania

Our purpose, in the article, is to provide an example of inter-ethnic cooperation in the countryside, in a country like Romania, where ethnic populations have always represented a significant percentage of the inhabitants, although it is declining over time. We start with the situation of the year 1930, according to the census results published by Manuila¹⁷, and to the results of the Census Report from 2002¹⁸, referring to the ethnic and confessional situation of the '90s. In 1930, in a territory of 316,710 square km, with a population of 18,025,896 inhabitants, 71% of the ethnics were Romanians, and the rest were minorities, as Hungarians (8%), Germans (4.1%). Other important minorities were the Bulgarian and Russians in the southern and, respectively, northern part of the country. In addition, the majority (75%) of the inhabitants was Orthodox, and the percentage the Roman-Catholic and Greek-Catholic churches was visible at the national level, as shown in Figure 1:

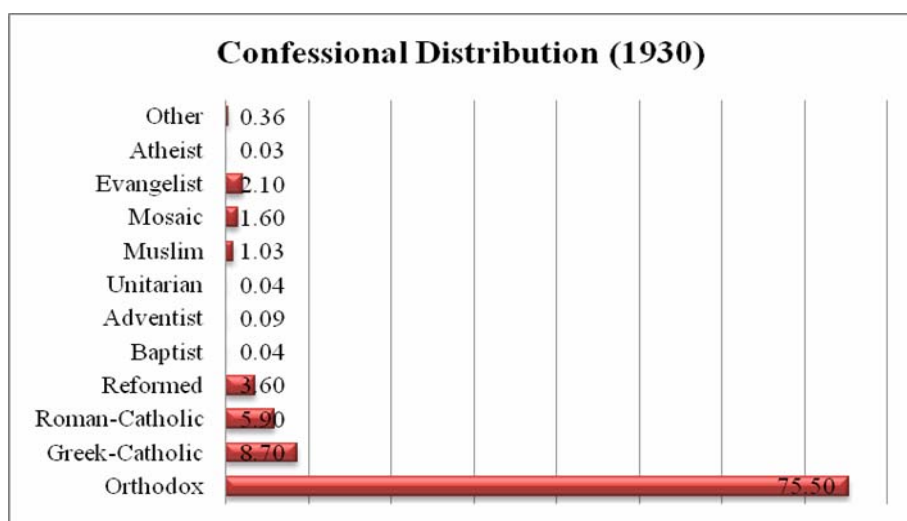


Figure 1. The confessional distribution of Romanians in 1930

Between 1930 and 1938, 28,580 foreign citizens settled in Romania, while 11,709 Romanian citizens left Romania¹⁹. The first years of communism, until 1950, when the borders were hermetically closed, witnessed waves of political emigration, which altered the distribution of minorities.

During the communist regime, the minority religions were victimized. In 1957, the Turkish and Tartar schools in Romania were closed, followed, in 1967, by the Muslim seminary in Medgidia. Religious publications were inexistent and, more importantly, Muslims were not allowed to take part in the ritual pilgrimage to Mecca, a sacred duty for everyone in their religion. After 1972, as Popovic²⁰ notes, some privileges were granted to the Muslim community, in order to improve the image of the country in the eyes of the Arab countries. Still, these privileges did not account for the religious and ethnic privations of the regime. The effects of these events on the ethnic conscience and on the interethnic relationships in this part of the country were hardly examined. Twenty years after the religious and ethnic liberalization, in a democratic society, we embark upon an evaluation of the inter-group relationships in the Romanian Dobrudja, using adequate statistical instruments for obtaining a representative image of an eclectic heritage.

According to the latest census, conducted in 2002²¹ (considering a population of 21,680,974 inhabitants per 237,499 square kilometers, the area of the country), the majority of the inhabitants (89.5%) are Romanians. The share of Romanians in the rural area is 46.9%, showing an urban distribution of the majority of Romanians. A similar distribution characterizes the Hungarian ethnics. As far as German ethnics are concerned, two thirds of them are located in the urban area. The Roma population (6 out of 10 Roma persons) and Ukrainian ethnics (4 out of 5 people) are mostly located in the rural area. The structure of the population according to the mother tongue is highly correlated with the ethnicity, as 91% of the population declared that their mother tongue is Romanian, 6.7% declared Hungarian as their mother tongue and only 1.1% declared Roma language as their mother tongue. As far as the confessional distribution is concerned, the majority of the inhabitants are Orthodox (86.9%). Other confessions in Romania are Roman Catholicism (5%), Lutheranism, Calvinism (3.5%), Greek-Catholicism (1%), Pentecostalism (1%), Baptism (0.5%), Islamism (0.24%) and Judaism (0.04%). Only 0.1% from the total declared to be atheist. The percentage of atheists decreased by one third after the fall of the Communist regime, but still is three times higher than in 1930.

There is a significant correlation between ethnicity and religion. Most Romanians are Greek Orthodox (94%), as well as most of the Ukrainians (79%), Serbians (96%) and of the Roma population (82%). German people are mostly Catholics (60%), as well as 41% of Hungarians and Bulgarians. Muslim confession characterizes most of the Tartars and Turks living in

Romania. These two minorities are of particular interest to us, in relation to their interaction with Romanian ethnics. Their specificity consists in their geographic concentration. Out of 29,080 Turks living in Romania (0.13% of the total population), 24,295 (83.5%) live in Constanta (3.3% of the county's population), 3,390 (11.65%) in Talca, and the rest in Bucharest, Calarasi, and Braila. Out of 24,649 Tartars living in Romania (0.11% of the total population), 23,894 (97%) live in Constanta county – 3.3% of the county's population.

