

Sociological report

The research was conducted on the Romani community in Hunedoara, Hunedoara County. According to the results of the latest, 2011, census, the local population of Hunedoara was of 60,525 and the Romani represented 1.64%, circa 990 persons.¹ This value is without a doubt not real considering that during our research we obtained 553 questionnaires filled by persons over 18 years of age and we contacted over 700 persons. It is a known fact that a census within the Romani community will never reflect the reality in the field, a significant number of persons preferring to declare as being part of the ethnical majority where they live. Still, because our research had other goals, with a focus on the cultural domain, the relevance of the declarative appurtenance to the majority of the population is reduced.

Our sociological research was focused especially on the validation or invalidation of cultural characteristics of the population, the other data having an incidental character. We were mainly concerned on the information on age of marriage, knowledge on the Romani language, the volitional component concerning the marital decision, appurtenance of a certain cultural sub-component of the Romani community or the relation with the majority of the population and with some forms of public authority. In some of the cases the cultural characteristics were confirmed while in some cases the results were not real. For example, there is a certain lack of correlation between age of marriage and marriage on one's decision. Also, there is no correlation between the lack of medical insurance with the visits to the family doctor.

The research proper was focused in seven urban divisions of Hunedoara, areas with compact Romani communities. Methodologically, we opted for a predefined questionnaire, with open and closed questions, filled by the field operator. This approach was accepted since we needed some other pieces of information which would complete the data from the ethnographic part of research within the project. From a procedural point of view the questionnaires were filled before the ethnographic interviews.

The questionnaire was elaborated before the beginning of the research, annexed to the present report. Based on the questionnaire we conducted the training of the field operators. The field operators were recruited from the community, with a good reputation among the members of the ethnic group and with an education which would allow the understanding the requirements of the research. During the training we insisted on the fact that suggestion of answers or influencing them was strictly forbidden. Unfortunately, when we analyzed the questionnaires, we realized that, in many cases, the respondents should have given different answers (for example the ones concerning the family or the learning of the language) they have given identical answers or lacking correlation with other answers.

The error rate of this research is a very high one, which means a reduced relevance from a sociologic point of view. Firstly, we must underline the fact that in order to respect the requirements of the funding party, we had to ask personal questions (such as social security number, name, surname). This approach has led to a lack in answers, or giving an obviously fabricated one (in concerning income, abortions or marriage). Our field operators confirmed the reticence with which they were met concerning such intimate answers for fear of possible negative outcomes if those answers were to be communicated to the Romanian Authority.

On the other side some of the data we collected are relevant for the cultural component of the research and it reflect a rather high degree of the minority integration. The most significant indicator was given by declaring the appurtenance to a certain Romani, with some interesting additions: "I do not know, I lost my traditions". As such, the appurtenance to a Romani kin/family was declared as follows (listed alphabetically):

Silversmith – 1
Goldsmith – 1
Metal smith (craftsmen working in metal, mostly brass) – 19
Brickmaker – 8
Carpatins (Carpathians) – 212
Castars – 24
Blacksmith – 1

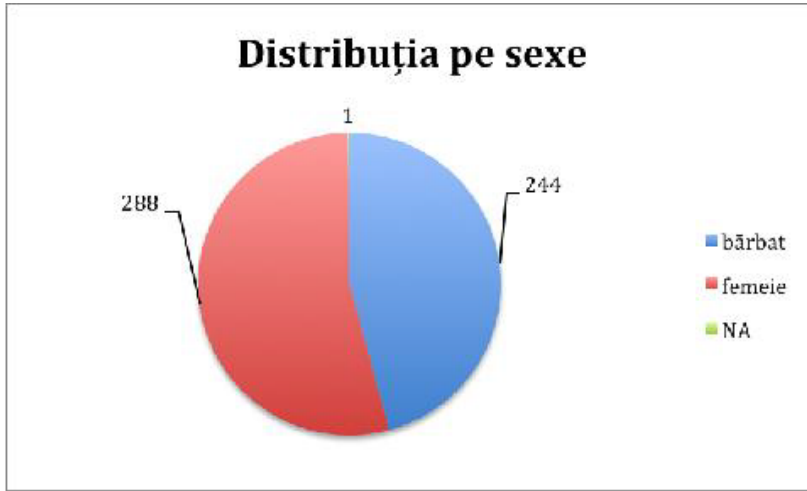
¹ According to the data provided by <http://www.insse.ro/cms/>

Spoon maker – 1
 Sieve maker – 1
 Tent-dwellers – 22
 Through makers – 15
 Blacksmiths – 23
 Gabors (“Hungarian Gypsies”) – 5
 Locksmith – 4
 Fiddler – 1
 Spoon maker – 4
 Lovar – 11
 “Silk Gypsies” – 14
 Mixed – 2
 Nomad – 14
 Pițulesc – 1
 Polish – 6
 Romanian – 4
 One who became Romanian – 86
 Wood objects makers – 3
 Rumungru (rumungur) – 11
 Saxon (Saxon gypsy) – 1
 Traditional – 3
 Hungarian – 1
 Hearth gypsy – 1
 Mason – 3

As one may see, almost half of the respondents declare they are part of the Carpatini (Carpathians) kin, about 1/5 of them declare they have become Romanian while the rest are distributed on an array of kins which reflect both the presence of traditional lineage (silk gypsies, tent-dwellers, gabors etc) and an origin which doesn't exist among the minority (masons, traditional gypsies), which is a reflection on essential cultural mutations within the researched community. The appurtenance to a kin or another could not be correlated to a certain line of work or a source of income, it mostly having a pure declarative purpose. The ethnographical research could not identify either a clear connection between appurtenance to a kin and knowledge of specific cultural values (wood craftsmen, spoon makers, tent-dwellers etc).

As for the lineage of a person when one enters a family (in the juristic-civilian meaning), most of the subjects have not answered the question, while the ones that answered indicated a relatively big number of mixed families, where one member of the couple comes from the majority. The distribution of answers to this question is as such: small business – 1, metal objects maker – 6, carpatin – 9, castar – 2, tent-dweller – 5, blacksmith – 1, florist – 1, gabor – 3, gadjo (Italian) – 1, spoon maker – 1, lovar – 3, Hungarian – 1, mixed-majority – 1, mixed-Italian – 1, Roma – 1, Romanian – 14, who became Romanian – 1.

The distribution of the subjects according to sexes is a balanced one, as such:

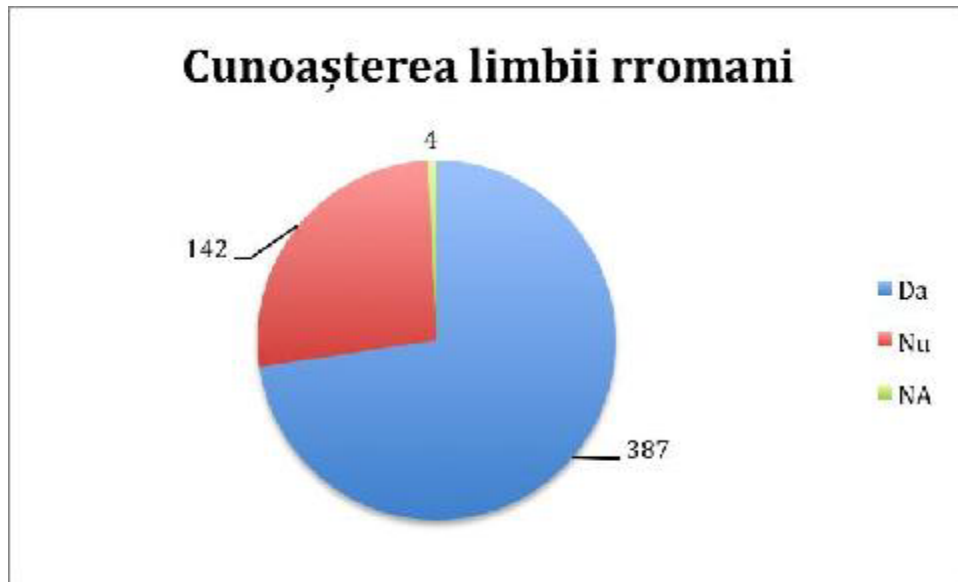


One question with interesting answers was referring to the source from where the subjects learnt the Romani language. The distribution of the answers (which also include multiple answers) is as follows:

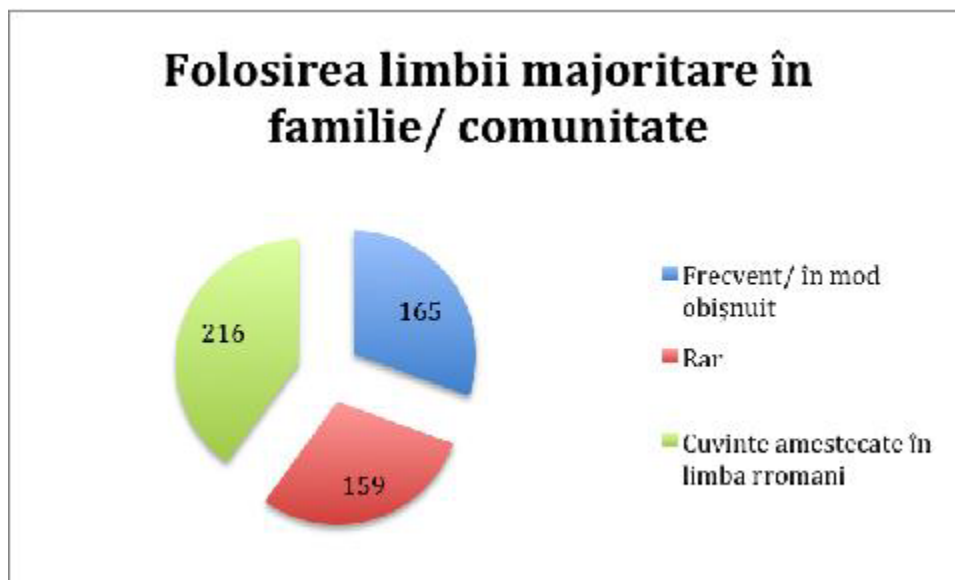


It is noticeable that learning the language from the father is less numerous than from the mother but basically, from the linguistic point of view, the father is just as important concerning the preservation of the cultural fundamental information (the language) and agrees with the information which suggests that there are more numerous the cases where women from outside the ethnic group marry Romani men than the other way around. As for other sources of learning the language (others than husband/wife) – when they were mentioned – they are grandparents, the extended family, the neighbors, the street, in some cases the answer being “native” .

Most of our subjects responded that they speak Romani, although we had answers such as “a little” or “I forgot it”.



The relationship between our subjects the majority, reflected in the use of the native language of the majority is as follows:



Although this question had multiple answers, only seven subjects used this possibility. They associated the frequency of use of the language of majority with the way of usage. Therefore we cannot say that the use of a mixed language is a characteristic of the families which frequently speak the language of the majority or if the incidence is greater in the case of a seldom usage. Also, we could not associate the linguistic usage with the component of the family, according to the lineage of the couple.

The age of marriage varies from 8 to 38 years old, with an important number of non-answers (67). 18 of the subjects declared they are celibate, 3 of the subjects (women) declared the age when they will marry (13, 15 and 18 years old respectively) while 3 persons declared they do not remember the age they were when they married. The answers given concerning the age of marriage are as follows:

- 8 years old: 2 persons
- 12 years old: 2 persons
- 13 years old: 11 persons
- 14 years old: 27 persons
- 15 years old: 40 persons
- 16 years old: 47 persons
- 17 years old: 63 persons
- 18 years old: 60 persons
- 19 years old: 31 persons
- 20 years old: 77 persons
- 21 years old: 14 persons
- 22 years old: 18 persons
- 23 years old: 9 persons
- 24 years old: 10 persons
- 25 years old: 15 persons
- 26 years old: 2 persons
- 27 years old: 5 persons
- 28 years old: 3 persons
- 29 years old: 3 persons
- 30 years old: 5 persons
- 34 years old: 1 person
- 38 years old: 1 person

The analysis of the data points to an age interval from 14 to 20 years old that registers the most numerous marriages. On the other side, because this study did not cover the persons report to the juridical sense of the marriage, and also considering the number of persons that declared being married at the age of the legal minority, we can attest that these marriages are in reality civilian unions and an informal recognition of the couple/ family.