The ethnic map of the Dobrudja region, which sheds light on the concentration of Turks and Tartars in this area, is shown in Figure 2 below which highlights the multi-ethnic conglomerate in the region, exhibiting an intricate and intrinsic cohabitation pattern reminding of Brauner's *Conglomerados*²²:

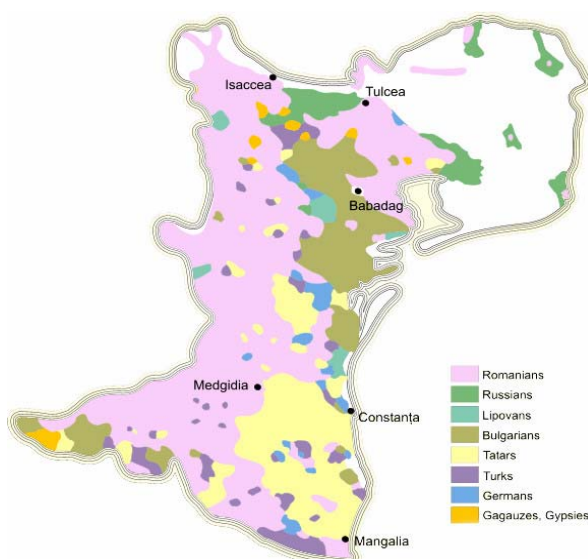


Figure 2. The ethnographic map of Dobrudja

Source: www.restromania.ro/Geografie/RegiuneaDobrudja.htm (accessed May 25, 2008)

Valea Dacilor (Hendekkarakuyusu, in Turkish), situated in Constanta county, in the periphery of Medgidia, an important cultural center of the Turk and Tartar minority, exhibits a stratified structure of its inhabitants, who belong to three confessional groups (Orthodox, old rite Orthodox, and Muslim), and four ethnic groups (Romanians, Turks, Tartars, and Lippovans). The village is representative from the economic point of view for the Romanian countryside and from the ethnic point of view for this ancient Romanian province. Similar ethnical and confessional composition is found all over Dobrudja. This diversity, on both coordinates, does not appear anywhere else in the country. For this reason, designing this survey

into a complex village it allows us to study the multiple interactions between various ethnics of the same confession or of different confessions, and to draw conclusions that can be easily adapted in environments with a less diverse structure (three ethnic groups, two religions, etc.).

Recent similar studies

Poledna, François Ruegg, and Rus conducted a similar research between 2000 and 2003. The study concludes that Romanians are not so favourable to other ethnic groups in the country. This is particularly appropriate for those living in mono cultural areas, which explains the significant differences between the national sample and the Transylvanian one. On the contrary, Roma people had the most favorable attitude towards the others, and the least favorable towards themselves. This can be, if not an explanation, a helping factor in understanding the identification denial typical to this ethnic group. Also, in the context of reciprocal images, relevant is the distribution of answers to the question: "What were the reasons for which in our country there was not a conflict so violent like the one in Kosovo?" The answers most frequently chosen by the Romanians were: "Romanians are generally more tolerant than Serbs (58%), and "Hungarians in Romania were better treated than Albanians in Kosovo" (54%). The Magyar options were: "Hungarians in Romania are more patient than Albanians in Kosovo" (52%)²³. Relations between Romanians and Hungarians in Romania, compared to the ones before 1989, are shown in Figure 3 below²⁴:

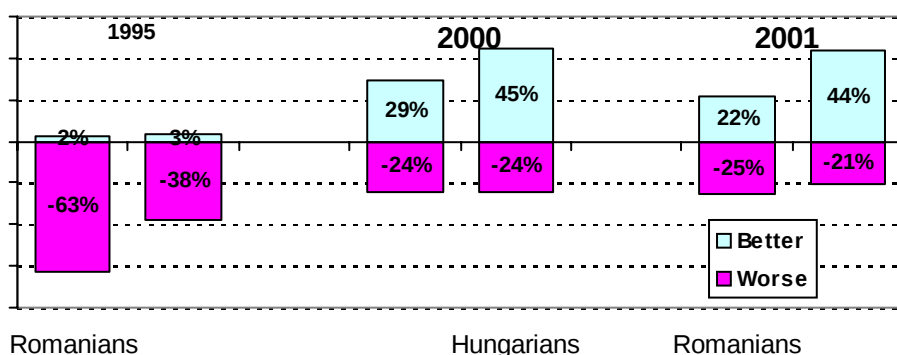


Figure 3. Distribution of the answers to the question "Are the Romanian-Hungarian relationships better or worse than before 1989?" in Romanian and Hungarian samples

Differences to 100% account for those who responded that nothing changed and to non-responses. As it can be seen, the mentality evolves, from a predominance of those who think that the relationships are getting

worse (especially Romanians), in 1995, to a visible perception of better relationships, in 2001.

Research methodology

Our objective is to reveal intercultural and inter confessional relationships between the Christian Orthodox community and the Muslim community in Valea Dacilor²⁵, a typical village in Constanta county, where we can find similar ethnical and confessional structures as in the other villages. The paper's aim is to enrich and refine knowledge concerning certain social processes and cultures between different ethnics.

Data collecting²⁶ represents the method of obtaining information from people interviewed in a statistical survey²⁷. The survey whose results we present in the paper was conducted in the multiethnic village with Orthodox Romanians, Lippovans of old Orthodox rite, Turks and Tartars living here together²⁸, therefore the sample construction took into account the ethnic structure. The administrative territory of Medgidia is of 8,987 hectares and includes the following localities: Medgidia - the urban settlement as such, third in size and importance in Dobrudja, Remus-Opreanu and Valea Dacilor, two suburban villages situated on the first development ring of the city.