The age of marriage cannot be significantly correlated with the person's sex, with an equal distribution on sexes and ages. On the other side, there is a clear correlation between the current age of the subjects and the age of marriage. As the real age is older, the younger the marriage age is, which is a strong indicator of the cultural modifications within the Romani community. Even more, marrying at a young age is strongly connected with a low education; practically, after getting married the person would leave the educational system.

As for the age when the first child was born, the answers greatly reflect the marital situation. The number of non-responses is great, 111, while the number of persons who declare they do not know the age when they had their first child is only 4. The age distribution for the birth of the first child is thus:

- 13 years old: 4 persons
- 14 years old: 6 persons
- 15 years old: 15 persons
- 16 years old: 36 persons
- 17 years old: 43 persons
- 18 years old: 63 persons
- 19 years old: 41 persons
- 20 years old: 58 persons
- 21 years old: 25 persons
- 22 years old: 34 persons
- 23 years old: 17 persons
- 24 years old: 14 persons
- 25 years old: 27 persons
- 26 years old: 11 persons
- 27 years old: 9 persons

- 28 years old: 8 persons
- 29 years old: 1 person
- 30 years old: 3 persons
- 34 years old: 5 persons
- 35 years old: 1 person.

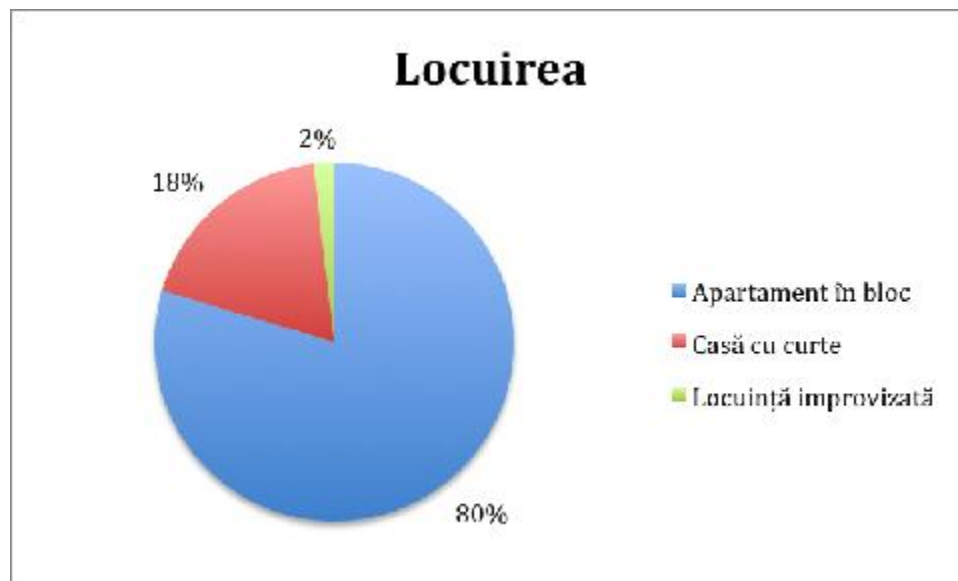
Although, as stated, this is a question most likely to receive false answers, the ages when the first child was born is grouped around 18 and confirm a marital behavior which focused around the age of legal minority.

The age distribution, correlated with information regarding the age when the first child was born is:

- 12-17 years old: 7 persons
- 18-25 years old: 59 persons
- 26-35 years old: 129 persons
- 36-50 years old: 209 persons
- 51-84 years old: 119 persons.

This question was not answered by 12 persons. The correlation of data with the social security number lead to our greatest doubt about the general accuracy of the collected data. Even though the social security number was requested, our field operators were instructed not to request or insist on the subjects presenting a valid identity document. Still, in many cases, we could find that the age given does not coincide with the birth date included in the social security number, the number associated with the sex does not correspond or we identified several social security numbers with consecutive numbers.