The area is traditionally known for its good multicultural and inter-confessional relations. The first Turks settled in Dobrudja, in Babadag, in 1264 A.D. From 1419 until 1877, Dobrudja was part of the Ottoman Empire. In the modern era, Dobrudja was subject of many political treaties, which changed its political status (today, Northern Dobrudja belongs to Romania and Southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria) and its population mix. Turks went to Bulgaria after the Russian-Turkish war in 1877-1878, and only partially returned. The "deportation to Baragan", in 1951, moved forcefully 40,320 inhabitants from Banat to Dobrudja (ethnographically, this explains the names of the new settlements, which took the names of the old villages of origin). They were Romanians, Germans, Serbs, refugees from Bessarabia and Bucovina, Macedo-Romanians. They were kept in Dobrudja until 1957, but some of them remained there forever²⁹.

The method we chose for data collecting, as appropriate for this research on a representative sample of villagers, was the **personal interview** or **face-to-face interview**³⁰), through a field survey³¹, using a structured undisguised questionnaire presented in Appendix 2. The questionnaire uses all types of questions, that is, *open questions, questions with pre-coded answers, multi-choice questions as well as dichotomy questions*³². We were interested in characteristics of a greater number of individuals, the intercultural and inter confessional relationships in the village. The group of individuals studied is typical for the total population of the village. The methods of statistical data analysis we used were hypothesis tests³³, chi-square test³⁴, study of the deviations around an arbitrary

value³⁵, identifying and characterizing central values³⁶ one-way analysis of variance³⁷, the regression model³⁸ and Fisher test³⁹.

Sample profile

The set of variables considered when defining the sample included age, gender, marital status and educational level. After collecting the data, the next step was data classification and summarizing in order to reach the typical phenomena, to check initial assumptions and make analyses. Sampling method is random sampling⁴⁰

The number of subjects inquired is 120 from which 60 are Romanians (50% of the sample) 30 are Turks (25%) and 30 are Tartars (25%). Christian Orthodox believers form one half and the Islamic believers form the other half of the sample.

The sample structure is shown in Figure 4 bellow. The sample structure is balanced between gender categories.

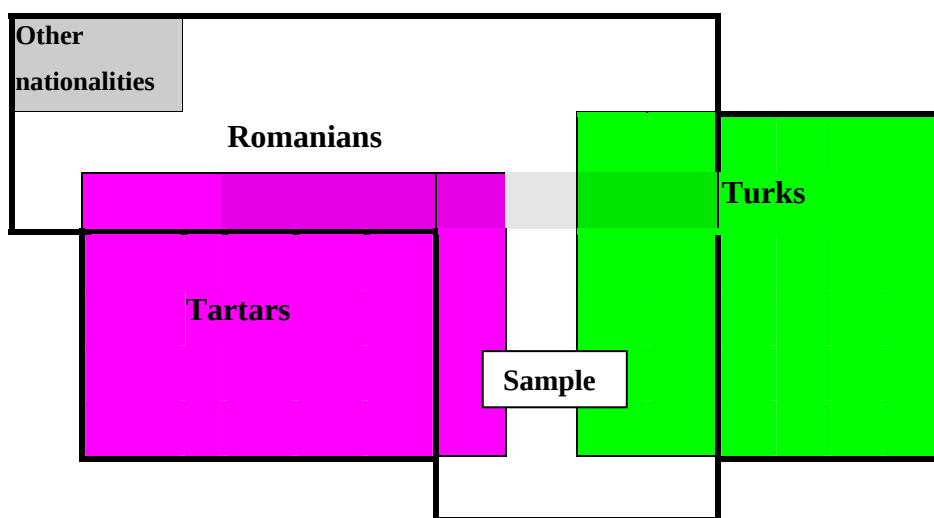


Figure 4. Sample construction

They are also of various **ages**: adults persons have an average age of 38 years, they are adults knowing and adopting the religious rules and beliefs from their parents and they are continuing teaching them to their children. In their household, the number of members varies from 1 to 8, with an average of 3.6 persons per household. People in this village have different legal status, most of them are married people, 57%, followed by single persons, 27%, and lower percentages widows (9%) and divorced (6%).

People interviewed have different backgrounds as regards the **education level**. There is only one person who did not attend any school, 12 people were only through elementary school, 43 finished gymnasium, 58 went further to Professional Schools or High Schools and only 6 persons

graduated from a higher form of education. With respect to the present **occupation** 55 persons are employees of different private or state organizations, the others being engaged in other activities as follows: 21 retired people still working the land, 2 owners, 12 housewives/husbands involved in land works, 5 agricultural specialists, 15 pupils or students, 7 unemployed and 2 in military service. As far as **languages** are concerned, out of 120 persons, of different religions in equal proportions, more than half (67) speak Romanian language at home in their families, this includes all 60 Romanians and 7 of the people of Turkish (3) and Tartar (4) ethnicity. In what concerns the rest, 10 Turks speak both Turkish and Romanian, 18 speak only Turkish and 25 Tartars speak only Tartar language.

Data analysis. Interethnic and interreligious relations

To the first question, “**How would you characterize your relationships with your fellow villagers of different ethnicity and religion?**”⁴¹, persons interviewed, answered mostly “Yes” for the category “*Friendship relations*” (79 people – 65.8%), followed close by the next category chosen, “*Neighborly relations*” (77 people – 64.2%). This is natural, people have grown up together, they live in a small location, and these kinds of relationships are inevitable, mainly in the countryside. People do not have work relations because they do not have the opportunity to work together; the village does not offer many employment opportunities. Actually, a great part of the inhabitants of Valea Dacilor work in Constanta, or at the cement factory, LaFarge Romcim in Medgidia, or in Cernavoda at the nuclear plant. This is possible because of the position of the village in the county. As concerns the other relationships, there are a few mentioned (9.2 %); there are people of different culture that are related by alliances (marriages, adoptions and others). The null hypothesis (stating that there is no connection between the respective variables) is accepted here. The significance value is high above 0.05 for each of the relation categories. There is not much of a connection between the ethnicity and the answers chosen. This could be, mostly influenced by the environment in which they live, their way of behaving. In the same context, answers for the following question: “**How do you get along with your fellow villagers of different ethnicity and religion?**” show the distribution in Figure 5:

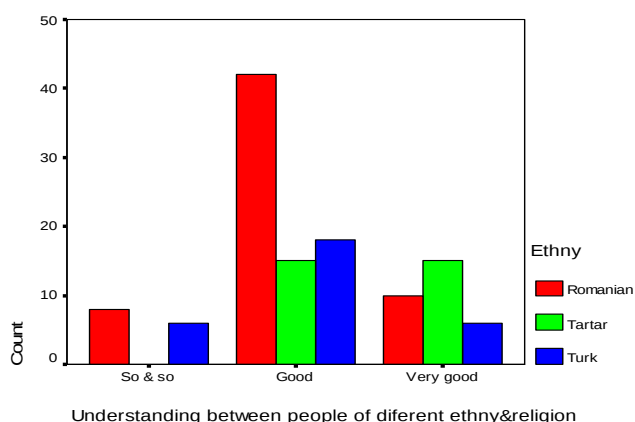


Figure 5. Distribution of opinion on other ethnics

To evaluate the level of understanding between persons of different cultures and religions, how well they get along, none of the respondents stated “Very bad” or “Bad” understanding in his/her opinion. There were 14 people choosing the option “So-so”, 75 have chosen “Good understanding” and 31 “Very good”. In general, people get along well with each other. The most frequent situation is that people of different ethnicities have chosen the variant of having “Good” understanding: 62.5% more than half of the population. A share of 13.3% Romanians, no Tartars and 20% Turks consider that there is a “so and so” understanding level between the villagers of different ethnics and religions. More than half of the respondents for each group consider they have “Good” relations with representative of other confessions. There are some people whose answer was “Very good relation” but we personally believe that this was a bit of an exaggeration - we do not get along very well even with many of the people in our own ethnic group.

Several research hypotheses were tested using statistical tests. A first hypothesis is that there is no relationship between the type of culture and the level of understanding. The chi-square test shows a low significance value, below 0.05 which means that the null hypothesis (initial assumption) is rejected, and we do have a relation between ethnicity and the type of understanding. In order to have a peaceful life and to live in a good way people should have good relationships. At the same time, 45% Romanians say that they know “a little” about the Muslim culture and religion in their village, only 23.3% giving a straight affirmative answer. The other 31.7 % do not know or are not interested. Thus, 37.9% Tartars and only 19.4% Turks know a little about Christianity, but on the other hand, 34.5% Tartars and 45.2% Turks gave a straight affirmative answer. The others do not know or do not care. Overall, the acknowledgement level is high enough among people, Christians and Muslims too. It does not necessarily mean

that they studied the respective traditions; they just picked up the information as they went on in life.

Another initial hypothesis to be tested claims that there is no relationship between the types of acknowledgement and ethnicities and the chi-square test confirms it. There is hardly any connection between the level of knowledge and ethnicity, because the significance level is above 0.05, and we do not think that ethnicity will have an influence on that. By living closely together in a small community, the respective people could not have helped finding out about each other's ways and customs. As regards the opinion about the other religions in the village the situation is as follows: 35% Romanians, 48.3% Tartars and 38.7% Turks believe that religions are the same, the same not in the meaning of objects of belief but in the sense of what religion means. Surprisingly enough, two Muslims think that Christianity is better than the Islamic religion and they are among the three who were considering converting to another religion. 20% Romanians believe that Islam is less good than their religion (this is due to the fact that Romanians represent the majority group in the village) and only 10.3% Tartars and 6.5% Turks think that Christianity is less good than Islam (they are a little reticent when making such affirmations due to their minority status). Large percentages, 45% Romanians, 37.9% Tartars and 51.6% Turks could not give a definite answer or refrained from making any comparisons.

Also, as we wanted to check whether there are different opinions on confessions from one ethnic group to another ethnic group, a third initial hypothesis for this situation was that there is no relation between ethnicity and the personal opinions on the other confessions. As the significance value in the chi-square test is high above 0.05, we are to say that there is no relation between the two variables. This could be the effect of other influence factors, as for example the way in which people were educated, previous experiences with persons of other religion, or an experience directly related to the respective religion. So, the initial assumption is accepted. We do not have enough statistical evidence to reject the initial assumption.