Most of our subjects live in blocks of flats, a direct consequence of two types of historical and social realities. The Romani established in Hunedoara prior to 1989, the urban systematization determined them to move into blocks of flats. After the 1989 revolution a significant number of them were given social residences, some of them buying those dwellings.

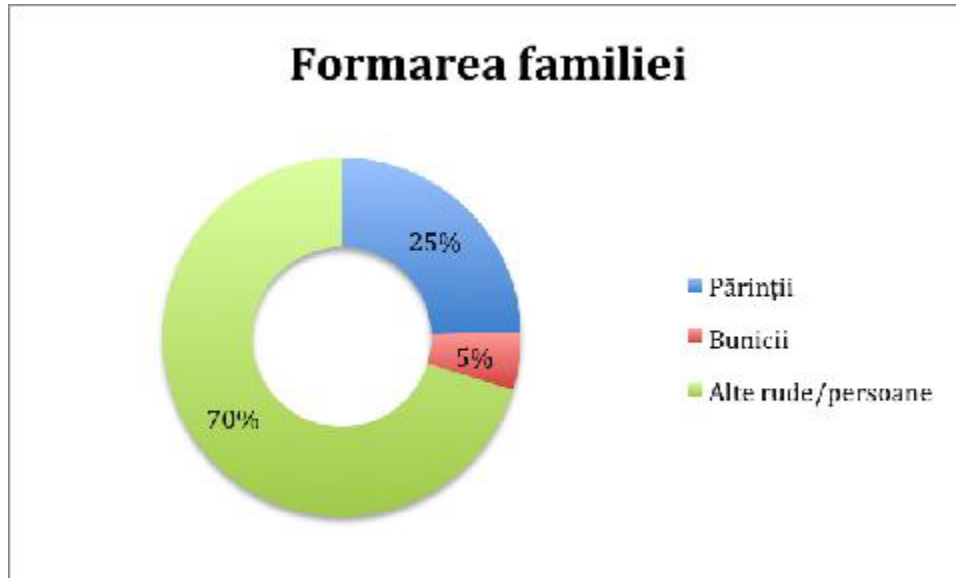


The ownership of the housing indicates a slight predominance of rent, although this information was not validated with other sources. Thus, 53% of our subjects declared they live in a rented space (most likely those are social dwellings) while 47% of them own their houses (36% have bought them, 7% built them and 4% inherited them).

The housing surface was approximated, most of the data (over 70%) indicating surfaces between 10 sq.m and 45 sq.m. The houses declared larger than 80 sq.m were not taken into account, since the field operator never indicated interviewing families living in large houses. The dwelling conditions indicate an

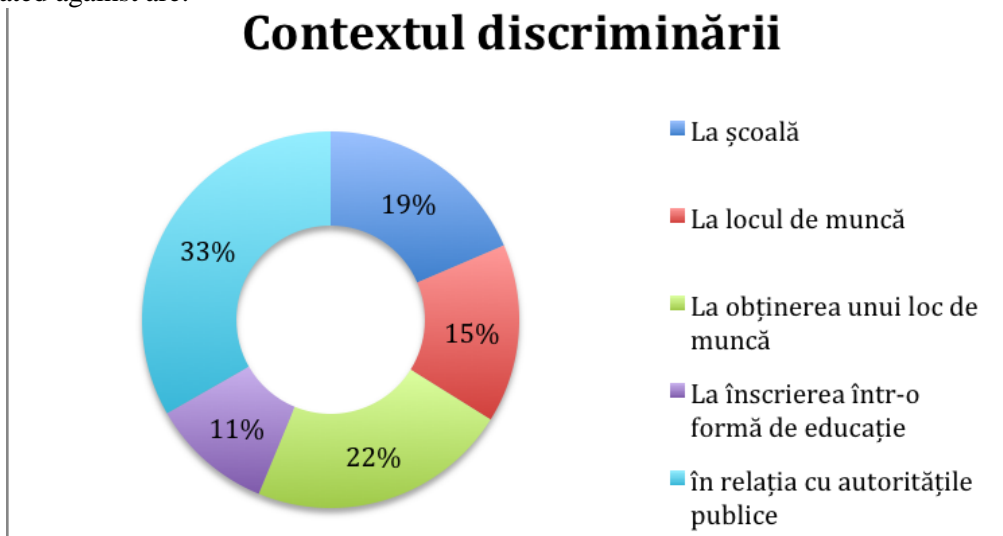
equilibrium between living at the decency limit and a dwelling under difficult conditions. 52% of the subjects declared they live with 1 to 3 more persons (also 7 of them live alone), 37% live with 4 to 7 more persons, 8% live with up to 12 persons. The rest are non-responses or living in dwellings with more than 12 persons.

The question referring to the componence of the family was meant to evidence those extended families, with three generations. Unfortunately, although the question allowed for multiple answers, the situations where the hypothesys was verifiable are difficult to answer surley. Still, the distribution of answers is:

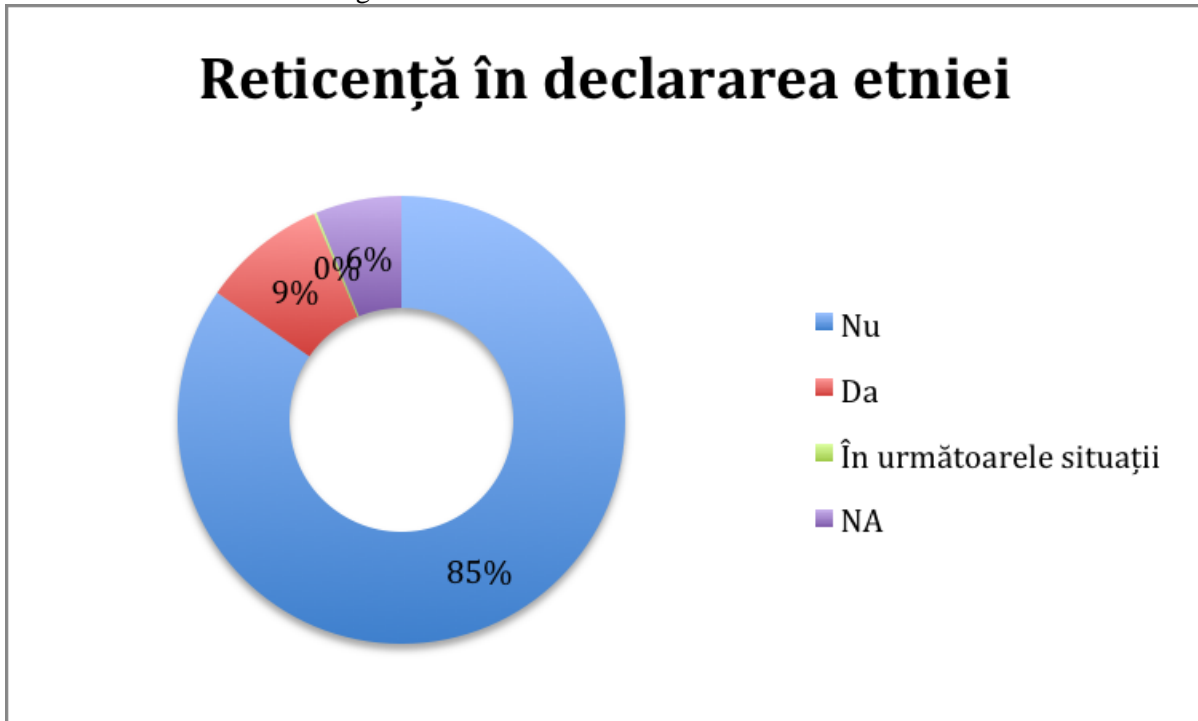


The answers “other relatives/persons” had multiple options: husband/wife, children, grandchildren, family, doughter in law, son in law, in laws, alone, etc. We still couldn’t conduct a multi-sourced research, therefore the real percentage of families of more than two generations was imposible to ascertain.

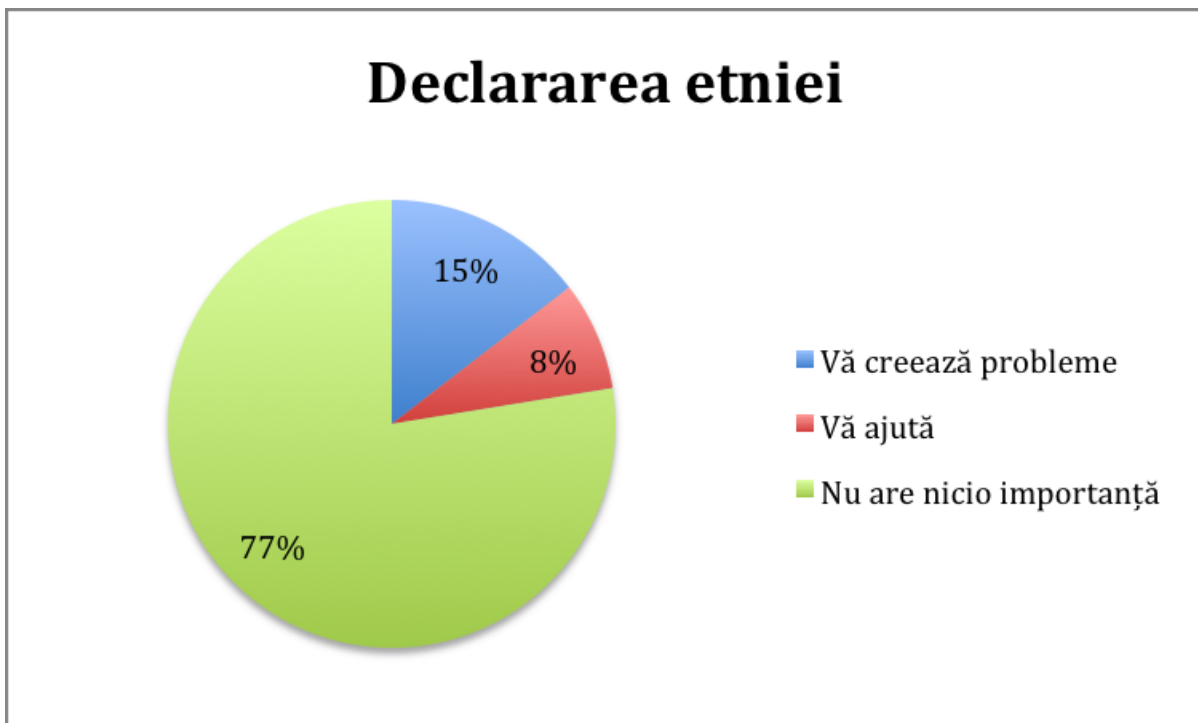
The perception of discrimination offers an image where 60% of our subjects answered that they have been or are being discriminated against, 39% did not declare discrimination and 1% never answered the question. Among the answers we found qualitative accounts: “[discrimination] in all situations”, “the most discriminated against”, “I am not saying I am a gypsy” etc. The contexts where the subjects were discriminated against are:



The questions referring to the relations with the majority population or in social interaction contexts evidenced the following answers:



The perception over the consequences of declaring one's ethnic background evidences a situation, at least apparently, where it bears little or no importance whether the subjects declare or don't their ethnicity.



The local community consists mostly of Romanians and most of our subjects speak the language of the majority, other used languages being Hungarian, English, German, French and Italian. It is highly likely that the persons who declared they speak other languages than Hungarian and German are a consequence of migration towards other European countries. The relation with the members of the majority is declared as 62% of collaboration. 38% of the subjects declared that they are in conflict with the majority while 1% declared neutrality or did not answer this question.

The last question in the questionnaire was thusly formulated as to allow passing to ethnography and pointed out the fact that 15% of our subjects rely on persons with knowledge on “traditional medicine” when having health issues.

Alexandra Zbucea

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alexandra Zbucea', is written diagonally across the page.