In addition, there are two more questions: **"What is your opinion regarding persons that belong to different ethnicities?"** to which 3.3 % Romanians say that one can never be too careful around people of different ethnicities. Tartars and Turks did not give such answers. Even as majority groups, Romanians, feel somehow threatened (maybe they keep in mind our historical battles with the Ottoman Empire), 6.7% Romanians, 10% Tartars and 6.7% Turks think that usually one cannot trust a person of a different culture. 28.3% Romanians, 16.7 % Tartars and 40 % Turks could not give an answer. 56.7% Romanians, 46.7% Tartars and 36.7 % Tartars said that one could usually have confidence in a person of different religion. The rest of 5.0% Romanians, 26.7% Tartars and 16.7% Turks said they could always have confidence. It is assumed that there is no relationship between

ethnicity and everyone's choice. The significance value is not very high above 0.05 but it is higher so there is no relation between the two. The hypothesis is accepted.

At the same time, 40% Romanians, 70% Tartars and 50% Turks agree that it is better for groups to maintain distinct their customs and traditions. No Romanian agrees with the variant "Better to adapt and mix", while 3.3% Tartars and 13.3% Turks did so. This is specific for the Romanians, as they are the majority group. 43.3% Romanians, 20% Tartars and 20% Turks agree with tolerance and the others 16.7% Romanians, 6.7% Tartars and 16.7% Turks do not know what would be the best solution. Applying the statistical test, we can say that there is a relation between the two variables with respect to the considerations of the majority group and of the minority group. When asked if they would help a fellow villager belonging to other groups the questioned people answered according to the distribution shown in Figure 6:

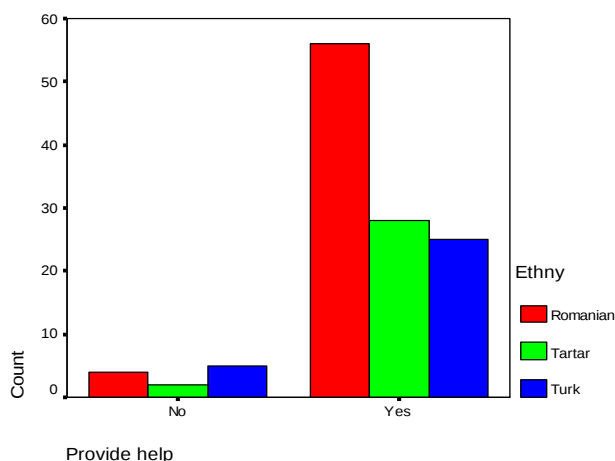


Figure 6. Distribution of answers according to the willingness to offer help to each other

There is a stochastic relation between the two variables and it is consistent with the idea about majority and minority groups. More than half of all the samples considered would provide help, and it is not only because of their ethnicity. The fact that they have lived in the same village maybe for a very long, time, the values learned and grown into, counts a lot too. Regarding the assurances that they will receive help from other ethnics when needed, the results are the ones shown in Figure 7:

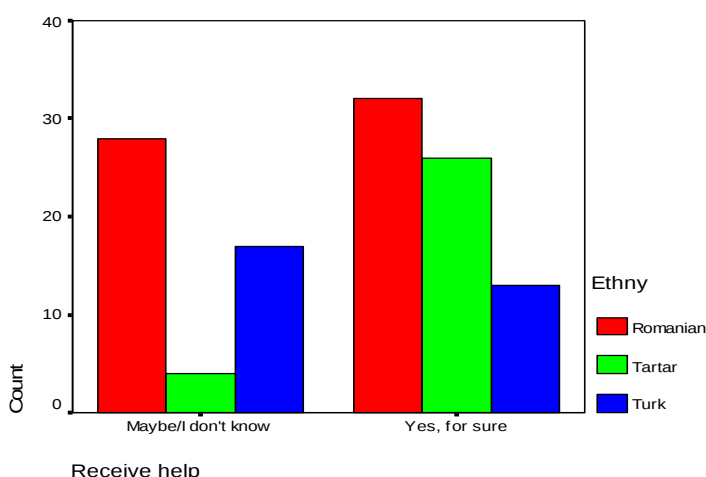


Figure 7. Distribution of answers according to the expectations of help from other ethnics

We checked the assumption that there was no connection between receiving help and ethnicity, but the significance level between the two is very low, so a relation does exist. Of course, if they provide help they expect to get help. At the same time, 46.7 % Romanians, 13.3% Tartars and 56.7% Turks are not sure that they will receive help. On the other hand, 53.3% Romanians, 86.7 % Tartars and 43.3% Turks are sure of receiving help. Moreover, everyone is certain that in the situation that help is needed, this help would not be denied – No one chose answer “No”. People in the countryside are often misbelieved to be somewhat ignorant and without much to say, this is not the case. The majority have a balanced image about the world as it is now and about human nature. Most of the answers are around the middle of the scale. The ones that have chosen the extreme points are only a few. This situation is normal, for some people with a certain degree of education, who do not live in isolation.

With respect to ethnicity, the statistical test shows no connection between the variables. To make such statements, people do not have to be influenced by their culture in a specific way. Concerning the religious belief, its variation is explained best by variations in the predictor variables: Believe in Saints, Believe in Mohamed, Believe in Miracles, Believe in Heaven, Believe in After Life, Believe in Christ, Believe in God, Believe in Virgin Mary. Some other variables are explaining the variation in the Religious belief, but not as strong as these. For example the following models:

1. As dependent variable, we considered the meaning of fasting and independent variable the knowledge of other people's religions. We

assumed that different levels of awareness of other religions create significant differences on the attitude toward fasting.

Model Summary:

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.639	.409	.357	.40

^a Predictors: (Constant), Dependent on What fasting means, Knowledge concerning the other confessions, Opinion regarding the other confessions, Religious attitude, Fasting, Going to church, Praying. The explanatory variables explain only 40.9% of the variance of Religious belief. While Praying, Fasting, Going to church, dependent on **what fasting means**. Variables explain only 36.5% of the dependent variable variance.

2. The weakest model is the following: when we assumed that relations between different ethnic groups influence variation in the religious beliefs.

Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
2	.339	.115	.059	.49

^a Predictors: (Constant), Dependent on Relation between people of different ethnicity & religion, other relations Neighborly relations, Trust or not a person of different relations, Understanding between people of different ethnics & religion, Working relations, Friendship relations. So many variables explain only 11.5 % of the Religious belief variation.

The model presented first shows that the respective variables are very good choices in predicting the Religious belief variable. Of course, the answers provided for those variables are good. They are the objects of belief for each of the two confessions. The main things that constitute the respective religions are different. Anyone can realize that a Muslim will not believe in Virgin Mary, as the mother of Christ, son of God. For them Christ is just a messenger, God exists, but His name is Allah.

Conclusions

Valea Dacilor is not an ordinary village. It is the first one that appears in one's way on the road to Constanta coming from Medgidia. Only 5 Km or less is between them. With respect to the multiculturalism of the village, this is not a recent situation. Tartars and Turks have been on the respective territory for hundreds of years. Like in every community, there

are problems but, all in all, things seem to be all right. There may be conflicts, but these arise independent of the multi-ethnic communities, and the important thing is that people see the need for them to get along well. They accept one another for what and who they are.

The village must be seen and preserved as a place where history was written, and the present population stands as testimony for the past time. The respective cultures do have different customs and traditions, they do have different objects of belief, but they respect each other's points of view and if they do not respect them, at least they do not raise questions or go on fighting on religious themes. People there are aware of the importance of being involved in social life and acting like good citizens, respecting private property, no matter whose private property it is. There are exceptions, but in what concerns the villagers as a whole they live in good understanding, they have relations of friendship and neighborly relations come only after. Usually, they trust each other and they do not keep their personal habits and ways of life only to themselves. When celebrating Ramadan or other holiday, Turks and Tartars habitually offer their traditional foods to Romanians, have cakes together and even invite them to their home to enjoy the feast. Romanians also do the same on their holidays, but they are more reserved. However, generally, they are content with their way of living and want to keep it as it is, in good understanding and respect for otherness.

The main aspect revealed by this paper is the multicultural reality of the Romanian society, taking into account that comparative approaches of the ethno-cultural diversities are missing in the Romanian social sciences, as well as the quantitative validation of general statements regarding intercultural issues. Many sayings, which circulate in the Romanian folklore, should be more carefully researched, in order to get out of the vicious circle of preconceived ideas, daily opinions, stereotypes. Statistics-based research proves that Romanian rural society in Doubrudja is multicultural, tolerant and deeply religious.

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Notes:

¹ Pierre Michel et al., *Les Religions à l'Est*, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1992), 183-201. This study is redefining the role of religion in the Balkans after the fall of the communist regime, by examining the particularities of the East which lead to particular inter-confessional relationships.

² George Simons, *Eurodiversity: A business guide to managing differences*, (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2002), 211-30

³ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 63, 111, 129

⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit; Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. (Neuwied: H. Luchterhand, 1962). Following Habermas, Keane speaks of a “complex mosaic of differently sized overlapping and interconnected public spheres” which is the very image of the civil society of today; John G. Keane, “Structural transformations of the public sphere,” *Communications Review* 1 (1995): 1. In this type of society, where people are interconnected by ideas, rather than territories, not only that the border line between the public and the private is getting progressively lost, but the spheres are broken into related sub-spheres.

⁵ Will Kymlicka, *The rights of minority cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 275-87

⁶ Edward B. Taylor, “On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions: Applied to Laws of Marriage and Descent,” *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 18, (1889): 245

⁷ Geert H. Hofstede, G., *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values* (Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications, 1980) 260

⁸ Eduard T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall, *Hidden Differences, Doing Business With the Japanese* (Nelson: Anchor Press, 1987) 114

⁹ Jay W. Jackson, “Contact theory of intergroup hostility: A review and evaluation of theoretical and empirical literature,” *International Journal of Group tensions* 23, (1993): 43; Thomas F. Pettigrew, “Intergroup contact theory,” *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49 (1998): 585; Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of the world order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996) 246-65

¹⁰ Anton Carpinschi, “The Political and the Hypostases of the Human. Towards a Recognition Culture,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 7, no. 19 (2008), http://www.jsri.ro/new/?download=19_anton_carpinschi_.pdf

¹¹ Rudolf Poledna, Francois Ruegg and Calin Rus, *Interculturalitate. Cercetari si perspective romanesti* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitara Clujeana, 2002), 177 – 209

¹² Henry S. Lucas, *Netherlanders in America: Dutch immigration to the United States and Canada, 1789-1950*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, History and Political Science Series, vol. 21, 1955); Jay P. Dolan, “Immigrants in the city: New York's Irish and German Catholics,” *Church History* 41 (1972): 354; Timothy L. Smith, “Religion and ethnicity in America,” *American Historical Review* 83 (1978): 1155; Jon

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¹³ Michael Heim, *Un Babel fericit*, (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2000)

¹⁴ Levente Salat, "The Challenge of Diversity Answers and Dilemmas", *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 1, no. 3 (2002),

http://www.jsri.ro/old/html%20version/index/no_3/levente_salat-articol.htm

¹⁵ Levente Salat, *Multiculturalismul liberal* (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 2001)

¹⁶ Sergiu Mișcoiu, "Liberalism Against the Nation: A False Hypothesis of Historical Analysis," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 4, no. 12 (2005), http://www.jsri.ro/old/html%20version/index/no_12/untitl4.htm

¹⁷ Sabin Manuila, *Recensământul general al populației României din 29. decembrie 1930. II* (Bucharest: Institutul National de Statistica, 1938), Romanian naturalised American, Statistician and MD considered by Dimitrie Gusti "the organizer of scientific Statistics in Romania"

¹⁸ Institutul Național de Statistică, „Recensământul Populației și al locuințelor”, National Institute of Statistics public site.

http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/index_rpl2002.htm

¹⁹ Idem 17

²⁰ Michel, 203-10

²¹ Centrul de cercetare a relațiilor interetnice, "CCRIT Ethnobarometer, 2002", www.ccrit.ro/bib/CCRITBooks.xls

²² Romanian artist of the avant-garde. *Congloméros* is one of his famous sculptures, depicting an agglomeration of bodies and arms

²³ Poledna et al., 77-80

²⁴ Poledna et al., 81-2

²⁵ See map in Appendix 1

²⁶ Data were collected by Ec. Dana Epure

²⁷ Traian Rotariu and Petru Ilut, *Metode statistice aplicate în științele sociale* (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 1998), 23-66; Petru Iluț, *Abordarea calitativă a socio-umanului*, (Iași: Polirom Publishing House, 1997), 9-42

²⁸ Medgidia Municipality Report, 2007,

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²⁹ Daniel Vighi and Viorel Marineasa, *Rusalii '51 - fragmente din deportarea în Bărăgan* (Timișoara: Publishing House Marineasa 1994)

³⁰ Claus Adolf Moser, *Survey Methods in Social Investigation*, (London: Chapman&Hall, 1962), 13 -34; Daniela Șerban, *Statistica pentru studii de marketing si Administrare Afacerilor*, (Bucharest: ASE Publishing House, 2004), 50-83

³¹ Ioan Mărginean, *Proiectarea cercetarii sociologice*, (Iasi: Polirom Publishing House, 2004), 163-250

³² Moser, 80-7, questionnaire design is in depth explained by Moser, whose rules are still valid

³³ Constantin Mitruț and Daniela Șerban, *Basic Econometrics for Business Administration*, (Bucharest: ASE Publishing House, 2007), 63-94

³⁴ Introduced by Helmert Pearson in Jon Curwin and Roger Slater, *Quantitative Methods for Business Decisions* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1991), 226 – 35

³⁵ Udney G. Yule and Maurice G. Kendall, *Introduction in Statistical theory* , (London: Griffin, 1960), 165

³⁶ Andre Piatier, *Statistique et observation economique*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961), 221 – 2

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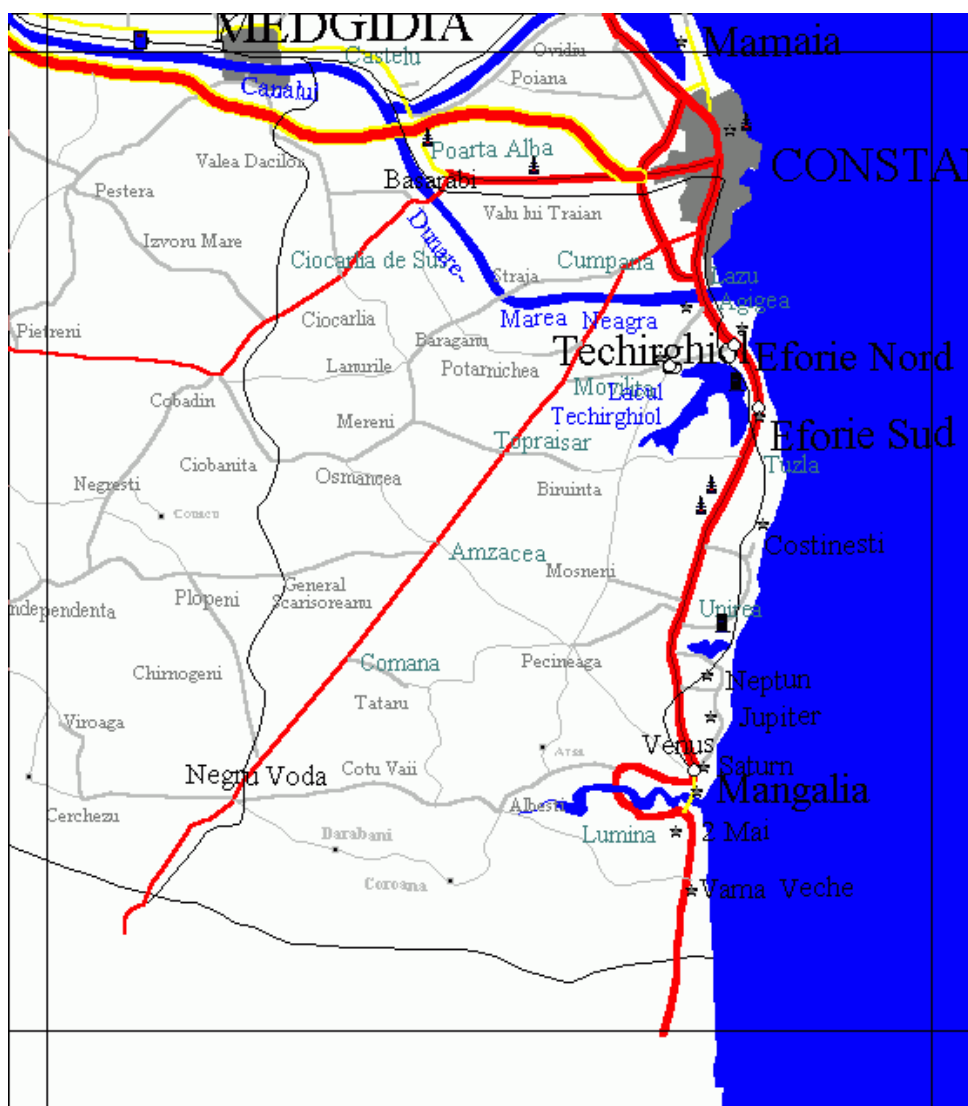
³⁸ Leighton R. Thomas, *Modern Econometrics*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1997), 135-168; Mitruț, Șerban, 80-107

³⁹ Fisher test as a part of testing in David M., Levine, Thimothy Krehbiel and Mark L. Berenson, *Business Statistics, a first course*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 2005), 281

⁴⁰ Mărginean, 141

⁴¹ See Questionnaire in Appendix 2

Appendix 1 – Valea Dacilor Map



Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

Please, specify your ethnicity:

Please, specify your religion:

Your education level:

Your present occupation is:

Employed as...	Owner	Expert/agriculturalist	Unemployed
Retired	Househusband /wife	Pupil/Student	Military man

1. How important is religion in your daily life?

Very important	A little importance	Important	Medium importance	Not at all important
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6. Do you know details about the other ethnicities and religions in your village?

a) A little; b) Yes; c) No; d) Not interested.

7. What is your opinion regarding other religions in your village compared to yours?

a. They are the same	b. They are better	c. They are less better	d. Cannot say	e. Cannot be compared
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8. How would you describe your religious attitude?

Extremely religious	Somewhat religious	Somewhat non-religious	Extremely non-religious
Very religious	Indifferent	Very non-religious	I couldn't say

9. Religious behavior

9.1. Do you go to church or to the holy place representative for your religion?

When I feel the need	Less than once a year	1-2 times a year	More times a year	About once a month
2-3 times a year	Every Sunday	Only for holydays	Otherwise	Never

9.2. Do you pray?

Many times a day	1 time a day	Many times per week	About 1-2 times a month
A couple of times a year	1-2 times a year	When I need help	Never.

9.3. Do you fast? a. Wednesday & Friday; b. Only great Fasts; c. Great Fasts and Wednesday and Friday; d. Every day; e. Some other time.....; f. Very rarely; g. Only when I feel the need for inner purification; h. Never

9.4. If for question no. 9.3. you've chosen any of the answers besides "Never", mention what "fasting" means to you:

Abstain from eating (Total fasting)	Not saying bad words
Abstain from eating food of animal nature	Something else

10. Which of the following is closer to your opinion?

There is little truth in any religion	There is truth only in one religion, mine
There are basic truths in all religions	I couldn't say

11. Was there a crucial moment in your life, which made you believe harder in your religion? a. Yes; b. No. If the answer is "Yes" which was that moment? Specify on the lower row. If "No" go to the next question!

12. You believe in...

Allah	God	Virgin Mary	God's Son, Jesus Christ	Miracles
Mohamed	Heaven	After Life	Saints	Something else ...

13. Have you thought about changing your religion? a. Yes; b. No

14. Please, indicate how important the following aspects are for you. Place an X for each aspect only once!

Aspects	Not at all important	Little important	Cannot say	Important	Very important
Holy place					
The church as an institution					
The priest					
Your village					
Your ethnic group					
The other believers in your cult					
Your family					
Your country					
Believing in a God and practicing your religion					
Being involved in social life and acting as a good citizen					
Respecting private property					
Being informed about other cultures and religions					

What do you do concerning your being informed? a) Read newspapers; b) Watch TV; c) Ask the priest; d) Ask other persons; e) Something else

Please place your image about the world and human nature on a scale from 1 to 7.

The world is full of evil and sin: ____; There is a lot of goodness in the world: ____; In general human nature is good: ____; In general human nature is perverted and corrupted: ____

17. The most spoken language at home, in your family is:

.....

18. Some people say that for an establishment it is better if groups, different in what regards the ethnicity and religion, maintain distinct their habits and traditions. Others say that it is better if these groups adapt to one another and mix. Which one of these opinions is closer to yours?

a) It is better for groups to maintain distinct their habits and traditions;

b) It is better for groups to adapt to one another and mix;

c) I don't know.

19. How do you get along with your neighbors of different religions and ethnicities?

Very bad	Bad	So and so	Good	Very good
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20. How would you define your relationships with your neighbors of different religions and ethnicities?

Friendship relations	Work relations	Neighbor relations	Some other relation.....
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21. What do you think you should do concerning your relationships with the other villagers of different religions and ethnicities? a) They should be improved; b) They must be maintained as they are; c) I don't care; d) Something else

22. Did you ever help a fellow-villager of different religion, in need? a)

Yes; b) No

23. Do you think you'll ever be helped by a fellow-villager of a different religion?

a) Yes, for sure; b) Maybe; c) I don't know; d) No.

24. What is your opinion concerning persons who are of different religion and ethnicity? a) You can trust such a person almost all the time; b) You can usually trust such a person;

c) Usually you cannot be too careful around such a person; d) You cannot never be to careful around such a person; e) Cannot say.

25. Sex: a) M b) F

26. Age: a) <18; b) 18-25; c) 25-35; d) 35-45; e) 45-55; f) 55-65; g) over 65.

27. Civil status: a) Not married; b) Married; c) Divorced; d) Widow; e) Living together.

28. Number of members in the household: