THE REMAKING OF THE DACIAN IDENTITY IN ROMANIA AND THE
ROMANIAN DIASPORA

By

Lucian Rosca
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts
Sociology

Committee:

___________________________________________ Director

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________

___________________________________________ Department Chairperson

___________________________________________ Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date: Fall Semester 2015
George Mason University,
Fairfax, VA
The Remaking of the Dacian Identity in Romania and the Romanian Diaspora

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at George Mason University

By

Lucian I. Rosca
Bachelor of Arts
George Mason University, 2015

Director: Patricia Masters, Professor
Department of Sociology

Fall Semester 2015
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis coordinators: Professor Patricia Masters, Professor Dae Young Kim, Professor Lester Kurtz, and my wife Paula, who were of invaluable help. Finally, thanks go out to the Fenwick Library for providing a clean, quiet, and well-equipped repository in which to work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. The Roman Conquest of Dacia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Background</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. A Historical Perspective</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1. Figures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Language and Identity Continuity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. A Revisionist Perspective</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Literature Review</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Resurgence or Emergence of a New Identity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. The Functionalist Perspective</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. Symbolic Interaction and Identity Reconstruction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Conflict Theory Perspectives</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. Postmodernism: The Discourse on Historical Truth</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. The Memory and the Relationship to Identity</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Research Problem</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Research Question</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Methods</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1. Data</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Findings and Limitations</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tables</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Findings</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1. A Historical Perspective</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.1.1. The Origins of the Dacians. A new turn to the perspectives offered in my inter-
views ................................................................. 50
9.2 A New Historical Perspective ........................................................... 51
9.3. History of Art Perspective ............................................................... 53
9.4. The Dacian Language ..................................................................... 55
9.5. The Latinization of the Romanian Culture and Language ....................... 58
9.6. The Dacian Roots of the Romanian Traditions ........................................ 59
9.7. Celebration of Dacian Traditions Today: Calusarii, Sumedru and Junii Brasovului . 62
9.8. Ancient Customs and Identity Reconstruction ........................................ 65
9.9. The Connection between Generations ................................................ 70
9.10. Traditions and Modernity ................................................................ 72
9.11. Memory and Dacian Identity ............................................................ 73
9.12. The Identity Revival ....................................................................... 76
9.12.1. The Origins of the Revival ........................................................ 76
9.13. Obscuring and Replacing Identities .................................................. 77
9.14. Dacian Revival ............................................................................... 78
9.15. The Idealized Homeland ................................................................. 82
9.16. Education and Identity Revival ......................................................... 83
9.17. The Romanians, the Moldavians and the Diaspora ............................... 85
9.17.1. Moldavian versus Romanian ...................................................... 85
9.18. Diaspora versus Homeland ................................................................ 94
9.19. The New Romanian Identity versus the Old Romanian Identity ............... 95
9.19.1. Communism and Freedom ......................................................... 95
10. Conclusion and Discussion ................................................................. 98
11. Limitations ....................................................................................... 101
Appendix 1. Informed Consent ................................................................. 105
Appendix 2. Interview Questions ............................................................. 107
Appendix 3. Focus Group Questions ......................................................... 110
References ......................................................................................... 116
LIST OF TABLES

8. Tables. Interviewees and Backgrounds..........................................................45
LIST OF FIGURES

2.1.1. Figure1. Dacia in 50 BC.................................................................6

2.1.1. Figure2. Dacia Province and the Free Dacians..............................7

2.1.1. Figure3. Contemporary Romania..................................................8
ABSTRACT

THE REMAKING OF THE DACIAN IDENTITY IN ROMANIA AND THE ROMANIAN DIASPORA

Lucian I. Rosca, M.A.

George Mason University, 2015

Thesis Director: Professor Dr. Patricia Masters

This study reflects my interests in the actual status of the ethnic identity in Romania, starting from the Romanian identity as the general frame and verifying the existence of the Dacian sub-identity as one of its particular frames. Dacia was located approximately on the actual Romanian territory, including parts of Ukraine, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and the Republic of Moldavia. Dacians are considered the ancestor of the Romanian people along with the Romans who actually conquered part of Dacia during the Trajan war between the years 105-106 A.D.

This qualitative study will analyze the interviews as well as recent books, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs and posts related to the Dacian and Romanian history, to its interpretations and to the Dacian identity or sub-identity. There will be three main groups of interviewees: Romanians, Moldavians and individuals from the diaspora that belong to the other two groups.
1. INTRODUCTION

The Roman victory over the Dacians in the second century A.D. created a mixture of populations, cultures, languages, and traditions that evolved over the centuries into the modern identity of the Romanian people.

My interest in ethnic identity started years ago when I first realized the research potential of this concept, the impact of the social and political interests that shape identity, and the continuous development and transformation of identity over long periods of time. I was born in Romania, and learned in school that the Romanian people were formed after the conquest of Dacia, the actual Romania, by the Roman Empire. The Roman sub-identity was considered superior to the Dacian sub-identity because the dominant historians viewed the Romans as more politically, socially, and economically advanced. Furthermore, the Roman sub-identity created a connection with the Western Europe and the Romance speaking countries, providing moral and cultural support during the Middle Ages and later because the Romanian territories were surrounded and attacked by populations with different origins, identities, and languages belonging to different language families: Slavs, Austrian-Hungarians, and the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, at least one of the two sub-identities was continuously present in the Romanian culture and its collective consciousness.
In the 1870's, during the Romanian identity revival, a theory called Protochronism developed in the three Romanian Principates and gained some strength between the two cold wars generating some controversies. That theory asserts that: (1) Dacian culture, language and civilization are some of the oldest in Europe (this is one of the reasons it was labeled by some researchers as nationalist); and (2) the Dacian language was not lost, but is the mother language of Latin. However, because the two languages were similar, historians and researchers believed that Dacian had disappeared.

Although some of the Protochronist assertions have been contested by historians, significant historical events backed by evidence and documents and recognized by historians have been either ignored by the Romanian historians and history manuals or hardly mentioned. These events at least provide evidence that the Dacian identity survived after the Roman conquest in 106 A.D.

1.1. The Roman Conquest of Dacia

In the Roman conquest of Dacia in 106 A.D., the capital Sarmisegetuza was captured but not the entire Dacian territory. According to the “Dacia Revival International Society” and some historians, during the second Dacian War 105-106 A.D. only 14 percent of the actual territory of Dacia was conquered by the Romans. Although this estimate may be too small, there are many mentions of other Dacian regions that were not
conquered by the Roman armies, including the Northern part of Transylvania, Moldavia, Bucovina and Bessarabia. This territory was occupied only until the Aurelian retreat in 275 A.D.; however, during the occupation there were many revolts and attacks by the free Dacians. Herodotus made an important statement, according to which the Dacians or Getae-Dacians are a Thracian population and “they are not only the noblest as well as the most just of all the Thracian tribes” (The Histories, 1993:4-93).

Galerius is a Roman emperor of Dacian origin, who ruled from 305 to 311 A.D. According to Lactantius, in: De Mortibus Persecutorum, in English Of the Manner in which the Persecutors Died: “Long ago, indeed, and at the very time of his obtaining sovereign power, he had avowed himself the enemy of the Roman name; and he proposed that the empire should be called, not the Roman, but the Dacian empire.“ (Chapter 27).

A more recent mention of the Dacians is made by Carolus Lundius in Zamolxis Primus Getarum Legislator (1687), who wrote that: “Under the influence of the ancient writers claiming the writing having appeared firstly with the Getae, Jornandes recommends in every conviction the written laws of Zamolxis and Diceneus” (1687:56, chapter 3).

Under the pro-Russian Communist regime which controlled the country from 1945 until December 1989, the Roman and Dacian sub-identities were first diminished and denied, then later excluded. The Communist government wanted to create a new Romanian identity, in connection and subordinated to the Soviet identity, based on some common vocabulary, and on fabricated linguistic and even ethnic origins. In this project
there was no room for a real Romanian history or for the Dacian and Roman cultural and linguistic heritage. Their interest was determined by the need to control and subordinate the nations forced to join the Soviet Union; however, that created a quiet resistance to acculturation and denationalization. The Roman and Dacian sub-identities were partially revived by this resistance and by the desire of the last Romanian Communist regime to promote a distinct identity to oppose the declining Russian influence, especially in the latest period, from 1970 until 1989. At the same time, this sub-identity did not become part of the official politics in order to not attract the retaliation of the Soviet Union.

Today it appears the Dacian identity is being revived especially within young college student and Diaspora communities. It is sometimes associated with different movements who advocate for the political and territorial unity between Romania and Moldavia. Moldavia is a former Romanian province incorporated into the Soviet Union after the Second World War and presently it is an independent republic with more than 70% of the population considered to be ethnically Romanian and Romanian speakers.

Some indicators of the Dacian identity revival are: the interest in reviving the Dacian lost language; a growing interest in old, pre-Roman Dacian traditions, (one example is Martisorul, a spring holiday celebrated in all the territories inhabited by Romanians, even in Albania, Croatia, Ukraine and Greece); and the formation of different organizations like Dacia Revival and Terra Dacica Aeterna, that promote the Dacian cultural and linguistic identity between the Dacian language and the actual Romanian language.
2. BACKGROUND

2.1. A Historical Perspective

2.1.1. Figures

The three maps reproduced here will help the reader better understand and connect the historical data, the geographical information and the main events that might have influenced the Dacian identity. The first map shows Dacia close to the highest territorial extent, in 50 BC. The second map shows Roman Dacia and Free Dacia in 125 AC, after the Roman Conquest. The last map shows contemporary Romania and the Republic of Moldavia.
Figure 1

Dacia in 50 BC at the end of Caesar's Gallic Wars, with the territory of Rome in yellow.
Figure 2

Dacia Province and the free Dacians: the Carpi, the Costoboci, and the Buri.

The Roman Empire in 125, after the conquest of some Dacian territory in 106 AC

Dacia Province and the free Dacians: the Carpi, the Costoboci, and the Buri
Figure 3

Contemporary Romania and the Republic of Moldavia in Europe.
The history of Romanians like the history of many other ethnic groups, has many examples of struggle, of continuous battle for power or for survival with different invaders. From a neutral perspective, I have to mention that power groups in every state, or political entities have sought to manipulate the collective memory, the history in order to legitimize their actions, to show their good intentions and to demonstrate they were not in fact the first ones to attack.

The formation of the Romanian nation-state is intimately connected with my thesis subject. The different perspectives point to the causes that determined the formation of the Romanian identity, and they continue to influence the opinions of many Romanians about the Dacian identity or sub-identity. There are at least three main historical theories:

The first perspective states that the Romanian nation is the result of the mixture between Dacians, the old inhabitants of the actual Romania, of the Republic of Moldavia, and some of the surrounding countries, and the Romans who conquered part of Dacia in 106 A.D. This view is dominant in the academic environment as well as in the Romanian society and the international academic communities. This perspective is important for my study as it is taught in most Romanian elementary schools, gymnasiums, high schools and universities, in Romania, Moldavia, and other territories inhabited by Romanians. It is part of the identity formation process of young students. Most of the Romanians who have studied in Romania thus consider the Dacian and the Roman sub-identities as part of the Romanian identity.
For instance, in the 1997 *Istoria Romanilor (The History of the Romanians)*, a sixth-grade history manual, it states that the Romanian population derive their ethnic origins from the Dacians and Romans that followed the second Roman invasion in Dacia in 106 A.D. The manual mentions that not all the territories inhabited by the Dacians were conquered by the Romans, but it does not specify what that proportion is. It simply mentions the actual Romanian provinces that were not occupied by the Romans, which make more than 50% of the actual Romania: Moldova, Bucovina, Maramures, Crisana, and Muntenia. It also states that today, there are only a few Dacians words left in the Romanian vocabulary and the Dacian language has disappeared, because the colonized Dacians and the free Dacians adopted the Roman language. Almas wrote that

The Dacians have learned the Latin language as well as the Romans settlers in Dacia borrowed many of the Dacian traditions and living style. Also, the other Dacians (from Muntenia, Moldova, Bucovina, Maramures, Crisana), who were free and maintained their living style, have received, nevertheless, much of the Roman civilization (1997:15, my translation).

Similarly in *Istoria Romaniei, (The History of Romania)*, (Barbulescu, et al. 1998), the same explanation about the formation of the Romanian people is developed, using more academic methodology, resources, and evidence. The school textbooks from the Communist age make similar statements to the ones mentioned above: “at the moment when the Romans left Dacia, the province was inhabited by a population strongly, for once and for all Romanized.” (Daicoviciu, et al. 1984:67 my translation).

The second explanation states that after the retreat of the Roman army and administration from the Roman Dacia, the entire population left this territory and the Hungarian nation established in an empty Transylvania or in a Transylvania inhabited by
Slavs. This perspective is only embraced by certain Hungarian officials and by some of the Hungarian minority ethnic groups who live in Transylvania and who have looked for justifications for their long occupation of Transylvania during the Austrian-Hungarian Empire while currently asking for territorial autonomy for the Hungarian minority in Romania. For example, in *Nations in Transition. Hungary*, Hill states that:

Magyar territories included all of Slovakia, a sliver of northeastern Croatia, part of Northern Serbia, part of what is today Ukraine, and Transylvania, now part of Romania. The wealthiest Magyars in these regions had large landholdings. Slavs formed the core of slave labor on these holdings (2004:21).

According to the text, the core of the slave population in these areas, including Transylvania was Slavic, and there is no mention of Romanian or Dacian ethnics.

The third explanation, a new revisionist history, adopted and supported by some contemporary Romanian historians like Napoleon Savescu in *Noi nu Suntem Urmasii Romei* (1999), and Daniel Roxin (2013) in *Spiritul Dacic Renaste* states that the actual Romanian nation is made of Dacians, because the Romans only conquered 14% of Dacia in 106 A.D. Also, they believe the Dacian language is actually the Romanian language because the Romans could not impose their language in such a short period of occupation of only 14% of the territory. This theory also states the Dacian and Roman languages are actually the same language, and this would be explained by the fact that Romania and the Republic of Moldavia are the only countries speaking a Romance language in Eastern Europe, while being surrounded by Slavic people and languages and by Hungarians who speak a Finno-Ugric language. Also, the Romanian language is unitary in the entire territory inhabited by Romanians while nations like Italy, France, or Spain have many
dialects that make communication almost impossible between the inhabitants of two different regions, without the use of the literary language (Roxin 2013:29-30).

Nicolae Densusianu was one of the first to promote these ideas at the beginning of the 20th century, in *Prehistorical Dacia* (2002). He is one of the first Romanian authors to mention some of the antique and medieval sources of information, previously ignored, about the Dacians especially before the Roman Conquest in 106 A.D. According to him, the Dacians are related to the Romans, both being Thracians or Pelasgians, populations that inhabited large parts of Europe, the founders of the European civilization:

Behind the populations known in Greco-Roman antiquity under the name of Getae and Dacians, stretches back a long series of several thousand years, a buried history of some great events, whose importance had reached far beyond the horizon of this country, the history of a nation, genius, powerful and glorious, who, long before the Trojan times, had founded the first vast world empire, had founded the first cultural unity in Europe, and had at the same time established a basis for the moral and material progress in western Asia and in north Africa (2002:2).

The Dacian religion and Gods spread across the Europe, the megalithic temples and the divinities located in Dacia were venerated and represented across a vast area:

The Sky Column from the southeastern corner of the Carpathians, which even today hides its top into the clouds, had in the most remote times of prehistory, and still has partly today, the shape of a stunted, four angled pyramid... This column has been considered in ante-Homeric times as the most sacred religious symbol of the entire Pelasgian world. It was represented with the same shape on the religious monuments of Hellada and Egypt, in the statuary art of the Romans, as well as on various specimens of ceramic paintings of the Greek and Etruscan epochs. The oldest reproduction of this column is found on the Cyclopes walls which encircled once the famous acropolis of Mycenae in the Peloponnesus (Densusianu 2002:311).

Similarly, Leonard Velcescu in *Les Daces dans la sculpture romaine: étude d'iconographie antique* (2010), explains the meaning of the term “barbarian” for the Romans and Greeks:
According to Quintilian the features of the Barbarian language were: some letters were added or removed within the Latin words or some were switched. According to Isidor from Sevillia . . . . Barbarian words where Latin words corrupted in regard to the letters or sounds (2002:1057).

For him the Latin and the Dacian language were related and people speaking Latin could communicate with people speaking Dacian: “The Barbarian language had, according to some authors, the features of the Vulgar or Rustic Latin” (2002:1060). This statement is the basis for the idea of the Dacian language and identity continuity in Romania, later borrowed or researched by other authors.

The three main historical perspectives mentioned above may have been influenced by different sociopolitical or economic interests and by the international context at the moment of their emergence, but they are also the expressions of what some of the Romanian nationals think about their identity.

2. 2. Language and Identity Continuity

In regard to the idea of Dacian language and identity continuity an article called Our Brothers From the Alps, published in Formula As magazine (Number 688, 2005), that mentions an old community of people called Romansi, who live in Engadin, region of Grison, Switzerland is relevant. According to the article, these people speak a language similar to Romanian, with many common words and expressions, have many similar toponyms, for example “carp” that is actually the root of the word Carpathian, the name of the main mountain chain in Romania as well as a so called “free” Dacian tribe name that hasn't been conquered by the Romans. They also have many similar superstitions, customs,
traditions, and foods. Falera, one of the Romansi Villages in the area has been attested as dating to 3500 B.C. and according to the locals many of their traditions have been inherited from their ancestors.

2.3. A revisionist Perspective

From the perspective of History of Art, Leonard Velcescu (2010), was attracted by the history of his ancestors but also by some aspects that have been little studied before him: although the Dacians have been defeated by the Romans, it appears they were treated with respect, they were actually glorified and this didn't happen with any of the people considered “barbarian” by the Romans. The proofs for his statements are his comparative studies of Trajan's Column and many barbarian and especially Dacian statues located around the world, statues that have been initially placed in Trajan's Forum in Rome after he conquered a part of Dacia in 106 (Trajan was a Roman emperor between 98 AD and 117 AD). Velcescu (2010) describes the Dacian statues, physiognomic characteristics and their clothing, very similar with the actual Romanian countrymen in many regards (2010:37). Unlike the other barbarians, the Dacian statues “are completely dressed” (2010:37).
3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Resurgence or Emergence of a New Identity

The reason why I chose to write about the Dacian identity was a mix between my interest in the study of ethnic identity, respect for what I have learned about my ancestors, and the desire to find out why some people seek to forget and change their identity inherited for many generations. Maybe this study is a different kind of revolt against the same ethnic identity, trying to reconsider it, to save the best out of it or at least to imagine a better one. The more I examined this topic, the more I found I knew very little about my ethnic identity and about the Romanian and Dacian identities. It came to question how many facts I actually assumed to be true.

3.2. The Functionalist Perspective

Functionalism is a theoretical framework that considers society a complex system whose component parts function together to promote solidarity and stability. (Macionis 2010:14). This means that all the parts of the society are interconnected and interdependent, and each has a specific function that is important for the stability of the entire society. For
example, education or medical services that may be paid for by the government to provide services for the people (this may be different in some countries), and in turn, people pay taxes helping the government to function. In this case, including more evidence-based information about the Dacians in the school curriculum may help in building a stronger Romanian-Dacian identity, which will create a more cohesive society.

The way people organize themselves in groups depends on two possibilities according to Gellner: “will, voluntary adherence and identification, loyalty and solidarity on the one hand and fear, coercion, compulsion on the other” (2006:52). Gellner notes that:

It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the preexisting, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically. Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored (Gellner 2006:54).

From this point of view it is necessary to distinguish very clearly between reality and fiction in regard to the creation of a Dacian sub-identity, but this is not an easy task when analyzing a different kind of an imagined community, one that existed almost 2,000 years ago and which may be on the point to be re-imagined. From a functionalist perspective, nationalism has a negative impact on society in general, especially if it supports extreme tendencies.

3.3. Symbolic Interactionism and Identity Reconstruction
From a symbolic interactionist perspective, the Dacian sub-identity has been reshaped, rediscovered, adapted to the new geopolitical context, and subordinated to the Romanian identity.

Epstein (2006) states that ethnicity corresponds to the formation of the self and this process starts early in childhood, being associated with figures of love like parents and especially grandparents. Epstein uses the example of a Jewish community in Yankee City. When the first immigrants arrived in the United States, they created a strong social and religious community in the city, building synagogues and strictly following the traditions. However, people stopped following the traditions, the children grew and moved to big cities, the synagogues emptied and it looks like the old community has disintegrated. Thirty years later, a sudden revival process starts initiated by the young members of the community. The Jewish identity re-emerges, but it is different from the one of their fathers and grandfathers. It is more open and it is connected to the American culture and identity.

According to Epstein, their identity was shaped through the opposition with the other identities surrounding them. For Epstein “ethnic identity is always in some degree a product of the interaction of inner perception and outer response, of forces operating on the individual and group from within, and those impinging on them from without” (2006:101-102).

Epstein makes the distinction between: (a) ethnic identity marked by positive poles which depends more on inner concepts strengths and resources, and (b) ethnic identity marked by negative poles which depends very little on inner definition (sometimes there is
none) and it is imposed from the outside. His examples are the *mischlings* and the *hibakusha*. The *mischlings* are the children of the mixed marriage between a Jew and a Gentile, raised without Christian or Jewish tradition and no emphasis on ethnicity. Although they may not feel Jewish they are regarded by the American community as Jews. In this case the identity is imposed, and it has no connection with the individual’s concept of self. The *hibakusha* carry a stigma, but they can share an “exclusive experience to use in governing their social interactions and in forming their own associations” (Epstein 2006:103).

Another interesting idea is the connection between the grandparents and the grandnephews. The grandparents, not the parents, are establishing the strongest connection between the generations, they are introducing the past to the children through stories, and they are “living links to the past” (Epstein 2006:145). While the relationship between the parents and the children is one of subordination and dominance, the one between the grandparents and children is an alliance.

Miri Song in *Choosing Ethnic Identity* (2003) analyzes the impact of the increasing number of mixed race people in the Western European countries especially in the United Kingdom and in United States and the effect of the diversification of the ethnic groups. The ethnic groups in these countries are constantly negotiating their social, economic, and political positions:

Claims to ethnic identity are subject to scrutiny by not only the wider society, but also by one’s co-ethnics, and can be met by validation, denial or disbelief…Jen Ang (1994) found that, despite her Chinese heritage, because she did not speak a Chinese dialect, she was not regarded as Chinese by the people she encountered on a trip to the People’s Republic of China or by many White Dutch
people she encountered in the Netherlands. Not speaking Chinese meant that she was not considered to be authentically Chinese (Song 2003: 142).

Song also shows that some immigrants chose to opt out of their ethnic group, denying their group affiliation and heritage; however, in order to completely opt out that person needs to be accepted in another group (2003:56-57).

In *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: Integrating Emerging Frameworks*, Wijeyesinghe and Jackson make a distinction between identification and identity: “identification results from external assignments or categorization, whereas identity results from internal processes as the individuals encounter external influences.” This distinction is important because the racial classifications are based on some differences between physical, psychological, and even linguistic characteristics. Thus, the “codification-and subsequent modification of racial categories results from the interplay between public policy and the denial or provision of various human and civil rights” (2012, 11-2). Some examples are the taxation without representation, the denial of property or of the right to vote.

Another important concept for the distinction between identification and identity is “cognitive identity,” and it refers to how the individual understands his/her own identity and identity shift in different contexts, finding a balance between external and internal “influences on one’s identity” (Chudari and Pizzolato 2008: 451).

Another approach to multiple racial identity is proposed in *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: Integrating Emerging Frameworks*, through “The intersectional Model of Multiracial Identity” (Wijeyesinghe 2012:81). This theory describes many people of mixed race, their identity being “holistic and multiply
influenced” by different characteristics like sex, age, class, nationality, culture, and education (2012: 84). The reason this model of identity is appropriate for my study is that some Romanians have ancestors of different races, and because of the actual immigration today, there are mixed families with multiracial children.

In *The Factor Model of Multiracial Identity Development*, Wijeyesinghe asserts that the racial identity of multiracial individuals is chosen by each individual according to different factors: culture, education, social and historical context, physical appearance, spirituality, political orientation, and other social identities (1992, 2001:88).

Cornell and Hartmann's (2007) main point is why ethnic identity come and go and some people attach significance to it and other don't. From this perspective, the Dacian revival can be interpreted as a primordialist versus circumstantialist versus constructionist understanding. The question is what determined this revival?

Referring to Hutus and Tutsies, the two ethnic rival populations in Rwanda, Cornell and Hartmann (2007) identify physical and moral stereotypes they have about each other:

Tutsis were held to be taller, more finely featured, and lighter skinned; the Hutus were considered short, stocky, and dark. Tutsi were said to be intelligent . . . . capable of command, courageous, and cruel. Hutus hardworking, not very clever . . . . obedient. Furthermore these qualities were held to be fixed and unchanging (2007:42).

Cornell and Hartmann (2007:51), define primordialism as: "the idea that ethnic and racial identities are fixed, fundamental, and rooted in the unchangeable circumstances of birth" (2007:51). There are eight elements of basic group identity: physical body, name, history, nationality, language, religion, culture, geography (2007:51). Most of these elements are
variable, for example, language, body characteristics, religious beliefs may be the same across ethnic, racial, geographical boundaries or they may be different. Thus, is "too much change and variation in ethnicity and race around the world to support the primordialist account" (2007:54). Geertz defends its strengths in stating that the "feeling of belonging is often associated with racial or ethnic group membership" (2007: 55).

Cicumstantialism, another perspective on ethnicity, proposes the ethnicity is fluid, and focused on “the circumstances and contexts in which ethnic and racial groups found themselves . . . . The central role played by utility in the circumstantialist approach has led many scholars to identify it as instrumentalism” (Cornell and Hartmann 2007:59, 61). Competition with the dominant ethnic group created by the new ethnic groups who may accept less money for performing the same job creates tensions and may lead to persistence of social barriers or internal colonization (Cornell and Hartmann 2007:65). This appears to be the case for many Romanians who work in Western European countries for lower wages than dominant groups. In this case, the orientation toward a Dacian identity may serve as a reaction to the sense of inferiority they experience. Cornell and Hartmann see two problems in circumstantialism: it ignores the “sentiments and experiences of many ethnic populations,” and does not answer the question of why the actions of individuals are motivated by “ethnic attachment”. Yet, they acknowledge that “Ethnic and racial identities are contingent on circumstances and therefore fluid and are often experienced as primordial and therefore fixed” (2007:74).

For Cornell and Hartmann, the constructionist approach offers a better explanation of the making of ethnic groups and identities: "Ethnic group and identities form in an
interaction between assignment, what others say we are, and assertion, who or what we claim to be” (2007:75).

The authors also make distinctions between assigned identities and asserted identities, thin or less comprehensive identities and thick or more comprehensive identities. For example, the Italian American's identity was assigned and thin a century ago, but now it is now strongly asserted as more Italian Americans have intermarried. Cornell and Hartmann mention there are individuals who carry more than one identity; there are members of the same identity group that can appear in more than one quadrant (one may have a thin assigned identity, other a thick asserted identity); and identity may change along both axes: thin-thick, asserted-asserted (2007:87). They conclude that "the power of ethnicity and race lies in the significance we attach to them, both to our own racial or ethnic identities and to the identities of others." Further, "Ethnic and racial identities are both contingent on circumstances and therefore fluid, and are often experienced as primordial and therefore fixed" (2007:74, 106).

Relevant to this question is the idea of “the simultaneity of identities” (Holvino 1994:161) and the two major forces of change for the “meanings and models of identity”: “globalization” and the “intellectual and political” forces. Another book in this category is *The Social Psychology of Ethnic identity* (Mayjel Verkuyten 2005). Three chapters in this book are useful: “Transnationalism and Diaspora” (2005:116) “The Role of Context” (2005:184), and “The Ethnic Self” (2005:205). In regard to the “Transnationalism and Diaspora,” the idea of the recreated or imagined homeland is important because this idealized image is common to many immigrant communities in the world. According to
Verkuyten, immigrant communities keep a permanent connection with their country of origin on multiple plans: social, economic, material and spiritual, especially due to the recent improvements in communication technologies and transportation. The immigrants live in at least two places and times, the time and place of the adoptive country and the mythical time and space of the native country and that has multiple and complex effects regarding their beliefs, hopes, choices, and actions.

Building on this perspective, Dill, McLaughin and Nieves “consider that people live multiple, layered identities and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege” (2007: 629). This suggests that people may have multiple identities and they can be at the same time proud or ashamed of the one, without relinquishing the others.

A similar approach is found in Multiple Dimensions of Identity Model by Jones and McEwen (2000). Identity is considered to be very “complex and fluid”, and this means the identity is constantly changing under the influence of many factors. The identity has multiple intersecting dimensions and characteristics: "the sense of self or the experience, the externally defined dimensions: race gender, social groups, the dimensions of identity "externally defined and internally experienced", and many "different identity dimensions are present in each individual" (Jones and McEwen 2000:408-10). This may explain why some people chose the Dacian dimension of the Romanian identity.

Another modality of identity reconstruction is to build imaginary communities. This idea was developed and explained by Benedict Anderson in Imagined Communities (1983). Although Benedict Anderson is considered by some sociologists as belonging to the historicist or modernist school of nationalism, one of the most interesting aspects for
my study is the way he reconstructs the concepts of ethnic identity and nationalism starting with from the idea of imagined communities. For Anderson, nationalism is something artificial and invented, and the community is a falsity: “Nationalism invents nations where they do not exist” (Anderson 1983:6). According to Anderson, nationalism is something else, it is a fraternity, comradeship that makes millions willing to die for “limited imagining” (7). The base for the national consciousness is print languages, which created fields of exchange that started to unify individuals. Ordinary people became aware of millions others who spoke the same language. Print capitalism gave fixity to the languages removing vernacular dialects or isolating them, thus making communication possible for people who spoke different dialects of the same language. Through this process, print capitalism created a language of power, the new dominant dialect that becomes the official language.

According to Anderson, “the progress of schools and universities measures that of nationalism” (1983:71). The European revolution in 1848 was influenced by the spread of schools and universities although there were only 19,000 high school (lycee students) students in France, 20,000 in Russia and about 48,000 university students in all Europe. It does not sound like a large number, but it represented a large increase compared to the previous centuries. With regard to the actual territories of Romania, by the end of the 18th century, grammars and histories of the Romanians appeared, followed by the replacement of the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin one. The printing of the vernacular languages created solidarity among the middle class bourgeoisie. A similar process happened in Japan where universal literacy was introduced in 1872 for adult males followed by the constitution
reform after the Prussian model in 1889. The result of the school and print propaganda was that Japanese imagined themselves as members of the same community. Their solidarity led to military victories against China in 1894 and in 1895, and to the annexation of Taiwan in 1895, and Korea in 1910.

At this point, I see two objections regarding the source of the imagined communities: first, these communities spoke different dialects but not different languages, which shows a connection between them and maybe the existence of a community, imagined or not, previous to the printings; second, people were still aware of the existence of millions others who spoke the same language, through the spoken language, through stories, songs, traditions, trade who established new connections or strengthened the existing ones.

By the time the European revolution started, there was a contradiction between the nation and the dynastic realm. For example, between the Austrian-Hungarian Empire on one side and the Magyarized Slovaks or Transylvanians, also between the Japanese Empire and the Japanized Koreans. The nations were not allowed to have their own local or national administration, but they had to accept the empire ruling them.

In the European colonies from Asia, the connection between the colonizer and the colonists was made by some local children who went to study in Paris and London. Once they graduated they were forced to return to the colonies because they couldn't integrate, and due to the the poor career perspectives in Europe. When they arrived home, they brought with them parts of the culture, civilization, and the knowledge accumulated during the years of study in the Western countries. They translated and adapted their experience
thus creating new connections between the locals and the vision of the new nations that would rise against the colonizers.

Anderson proposes there is a special kind of contemporary community expressed through poetry and songs:

No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing-Matilda and Indonesia Raya provide occasion for unisonality for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community (Anderson 1983:145).

This was also the case for the Romanian states emancipation and unification in the XIX-th century when the Romanian origin and identity was strengthen by poetry, literature, music, art. Also, the Dacian identity was emphasized at the time, especially by the Romanian national poet Mihai Eminescu and by Nicolae Densusianu, born in the Austrian-Hungarian Transylvania.

Further Anderson shows that the new scientific discoveries of the colonial powers, as well as history, archeology, cartography were meant to better control the colonies, but in the end, the educated locals started creating a special identity. They helped people imagine and create new communities, and the new nation states emerged threatening the colonial empire.

Today, millions of people have stopped accepting what other millions imagined about them and started imagining new states like Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. There are probably many others who were part of the Soviet Union and now wait for a favorable context to become fully independent. One of them is the Republic of Moldavia who
although is an independent state has to tolerate the Fourteen Russian military army on its territory.

3.4. Conflict Theory Perspectives

The actual evolution and perception of the Dacian sub-identity may by the result of many past conflicts, some of them still ongoing. The rivalry between Dacians and Romans ended long time ago, but some opposition still exists in people’s minds, based on the history classes learned in school. A positive, creative conflict exists today under the form of rivalry between different regions determined by slightly different traditions, cultural variation, vocabulary, accent, and ethnic identity.

Brubaker considers that ethnic nationalism could be interpreted in two ways: through biology or ethno-culturally. On the other hand, the term civic is more ambiguous, civic nationalism being perceived as either a “rationalistic understanding of nationhood.” Nation affiliation is rather chosen than given (2004:152-3). Michael Keating defines it as a:

Collective enterprise rooted in an individual assent rather than ascriptive identity. It is based on common values and institutions, and patterns of social interaction. The bearers of national identity are institutions, customs, historical memories and rational secular values. Anyone can join the nation irrespective of birth or ethnic origins, though the cost of adaptation varies. There is no myth of common ancestry…based on territorial defined community, not upon a social boundary among groups within a territory (1996: 5).
Brubaker analyzed the ethnic conflicts in Eastern Europe and notes that despite the high number of Russian ethnics located outside Russia in some of the ex-Soviet republics (over 25 million), the only violent conflicts took place in Yugoslavia, Transcaucasia and the North Caucasus. More recently, however, conflict has occurred in Ukraine, a development that actually contradicts Brubaker’s statement. He also mentions the case of the “Dniester Republic” in Moldavia and he analyzes the case of ethnic Hungarians in Romania. However, he ignores the case of the Romanians in the Republic of Moldavia, who make about 70% of the population and live in a state which is to this day separate from Romania. He mentions that unlike Western Europe, where the population is more heterogeneous, in Eastern Europe there was a process of “un-mixing, reducing rather than increasing heterogeneity” (Brubaker 2004:153).

A comparison can be made using some of the examples analyzed by Michael Banton (1997). He considers that a group can be defined through opposition with another group or groups, the characteristics of ethnics groups are not expressions of innate features and the ethnic, national, social or religious groups are continuously changing as their member react to new circumstances. The process of group formation is influenced by the structure of the social institutions and by the social changes. There is a continuous interaction between the group formation process, the structure and the consciousness of the group. Some people just follow the local conventions without any fine distinctions. For Banton, all social groups have a potential for change and this potential is higher if these groups are volunteer based, but in regard to the racial and ethnic groups he considers there is little freedom of choice. He considers that these groups have different levels of
boundaries, sometimes congruent, sometimes overlapped, for example Muslim and Bangladeshi.

Sometimes the ethnic identification was not necessarily natural or voluntary but forced or artificial and one of Banton’s examples is the ex-Yugoslavia’s case when Croats, Bosnians, Albanians had to accept the new Yugoslavian identity after the Second World War. In this context, the appearance can generate confusion and it may be misleading. For Banton, “the use of state power to decrease group consciousness can pose dilemmas because . . . state is rarely neutral . . . A policy of benign neglect may be preferable to some forms of intervention” (1997:130).

The same tendency was explained by Romanucci-Ross, De Vos, Tsuda (2006), in relation to an Italian province and city: Ascoli Piceno. The people living in that area, speak Italian but they also use a dialect that is hard to understand for Italians who only speak the official language or for other Italian dialects speakers. Some of these people consider themselves the successors of the immigrants from Troy when the city was destroyed or descendants of the Pelasgians, who according to some historians were the ancestors of Dacians. It is interesting to mention that between Ascoli and Rome there was a constant conflict, with some breaks, that the place where Spartacus defeated the Roman soldiers was very close to the city and that the locals actually still consider themselves different from the rest of Italy, celebrating certain festivals and still preserving traditions that are not common to the rest of the country.

A parallel can be drawn here between the double identities of the inhabitants of Ascoli: Italian and Ascolian, in Romanucci-Ross et al. (2006) and the distinction made by
Banton (1997) between the ethnicity of the Italians in Italy and the ethnicity of the Italian-Americans or Polish-Americans. The last two identities are secondary ethnicity in which “ethnic groups compare themselves with one another within a framework of shared citizenship” (Romanucci-Ross et al. 2006). Both examples show there is a tension between the two identities and sometimes one becomes dominant or a third identity emerges.

For Romanucci-Ross et al., the conflict has an important role in a community because it is “placing a family in the hierarchy of control and respect” (2006:158). He uses the example of Ascoli Piceno community in which there are many long lasting conflicts caused by almost anything: land, water, fire, crops animals, seeds etc. A similar situation can be encountered in Romania, in the country side where some conflicts last for generations but they are non-violent and they have a cohesive role, keeping the communities together.

Group consciousness is very important for the acceptance or the rejection of certain individuals in certain ethnic groups or categories. Banton mentions the example of James Bryce (1912) who stated that “In the United States everyone who is not white is classed as colored, however slight the trace. In Spanish America everyone who is not wholly Indian is classed as white, however marked the Indian type” (1997:90). The reason for this classification may be the fact that when there are only two categories, intermediate characteristics will be attributed to the lower one in order to” limit the number of persons entitled to share the privileges” (1997:90).

3.5. Postmodernism. The Discourse on Historical Truth
From a postmodernist perspective our society is continuously transforming, and the perception of truth is also constantly changing, which generates mistrust of the grand theories and ideologies.

Power has an important role in analyzing the relationship between freedom and human needs being either the main source of oppression or, in rare cases, a promoter of freedom. From Foucault’s perspective, power doesn’t only produce oppression it doesn’t always use force or repression, but sometimes “it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse” (1980:119). For him, the truth is a production of power, being connected to the systems of power, extending the effects of power. Power cannot self-maintain, it cannot function without the discourse on truth. Foucault considers that we are obliged to produce the truth of power, that “society demands” (1980:93) and needs in order to function. This means the actual capitalist society created the whole discourse of truth that power uses in order to rule. Our society created the discourse about competition and work, about the need for super-production, about diversifying production in order to satisfy our needs. The society creates the historical truth, which can be modified according to the social and political contexts.

3.6. The Memory and the Relationship to Identity

An important aspect of the historical perspective is represented by memory. There are many types of memories that can be considered in different circumstances but in this
case we are mostly interested in the collective memory. According to Jeffry K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy: “Memoria is the basic form of our relationship to the past, of our existence in time” (2011:6). They show this relationship has changed with the time, today an important role is played by media technologies, everybody being able to record and share almost any event. Written records create a different relationship with the past for the societies that have/had them compared to the societies that did not and that used an oral type of memory that could be easily altered.

The study of memory and the relationship with the history relate to studies like this one because memory is one of the main factors in the process of identity formation. It shapes what people think about their past ancestors, traditions, legends, myths, about the present, and how people report themselves to the past. Knowing about past events and their causes, about ancestors and connecting them with the actual circumstances can reshape individual opinions, choices and identities. For example, an Italian without the written or oral memories about spaghetti or Leonardo da Vinci, inherited from his ancestors, would be less Italian than we consider him now.

Today the Romanian society is in a complex process of transformation, switching from communism to capitalism and from a centralized state to a democratic one, and we can apply the example taken from Koselleck:

There is thus a stark contrast between a world of prophecy, in which events are merely symbols of that which is already known...and one of prognosis, which produces time within which and out of which it weaves (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011:7).
The memory is altered by the transformations of the social structure: “The past is a foreign country not only because it is long ago but because it is often far away” (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011:7). This means that the actual traditions, and customs, probably suffered transformations and could be different from what our ancestors used to celebrate 2000 years ago. One example is Calusarii, a dance and a ritual organization that probably suffered many changes with time and many of its dances meanings and rituals have been forgotten or reinterpreted.

In regard to collective memory Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (2011) mention Nora's (1989) and Megill's (1998) positions: “The problem of the collective memory thus arises in a particular time and a particular place, namely where collective identity is no longer as obvious as it once was” (cited by Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011:8). That is the case of some Romanian or Dacian old traditions that have been partially preserved by the collective memory. Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (2011) show that by the end of the 19th Century, to prove the superiority of a certain ethnic group or nation in the history of humanity, nation-states greatly increased the interest in their past.

This is the famous invention of tradition that Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (1983) who showed convincingly how European states in the decades before World War I sought to shore up the legitimacy they had been losing since the demise of absolutism and the introduction of democracy by generating a sense of historical endurance (often bogus) for their institutions and practices (2011:13).

Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy introduce Benedict Anderson's (1991) book, *Imagined Communities*, in which he states that nations are imagined entities. “But imagining nations, Anderson argues in similar terms to Koselleck and Hutton quoted above, depended on the
decline of earlier cultural models, including that of the written word as a privileged carrier of the ontological truth and of cosmological time” (2011:13).

Regarding the selective use of the historical proofs, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy show that:

To be sure, the memory boom of the late nineteenth century was tied up with the ascendency of nationalism, while that of the late twentieth century is tied up with its decline and the nineteenth century was still the age of monuments, while ours, given the atrocious history of the last hundred years, is one of the memorials (2011:14).

Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (2011:225-227) analyze the collective memory and indicate two “complementary phenomena: socially framed individual memories and collective commemorative representations and mnemonic traces”. There are chances “that different remembrances are valued differently in the group, that the memories of some command more attention than those of others”. This may also be the case with the members of one nation selectively remembering the history of another nation.

Also, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (2011) name:

The collected memory approach notion of collective memory as objective symbols or deep structures that transcend the individual risk slipping into a metaphysics of group mind . . . the social frameworks shape what individuals remember, but ultimately it is only individuals who do the remembering (2011:228).

They also mention prosthetic memories, which emerge through the stimulation of our neurological processes in different ways. Also, some European states during the nineteenth century have developed “new mnemonic forms like the museum” in order to increase their power and legitimacy (2011:228). It is emphasized the connection between retelling history and reality in writing that:
Our need for immortality through the memory of posterity. In our descendants' memory lies our hope. That requires our story to be set down, to become history, like the stories of our fathers before us. In this sense history is the precondition of destiny, the guarantee of our immortality, the lesson for posterity. Since we must live through our posterity, the offspring of our families, that history and its lesson must belong to us and tell our collective tale. Hence our myths, memories and symbols must be constantly renewed and continually re-told, to ensure our survival. The nation becomes the constant renewal and re-telling of our tale by each generation of our descendants (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011:236).

Nowadays, Romanian people rediscover parts of the ancient Wolf Celebration still preserved in the countryside and try to recreate the old customs. Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (2011) show that by the end of the 19th Century, to prove the superiority of a certain ethnic group or nation in the history of humanity, nation-states greatly increased the interest in their past.

For Marcuse (2002), the suppression of history is a:

Suppression of society’s own past—and of its future, inasmuch as this future invokes the qualitative change, the negation of the present. A universe of discourse in which the categories of freedom have become interchangeable and even identical with their opposites is not only practicing Orwellian or Aesopian language but is repulsing and forgetting the historical reality—the horror of fascism; the idea of socialism; the preconditions of democracy; the content of freedom (101).

The suppression of history is changing the ways the individual understands himself and the society, neutralizes consciousness, reduces individuals to working robots, inauthentic copies of forgotten and lost matrix. Without the knowledge about the past, people can easily repeat the same mistakes, losing their freedom to invented needs created with minimum effort by a technology that enslaves and exploits them.

Michael Kammen (1991) analyzes the relationship between memory, tradition, myths, and history, comparing democratic countries like United States and France with totalitarian countries like Russia. He begins with Claude Levi-Strauss ideas on myths:
“myths may be activated and reactivated in order to legitimize a version of history that is useful or attractive”. Also, myths may use a “Purged past as the foundation for a future that is just beginning to take shape” (1991:17). Kammen (1991) compares different attitude towards history or towards different events that happened in the past, in different countries: “Issues involving collective memory are not ordinarily, hotly contested in the United States” while in Germany the “fierce public debate concerning historical revisionism . . . provides a stunning contrast” (1991:702).
4. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research paper explores:

1. The status of the Dacian sub-identity and its relationship with the Romanian identity within different local and historical communities in Romania and the Romanian Diaspora.

2. The awareness of a Dacian sub-identity among Romanians.

3. The prevalence of the Dacian identity among Romanians: attitude of Romanians towards identifying as a Dacian and the degree to which they embrace or deny this identity, considering economic, political and historical factors.


When using the term “status” I am referring to the actual position of the Dacian sub-identity relative to the Roman sub-identity and to the Romanian identity, the prestige of the Dacian sub-identity, its legal character, popularity and the meaning associated to it. I have tried to find out if the Dacian sub-identity is becoming more important than the Roman sub-identity and whether that is influencing the perception of the Romanian identity. I have also examined and analyzed the factors that influence these relationships:
culture, language, religion, political, social, economic contexts and the immigration process.
5. THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research questions are as follows:

1. *What is the relationship between the Dacian and the Romanian linguistic and cultural heritage?*

2. *Does a Dacian community exist in Romania or abroad, and how is the Dacian identity influenced by migration?*

3. *To what extent is the Dacian identity real and to what degree does it represent an idealized, invented sub-identity?*

4. *Was the Dacian sub-identity a refuge against ethnic, linguistic and social discrimination in the history, during the Turkish occupation, later during Russian occupation of Basarabia and during the Communist dictatorship?*

5. *How is it possible to distinguish between Dacian and Roman influences on Romanian culture and language?*

6. *The Dacian sub-identity serve as a refuge against prejudice and discrimination for many Romanian communities. How does this process happen and what are the effects on the Romanian identity and on Dacian sub-identity?*
6. METHODS

There are many recent historical books about the Dacians and their culture, but I am not aware of any studies of the existence of a Dacian identity or sub-identity today. That is why I have decided to use interviews for this study. This method reflects what the Romanians within Romania and the Diaspora believe about the Dacian ancestors, if there are still people who consider themselves Dacians or consider their direct ancestors were Dacians, have a common history, people who believe their actual customs, traditions, foods, holidays, are of Dacian origins, who have a sense of belonging to a Dacian community.

My research begins with a historical review of the development of the Dacian identity. I have used qualitative methods in order to reveal many aspects of my research topic, some of them possibly not considered at the beginning of this study.

I have started with Grounded Theory (Strauss 1967), as an analytical approach for the qualitative research to unveil aspects of the experiences of my study population that may enrich my findings. The reason why I used Grounded Theory is because there are few studies and little information about the Dacian sub-identity and the best approach was to formulate the theory inductively through observations, interviews and reflection, continuously refining the indicators, concepts and the problem definitions.
As Glaser and Strauss showed in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967), the researcher will enter the study field with some ideas that may influence the analysis or the final results. According to Glaser and Strauss, ongoing reflection is as important as the coding and the recoding processes, generating categories and theoretical memos: “generation of theory through comparative analysis both subsumes and assumes verification and accurate description, but only to the extent that the latter are in the services of generation” (1967:28).

As I explored this topic, I became aware that:

There is a tension at the heart of the qualitative research between presentation of data and its interpretation. While the role of interpretation varies with different approaches some interpretation will always be present, even if confined to the selection of events and details relevant and the way a narrative account is presented (Poirer and Ayres 1997:551).

To be able to find out whether a Dacian identity or sub-identity remains I have conducted in-depth interviews with people from different regions of the country, Romanian ethnics, from Romania or from the Diaspora, people of different ages, social conditions, different religious beliefs, and living in urban areas as well as the countryside. Many of these people have the experience of living in a different country than Romania. The interviews have been conducted both in English and Romanian because some people are not fluent in English and others may be able to explore more ideas, circumstances, and personal experiences when using their native language.

The reason why I chose the in-depth interviews is to know and connect with the interviewee's thoughts, experience, reasoning and feelings:
The interview gives the researcher access to interviewees’ thoughts, reflections, motives, experiences, memories, understandings, interpretations and perceptions of the topic under consideration. It gives the researcher the opportunity to establish why people construct the world in particular ways and think the way they do. . . It is an extremely versatile method and can be used to study an almost limitless range of topics and research questions (Morris 2015:5).

According to Mason (2010), there are different approaches in regard to the sample size, based on the concept of saturation, the chosen topic, and the size of the project. Although some researchers mention different numbers for certain types of projects, and offer specific guidelines, these are not followed by other researchers:

Further to this, other researchers have tried to suggest some kind of guidelines for qualitative sample sizes. Charmaz (2006, p.114) for example suggests that "25 (participants are) adequate for smaller projects"; according to Ritchie et al. (2003, p.84) qualitative samples often "lie under 50"; while Green and Thorogood (2009 [2004], p.120) state that "the experience of most qualitative researchers (emphasis added) is that in interview studies little that is 'new' comes out of transcripts after you have interviewed 20 or so people" (Mason 2010:3).

My research included 12 interviews and two focus groups. Six of the interviews were done in Romania, and six in the United States. The two focus groups, each of them comprised of five and six interviewees, were conducted in the United States. The first six interviews have been done in the United States and the following six in Romania.

The two focus groups have helped me generate more ideas on the topic through the interaction between the interviewees:

This research method is advisable for generating ideas for investigation or action in new fields; for generating hypotheses based on the perception of the participants; to evaluate different research situations or study populations; to develop drafts of interviews and questionnaires; to supply interpretations of the participants' results from initial studies; and for generating additional information for a study on a wide scale (Freitas, Oliveira and Jenkins 1998:2).
Another benefit of the focus groups is that: “they offer the chance to observe participants engaging in interaction that is concentrated on attitudes and experiences which are of interest to the researcher” (Morgan and Spanish 1984: 259)

I chose to use snowball sampling as part of my method because I anticipated that might be difficult to find the interviewees in the beginning because they might be reticent or afraid to be ridiculed: “The method is well suited for a number of research purposes and is particularly applicable when the focus of study is on a sensitive issue, possibly concerning a relatively private matter, and thus requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people for study” (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981: 141).

6.1. Data

In order to make certain information about the interviewees easier to find, access and process, I organized it into tabs, mentioning: name, ethnicity, place of birth, residence, gender, age, studies, Dacian sub-identity/identity, language and family linkage. The tabs are available between the method section and findings.

7. FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

During this research I identified some groups of Romanian ethnics who live in Romania or in the Diaspora who consider themselves Dacians. I was also be able to find a strong relationship between the Romanian identity and the Dacian and Roman sub-identities with an increasing importance of the Dacian sub-identity, proportional to the
decreasing of the importance of the Roman sub-identity and the hesitation of showing or recognizing the Romanian identity.

Although the Dacian sub-identity became more popular, it is not probable that the Dacian identity will totally replace the Romanian identity although a mixed Dacian-Romanian identity is possible, especially if the actual trend continues among the young student communities.
### 8. TABLES. INTERVIEWEES AND BACKGROUNDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Place of birth/childhood, city or countryside</th>
<th>Residency</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Studies</th>
<th>Dacian sub-identity/identity</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Family linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>Moldavian/Romanian</td>
<td>The Republic of Moldavia/countryside</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Yes, moderate</td>
<td>Romanian, Moldavian (Variety of Romanian)</td>
<td>Romanian parents, Dacian ancestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania/countryside</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Yes, he consider himself Dacian, and “Dacian is Romanian”</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>He used to live with the grandparents in the summer, in the countryside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania/city</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania/city</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Dacian origins (sometimes he feels more Dacian than Romanian, due to discrimination)</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Traditions learned from parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania/countryside</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Identity Description</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Other Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorin</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania/city</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity melted into the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costel</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania/city</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. TABLES. INTERVIEWEES AND BACKGROUNDS “continued”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Romanian Identity</th>
<th>Other Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>College Student</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity melted into the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Yes, she considers herself a Dacian</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Her father considers himself a Dacian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Yes, very strong</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Group1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasile</td>
<td>Moldavian/</td>
<td>Republic of Moldavia</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Moldavian and Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilie</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Identity Description</td>
<td>Background Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>Moldavian/</td>
<td>The Republic of Moldavia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>College student</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Moldavian (Variety of Romanian)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johanna</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>College student</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Historian</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is part of the Romanian identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Romanian-Roman identity</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Dacian sub-identity is dominant</td>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Rica   | Romanian    | Romania | 70  | College/re tired    | Yes, strong Dacian identity                                                         | Romanian                                                                           | Dacian ancestry, his grandfather was “mot”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Student Status</th>
<th>Dacian Identity</th>
<th>Moldavian Identity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luca</td>
<td>Moldavian/Romanian</td>
<td>The Republic of Moldavia</td>
<td>man</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>College student</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Moldavian (Variety of Romanian)</td>
<td>It is not the case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. FINDINGS

9.1. A Historical Perspective.

9.1.1. The origins of the Dacians. A new turn to the perspectives offered in my interviews

Many of the interviewees state among other opinions, at a certain moment of the interview, that the Romanian nation emerges from a mixture between the Dacians and the Romans, or at least they state this is what they have learned in school. This is the main historical perspective in Romania and it is taught in all the schools across the country. However, this statement has many variations and sometimes during the interviews it was completed or questioned on the basis of new evidence, new theories or the lack of support for the old theories.

For example, interviewees like Don, Chris, Sorin, Anthony and Marian believe the Romanian people has formed as a mixture between Dacians and Romans, but there are many nuances here. For Don (Interview 2), the Dacians did not disappear completely and some of the Northern areas in Romania are still inhabited by people who resemble Dacians. For Marian (Interview 9), it is hard to compare Romanians and Dacians because of the time span; however, he believes the people in the countryside resemble Dacians
more than the people who live in the cities. Anthony (Interview 8) doesn’t know any pure Dacians, but Dacian-Romanian with strong Dacian traditions especially in the villages.

The school, home education and instruction are very important for the children in shaping their future adult personality, character, vision, set of values, and political opinions. In addition, education shapes societies and the relationships between them. For example, the Romanian history textbook from the Communist era (Daicoviciu et al. 1984), and the ones in use today in general (Almas 1997), state that Romanians are the result of the mixture between the Roman conquerors and the defeated Dacians:

The Dacians have learned the Latin language as well as the Roman settlers in Dacia borrowed many of the Dacian traditions and living style. Also, the other Dacians (from Muntenia, Moldova, Bucovina, Maramures, Crisana), who were free and kept their living style, have received, nevertheless, much of the Roman civilization. (Almas 1997:15, my translation).

9.2. A New Historical Perspective

On the other hand for Maria “the base of the Romanian people is Dacian so most of the Romanians are Dacian and simply describing the Romanians means describing the actual Dacians”(Interview 10, 2). In addition, she states that “the Dacian nation was grafted by other cultures”(Interview 10, 2), referring to the French influence in the beginning of the 19th and 20th centuries, when middle and upper class students used to go to French Universities, and to the more recent impact of the English language and culture. Maria is about 30 years old, and she lives in the Southwestern part of Romania, a region called Oltenia. From a new historical and political perspective, she mentioned that the
French language, was accepted as a Romance sister language in order to oppose the Austrian-Hungarian influence in the context of the independence struggle of the Romanian states during the 18\textsuperscript{th}, 19\textsuperscript{th}, and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries:

Maybe it is true that the Romanization of the Romanian language was done by the Scoala Ardeleana to release Transylvania from the Austrian-Hungarian empire domination. It was an invention meant to get Romania closer to some power centers in Europe: France and Italy, through a common origin and language (Interview 10, 4).

Maria suggests the possibility that the Latinization was invented recently to create a stronger Romanian identity with support from the countries speaking Romance languages. Maria, Rica and David are actually the only interviewees who make this statement in regard to the Latinization of the Romanian language and identity. Though not new, this theory is a reasonable explanation of the political conditions in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries when the Romanian states needed support to gain independence and resist aggression from the outside. It is interesting that some of young historians and scholars studying in Romania embrace this perspective.

Marcuse's theory about the suppression of history, of the future and of the past can be considered here (2002:101). Maria shows the education is very important for our identities and this statement is proved by many of the interviews, because people often mentioned what they have learned in school about Dacians and Romans. This information is more or less correct, and this demonstrates the role education plays in the formation or the suppression of history. Maria mentioned there was a different national interest that determined the 18-19\textsuperscript{th} century politicians to create a Latin identity in order to receive
support from some of the Western countries against the Austrian-Hungarian Empire who at the time occupied Transylvania, so she suggests that Romanians should be taught a more accurate version of their history of Dacians in schools and universities. This evidence-based history would gain wider acceptance and legitimacy.

Daniel Roxin, on his site Adevarul despre Daci (http://adevaruldespredaci.ro/), in English The Truth about Dacians mentioned one of Plato's dialogues, Charmides, in which Socrates spoke about a Thracian and Zamolxian\(^1\) physician:

I learned when serving with the army from one of the physicians of the Thracian king Zamolxis, who are to be so skillful that they can even give immortality. This Thracian told me ... the Greek physicians are quite right as far as they go; but Zamolxis, he added, our king, who is also a god, says further, "that as you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head, or the head without the body, so neither ought you to attempt to cure the body without the soul; and this," he said, "is the reason why the cure of many diseases is unknown to the physicians of Hellas, because they are ignorant of the whole, which ought to be studied also; for the part can never be well unless the whole is well." For all good and evil, whether in the body or in human nature, originates, as he declared, in the soul, and overflows from thence, as if from the head into the eyes. And therefore if the head and body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul; that is the first thing Plato (380 BC).

According to Daniel Roxin the Dacians had complex knowledge about medicine in general, medical plants, surgery and astronomy, their calendar being more precise than the Roman calendar. Most of this information, important for its scientific and historical content, is not taught in Romanian schools or universities. However this information became available, especially online or on some television shows, being presented by some scholars or writers like Daniel Roxin.

9.3. *History of Art Perspective*

---

\(^1\) Zalmoxis was considered a Thracian-Dacian king and God
Leonard Velcescu (2010) finds a few interesting facts about Dacians that bring questions regarding the relationship between the Dacians and Romans:

Although the Dacians have been defeated and they were probably prisoners, they were not represented with the hands tied behind back as the other prisoners. Velcescu mentions the Romans used to tie the prisoners hands behind back. These statues belong to different schools of art and some could have been brought from Dacia before or after the conquest.

Their attitude as represented by the statues is not humble, defeated, fearful, a prisoner attitude, by the contrary, they appear dignified, calm, and serene. They rather look like free men than prisoners.

There are many statues of Dacians of different sizes that have been initially placed in Trajan's forum and some are made of a very tough material, very hard to work with, porphyry, which was reserved only for the important personalities of the Roman Empire (2010:141). Some of the porphyry statues are made or have been brought from Dacia.

For the first time a barbarian king, Decebalus, has been represented multiple times in the antique statuary sculpture.

All these findings raise many questions regarding the origins of the Romanian people and their connections with their ancestors, the Dacians and the Romans. It also indicates a continuity of the Dacians, at least in regard to physiognomy and traditional dressing and a special relationship with the Romans.

Velcescu (2010), explains the meaning of the term “barbarian” for the Romans and Greeks: “According to Quintilian the features of the Barbarian language were: some letters
were added or removed within the Latin words or some were switched. According to Isidor from Sevillia . . . . barbarian words where Latin words corrupted in regard to the letters or sounds” (2002:1057). For him, the Latin and the Dacian language were related and people speaking Latin could communicate with people speaking Dacian: “The Barbarian language had, according to some authors the features of the Vulgar or Rustic Latin” (2002: 1060).

This statement becomes a reason for the idea of the Dacian language and identity continuity in Romania, later borrowed or researched by other authors. In this case the author doesn't recreate his homeland, but he rediscovers it through scientific methods.

9. 4. The Dacian Language

I will now turn to some of the interview statements regarding the origin of the Dacians people, from this perspective, based on the literature about the history and language of the Dacians, studied for this purpose.

The official position of the Romanian linguists is that the Dacian language has disappeared after the Roman partial conquest of Dacia in 106 A. D. According to them only a few words persisted in the Romanian language, most of the vocabulary being replaced by Latin words, and in a small proportion by Slav words.

A relatively new theory about the evolution of the Dacian nation and language, from the literature, is embraced by Rica (Focus Group 2) who believes that only 35-40% of the Dacian territory has been occupied by the Roman armies, and Dacian language had not been Latinized. Rica is about 70 years old, he is from Transylvania and now lives in
United States. He believes that the Dacian language was preserved, it evolved into the actual Romanian language, and the Romanians have Dacian roots with influences due to the migrations. His views are expressed in the following excerpt from his interview:

I would have to add some things: according to new researches and documents, Trajan’s Column, there are new ideas regarding the Dacian language and customs. It is known that the Roman empire only occupied 35-40% of the territory and the Dacian nation “rushed to learn” the Latin language, starting from Azov sea and towards Germany, because the Thracian tribes occupied a large territory, from Caucasus to the actual territory of Swiss, where there is village where a language close to Romanian is spoken . . . The new theory states that Dacians spoke vulgar Latin language, not Getae or Thracian. On the Trajan Column, Dacians appear as free solders, like free solders, not with tied hands, not as prisoner or defeated. The new theory to which I totally subscribe is that the Romans have learned Vulgar Latin from Dacians. According to the general accepted theory, Dacia is the only nation that learned the Latin language from the Romans. Neither did the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Southern French, Southern Germans, neither those from Pannonia planes, not Hungarians yet, but only one nation, not entirely conquered (35%) has learned the Latin language! Don't you think this is a little strange (Focus Group 2, 2, 3)?

This quote reflects the reasons used by Rica to support his statements. Similarly to Rica, Maria considers that, the Romanian language was not inherited from the Roman conquerors because Dacians spoke a version of Latin before they were partially conquered by the Romans and their language was not as simple as some believe. Rica has mentioned during the interview that Thracian tribes occupied large territories of Europe, some of them being located even in Swiss and I have found an interested magazine article related to this statement.  

---

2The article is called “Our brothers from the Alps,” published in Formula As magazine, (2005) and it mentions an old community of people called Romansi, who live in Engadin, region of Grison, Switzerland.
Gellner’s functionalist theory proposes that nationalism blends historical and cultural elements selectively, transforming them profoundly to revive and recreate traditions and languages (Gellner 2006:54). In this context, his motivations are multiple: Rica, was born in a family with some Montenegro ancestry and Rica is one of the many Romanian ethnics who has developed a strong Romanian identity because of the long Austrian-Hungarian occupation of this province Transylvania. This identity opposes the identity of the Hungarian minority that lives in this province and states the Hungarians were the first settlers in the region. As a result, Romanians from Transylvania may be selecting linguistic, cultural and historical elements, referring only to their most prestigious ancestors: the Dacians and the Romans, minimizing the other populations who temporary occupied the area: Slavs, Germans, Hungarians, and Celts. In choosing between Dacians and Romans, the Romanians emphasized the Romans in the 19th century because of the surrounding Turkish, Slav and Hungarian populations, based on the language, culture and tradition similarities. The connection between the Romanian identity and language on the one side and the Roman identity and the Romance languages

According to the article these peoples speak a language very similar to Romanian, with many common words and expressions, have many similar toponyms, and for example “carp” that is actually the root of the word Carpathian, the name of the main mountain chain in Romania. The article states they also have many similar superstitions, traditions, foods. One of the Romansi Villages in the area, Falera, was attested in 3500 B.C. and according to the locals many of their traditions have been inherited from their ancestors, this indicating their continuity, and strong cultural and linguistic connections with the Getae-Dacians (Thracians) from Dacia.
on the other, provided support and international recognition at least from France and Italy, officially speakers of Romance languages.

Again, consistent with Gellner's theory, some Romanians in nowadays Transylvania may choose the Dacian identity for two reasons: (1) because some of them believe they always had it, for example some people living in Maramures and Oas area consider themselves either Dacians or their direct descendants, or (2) because the Romanian identity, strongly connected to the Latin identity and language, is losing some of its status and power due to the economic downturn, immigration and discrimination in Western Europe.

Considering Epstein's (2006:103) distinction between ethnic identity marked by positive poles and the ethnic identity marked by negative poles, the Romanian ethnic immigrants are more comparable to hibakusha when they are misidentified with other ethnics and labeled, they receive another identity, an imposed one, but they establish a connection between each other through their maternal language, traditions and common experiences.

9.5. The Latinization of the Romanian Culture and Language

To this Latinization process of the Romanian culture and language contributed the fact that Romanians where the only people who spoke a Romance language in a middle of a Slav speaking mass of nations with the exception of Hungarians who spoke a
different language, of Finno-Ugric origin. In this context, Romanians may have been named by their neighbors Romans, Rumuni or derivatively Romanians due to the linguistic and cultural similarities between them and the real Romans who lived in the Italic peninsula and later in the Byzantine Empire or the East-Roman Empire. This fact may have contributed significantly to the formation of a Romanian Latin identity that could be used in opposition with the surrounding identities in Eastern Europe. Also, considering Maria's statement mentioned above, the theory of Latinization may have been accepted and promoted, beginning with the 18th century by the “Scoala Ardeleana,” an important cultural movement that was determined by the unification of the Romanian Metropolitan Church with the Roman-Catholic Church. “Scoala Ardeleana” played an important role for the cultural and political emancipation of the Transylvanian Romanians by promoting the idea of a pure Latin origin and language (claiming the Dacians have been exterminated by the Roman invasion), replacing the Cyrillic alphabet with the Latin alphabet and introducing Latin neologisms in the Romanian language in order to replace words of other origins. The result was a revival of the Romanian-Latin identity that later determined the Romanians in Transylvania to gain independence from the Austria-Hungarian Empire and to unify with Romania. This theory is contested today by archaeological and cultural evidence that show the Dacian continuity in Transylvania after the Roman conquest in 106 AD.

9.6. The Dacian Roots of the Romanian Traditions
Maria is from the Southwestern area of Romania, conquered by the Romans during the war with Dacians. She is familiar with many old traditions, associated with the Dacians that other interviewees also describe. As she commented:

It is astonishing how the traditions were transmitted for more than 2000 years: we have Calusarii, we have the winter holidays - also based on old Dacian traditions, and these are ritual Dacian dances that have not yet disappeared but are an integral part of the Romanian nation. These have not yet disappeared but they are about to (Interview 10, 1).

Like Rica, she identifies herself as a Dacian, based on her physical features. She admits that Dacians changed, because of the Roman, French and English cultural and linguistic influences, but the main part remains Dacian: “The Dacians exist irrespective of traditions, no matter if they are aware of that, like people in Oas for example or not. They simply exist” (Interview 10, 2, 3).

Maria also uses the discoveries of archeologists that document the existence of the oldest writing systems in the world: Tartaria and Sinaia slates. In addition, she asserts the possible existence of a complex oral culture that justifies the scarcity of written proves and justifies the richness of the actual Romanian folklore and oral traditions. Finally, Maria advocates the recognition of the Dacian ethnicity by the Romanian government, since she doesn’t believe in the Romanization of the Dacians. Maria and Rica bring into
play the military victories of the Dacians, as they defended themselves against the Romans.3

Maria used the example of the Oas Dacians mainly because the area was barely governable during the Austrian-Hungarian occupation and the people from this region are very conservative and attached to traditions and language4. What Maria brings new compared to Rica is her statements about the Dacians' advanced civilization, about their medicine that was pretty developed at the time as well as arts, construction, agriculture and military. She compares the Dacian capital, Sarmisegetuza, with the ancient temple Stonehenge.

Maria commented that Romania had architecture, monuments, and traditions that were comparable to those in Western Europe. Yet, they are not adequately valued, preserved, and studied. Old cities or fortresses are left to crumble, which is an obstacle to Romanians who want to know more about their history and ancestors. As with other countries, Romania’s history has both positive and negative aspects. In Maria’s view,

3For Maria, the reason that supports these statements is their resilience in contact to the Roman civilization, they persisted very well to many wars with the Romans including the ones in 101-102, 105-106 A.C., and they didn’t lose all their territories. After 165 years of occupations, Romans decided to retreat from that part of the country because of the Dacian rebellions, and due to the free Dacian and barbarian invasions.

4They speak the “Maramuresan grai”, a Romanian variety with accent which is not a dialect and it is close to the official, academic Romanian language, but the pronunciation is a little different and it includes some regionalisms.
there appears to be a double suppression of the past in Romania: first of all the Dacian ancestry has been denied, ignored and hidden. Though, a new identity based on Latinization has been created, it is no longer powerful, and it is ignored by the foreigners. It became shameful for the Romanians because of the association with poverty, corruption and lie, especially during the recent governments made of people belonging to the old Communist organizations. Secondly, in some cases, people form their opinions about Romanians, based on some negative experiences according to the Romanians they have met. Also, the media in some of the Western European countries created and fueled this confusion, generating sometimes anti-Romanian feelings.

9. 7. Celebration of Dacian Traditions Today: Calusarii, Sumedru and Junii Brasovului

Another interviewee that has a strong interest in Dacian myths, celebrations, language and clothing, is David, a young Romanian ethnic from Arad, Banat region, located in the Western part of Romania, that has been under Austrian-Hungarian occupation for long time. This is important for my study because Transylvanian and Banat people are more attached to the Romanian values and cultural heritage. They are also more nationalist, probably due to the long foreign occupation. Their Transylvanian-Romanian identity formed in opposition with the Hungarian, Austrian or German identities and thus it is stronger compared to the identity of the Southern Romanians,
because their identity wasn't threatened as much. He is about 34 years old, he is a writer, he works in the media and he is passionate about the Romanian history.

As a specific Romanian custom, David mentions Calusarii, a very old dance and music without an equivalent to the surrounding ethnics and countries. Traditionally Calusarii is a secret organization, male-only, ruled by an older man who recruits single young men with excellent physical abilities. The group takes an oath of secrecy and remains celibate for nine years. After the oath young men are initiated into the practice of dance, singing, and rituals. They roam the country during springtime and people believe that watching them brings good luck and protect against the disease and evil spirits like iele. There was an opposition from the church against Calusarii, who were excluded them from communions for up to three years. According to Mircea Eliade (1975), Călusarii were known for "their ability to create the impression of flying in the air" (1975:161).

Everything that's left from this practice, Calusarii, remained in the collective memory through its exterior form, the dance, but the meanings could have been lost, reinterpreted, or slightly modified, because of the secret character of these groups. Calusarii dances have been mentioned by other interviewees, but their meanings and interpretations have not been explained as detailed in terms of historical references as David did. This is a proof that culture and personal interest are very important in regard to the formation of the Dacian sub-identity.

David states that Dacians are a component part of the Romanian nation and this is being proved by the clothing and the traditions preserved until today. In regard to the identity preservation based on traditions, clothing, language and foods, the history and the
collective memory have an important role. According to Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy in *The Collective Memory Reader* (2011), the memory represents a connection with our past (2011:6), which creates a different relationship with the past for the societies that have them compared to the societies that do not. This demonstrates the importance of history, of the written and oral traditions, and of traditional clothing that many times carry through times symbols and coded messaged. For example there are symbols belonging to Cucuteni culture, about 4,000 years old, which appear on the traditional clothing today.

Another example of old traditions that make a connection with the Dacian past is “Murus Dacicus” or the Dacian wall was a type of wall meant to protect cities or fortresses against any type of aggression. The construction techniques are not entirely known because they were either lost or kept secret. According to Cosmin Zamfirache in the newspaper “Adevarul” (2014) there is a village in Romania, Horia, located in Mitoc Comune, Northern Romania, where people build their homes from stone, using a 2000 old secret procedure, inherited from their ancestors. They don't use any type of cement or binder. The ethnographers and the historians found these walls and the construction techniques very similar to the Dacian walls and this village is probably one of the last ones where this construction technique is applied.

This demonstrates that some professions may have resisted time and may still preserve some techniques inherited from the Dacians.

David mentions the Dacian legend of the White Wolf that appears in different parts of the country, under different names. For example, in Dambovita County it is called “Sumedru” and this was also mentioned in the second focus group by Charles. He has
probably rediscovered this tradition in old rural communities and this could be an example of the “invention of tradition” as it was theorized by Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (1983), who showed how some European states before World War I tried to gain back legitimacy creating a sense of historical resilience of certain traditions, and institutions. On the other hand, if this tradition is genuine and has correspondents in other regions of Romania this is a proof that some identities are founded on authentic customs.

Another old tradition mentioned by David is Junii Brasovului, in English the Young people of Brasov:

This celebration is very well known in the area and it has been proved that it has Dacian roots. This community organizes traditional events in Brasov area, every year and obviously has such connections and continuity . . . that also includes teachers and doctors and there is an archaic language that is not understood in some regards not even by those who use it but is preserved with great care from their ancestors. The rituals and the words are repeated exactly the way they were learned but the meaning of some of them is lost (Interview 12, 4).

Basically these traditions are a bridge between the actual modern community and their Dacian ancestors, although some of the rituals and traditions have lost or changed their meanings.

9.8. *Ancient Customs and Identity Reconstruction*

Most of the interviewees were able to identify many old traditions and customs that are pre-Christian, aren’t present in other countries that used to be part of the Roman
Empire, but can be found in many Romanian communities in Romania and abroad. Because some of them were specifically mentioned to be Dacians, and because of their pre-Christian origin and uniqueness, these customs and traditions are considered to be of Dacian origin. There are differences between customs and traditions in the countryside, these being more diverse, more complex and archaic than the ones still preserved in the urban areas. Many of these traditions and customs were mentioned by more than one interviewee and some of them appear in four interviews. This demonstrates their popularity and the interviewees’ connection with the keepers and originators of these customs, mainly considered Dacians. One example of such custom is Colinde, which appear in Daniel's and Mihai’s interviews and in both focus groups. Colinde is a custom practiced especially by the children and young people, during Christmas and the New Year’s Eve. They go to every house of the community singing specific songs about Christmas and some songs about the wealth and the luck of the New Year that apparently have no connection with the actual Christmas. It is very common to all of the regions in Romania and also regions inhabited by Romanians in Europe. Another old custom present in the Romanian folklore and mythology is Sanziene. This was mentioned in Christine's and Chris’ interviews and in both focus groups. It is necessary to mention that Christine, Chris, Nicole and Charles, from the second focus group and Vasile from the first focus group have grown up in the countryside and only Luca from the second focus group grew up in a city. This emphasizes the fact that Sanziene was preserved mostly in the countryside and has some agrarian characteristics unlike Colinde which was preserved with small variations both in rural and urban areas. Another interesting aspect
is the fact that Sanziene is mentioned by people born in different countries, in Romania by David, Christine, Chris, Nicole and Charles, and in Moldavia by Vasile and Luca. As a consequence these customs are spread on a very wide territory. Sanziene is considered by many people a pre-Christian celebration, in Muntenia and Dobrogea provinces taking place on a specific date, June 24th and it is characterized by a traditional meeting of the girls and women not married who pick herbs and plants with medicinal and magical properties. The plants are also called Sanziene or Dragaica. The people who practice this custom believe that during the Sanziene celebration, night miracles are possible, because the barrier between this world and the other world disappears. Sanzienele or Dragaica are considered to be some sort of small goddesses in some areas, beautiful girls in other areas who live in the woods, dance hora, an old traditional dance, and practice rituals that give special powers to some medicinal or ritual herbs. Other names for Sanziene are: Sfintele-the Saints, Frumoasele-the Beautiful Ones. They are also considered to be fantastic creatures, made of air or positive characters. They are beautiful, they dance, travel fast and sing more like goddesses than humans. Unlike Ielele or Rusaliile, other mythological characters, Sanzienele help people, the animals, and the crops, bring prosperity, fertility and have healing powers.

On the blog “Terra Dacica Aeterna” this celebration is described as:

The legend says that in long lost times, Sanzienele used to be priestesses of the Sun, but as their beliefs are lost in the mists of time, today they are considered beneficial fairies of extreme beauty. Some specialists say the Sanziene celebration is a Getae-Dacian celebration of the Sun, millenniums old. In the night of 23rd to the 24th of June, Sanzienele, who live in forests and plains, come out of their hiding places and dance the night away in circles. Where the Sanziene or
Dragaica dance, the plants grow healthier and stronger filled with healing properties (Terra Dacica Aeterna blog 2012:1).

The solstice night or the Sanziene night, is considered one of the magical nights of the year, when the veil between real and magic almost disappears and the two worlds merge. People believe that in this night, Sanzienele or the fairies are flying or walking on land, singing and dancing, healing, protecting the crops and the love. The legend says that if people forget or ignore this holiday and don't celebrate Sanzienele as they should, Dragaicele will get angry and they will punish the ignorant.

According to most of the interviewees this celebration takes place three days after the summer solstice, being directly connected to the longest day of the year, to the celebration of the Sun. On Sanziene night, huge fires are lighted by young men on top of the hills while singing: "Go Sun, Come Moon/ Good Fairies/ May the flowers grow the flower/ Yellow and sweet smelling/ For the girls to harvest it/ To make it into wreaths/ To wear on the hats/ Flowers for marriages/ The old women to spell them/ To get married by the autumn", and imitating the sun movement” (Terra Dacica Aeterna blog 2012:1).

There are complex rituals that involve both young men and women, and old women as well.5

---

5According to Terra Dacica Aeterna (2012), this night, the young, unmarried women and girls go to the forests to pick tiny, yellow Sanziene flowers, make wreaths and throw them on the roofs and if the wreaths get stuck on the house they will marry before the end of the year. Next morning, young men wearing Sanziene at their hats will go through the village to pick the maiden that will represent the fairy, chosen from a group of seven girls, the most beautiful, and the one with best character of the group. She
Some consider this tradition Dacian, other like Romulus Vulcanescu in *Mitologie Romana*, (1987:127), consider it to be of mixed origins, Dacian and Roman, the name Sanziana being composed of san from saint and ziana from the Roman goddess Diana.

In certain areas, in the cities or countryside, young girls put Sanziene flowers under the pillow in order to dream their future husband.⁶

An example of a Dacian tradition resurrected is the International Day of ie, which is the actual Dacian-Romanian traditional blouse, and begun to be celebrated since 2013. The day chosen to celebrate the Romanian Blouse, June 24, is the date of Sanziene celebration. This is not a simple coincidence and the date was selected purposely to emphasize the strong connection between the two important elements of Dacian traditions: the symbolic clothing and the solar, ancestral rituals. This resurrected tradition spread rapidly in most of the Romanian communities, being celebrated in the Republic of Moldova, in Western Europe and in United States. In Washington DC, the Romanian community already scheduled this special event on June 24th 2015.

will become a Sanziana, dressed in a white dress and she will sing and dance along the village in the intersections and the crop fields.

⁶If the maidens want to marry fast they need to wash themselves with flower dew in the Sanziene morning and before sunrise. In hidden places, far from the village, the old women collect the Sanziene dew in a white container, and it has to be in new cotton. When going back home, the women are not supposed to talk or meet anyone in their path. If everything is done right, the girl who is going to wash with the dew will stay beautiful, healthy and she will be loved for the entire year.
Michael Banton (1997) considers that a group can be defined through opposition with another group or groups, most of the traditions mentioned here being found in Romania and in the neighboring countries mostly at the Romanian minorities. These traditions have been preserved even when the region has become part of a different state, through the opposition with the other ethnics, or in Romania, preserved especially in the countryside.

As I mentioned before, this celebration could be Dacian, if we consider the other name, Dragaica, without Latin roots, Roman or Daco-Roman, according to the Romulus Vulcanescu, if the possible etymology for Sanziene is accepted, but nowadays it is considered Dacian due to a possible process of identity reconstruction.

9.9. The connection between generations

Another area I explored in my research is the connection between grandparents and grandnephews. As Epstein emphasized, the grandparents, not the parents, establish the strongest connection between the generations, they introduce the past to the children through stories and they are “living links to the past” (2006:145). While the relationship between the parents and the children is one of subordination and dominance, the one between the grandparents and children is an alliance.

The young Romanian immigrants in Western Europe are influenced by this strong relationship with their grandparents, most of them very traditionalists, grown in the countryside, close to old customs and nature and they are more likely to rediscover or
reconstruct a Dacian identity. Also, many Romanians who work temporarily in other countries of the European Union leave their children in Romania with their grandparents.

According to David, the connection between the Dacians and the actual people who live in some rural areas in Romania is made by customs, stories and myths. There are also some legends about the Dacian gold curse, that are actually taboos and people believe in them. David gives some examples of these taboos being broken by some people who wanted to become rich and succeeded by finding a Dacian treasure. In the end they lost everything they had, they became crazy and died: “There are more stories and statements from the Orastie mountains area where in a similar ways people who were also presumed guilty or arrested because of artifact traffic have lost everything, died in suspicious circumstances or lost their minds” (Interview 12, 3). These legends are very powerful in those areas and they create a direct connection between the community and their Dacian ancestors. The community in this case becomes the guardian of their ancestors' memory, tombs and treasures. The easiest way these legends are transmitted is oral, through stories told by grandparents to their grandchildren.

During the Communist era most of the lifestyle, customs, myths and traditions have been preserved due to the fact that Romania was a closed society and the social mobility was relatively low. Today the Romanian society is in a complex process of transformation, switching from communism to capitalism, from a centralized state to a democratic one, and some of the traditions might suffer changes or disappear, other might be resurrected.
Some differences were apparent between the interviewees that come from the countryside or have spent their childhood in a village and people who grew up in the cities. The first category has a stronger connection with the nature, with the traditions, customs, celebrations and superstitions than the second category. Many customs that are preserved very carefully in the countryside have disappeared in the city or have been changed in order to correspond to the new conditions, interests, demands, fashions, international trends or attitudes. One example is the old Romanian custom of Dragobete, celebrated on February 24, but being replaced recently by the more popular and commercial Valentine's Day.

In the first focus group, Vasile who grew up in the countryside mentions many traditions that are still preserved in his area and may be of Dacian origins with Christian influences: Plugusorul, Colindele, Uraturile, Craciunul, Ielele, Sanzienele, St. Gheorghe, Caloianu, Paparudele, I consider them Dacians. They may have been modified, they may have received some Christian content” (Focus Group 1, 7). Ilie from Maramures and Victor from the Republic of Moldavia, mention the transformations suffered by some of the traditions nowadays:
Ilie: “Like Valentine’s Day that almost became more popular than Dragobete” (Focus Group 1, p.6).

Vasile: “These Holidays are reinterpreted, there are new contents added, each generation uses them as they want or need to” (Focus Group 1, 6).

Vasile's statement is very important because it shows that some of the meanings of old celebrations and traditions may be preserved, but other may be altered in order to better answer the community spiritual, social and political needs. This may be the case for the revival of Sanziene and the association of this old celebration considered Dacian with the Day of the Romanian Blouse, part of the Romanian traditional popular clothing, also considered of Dacian origin. The revival of these two important elements of the Romanian tradition and identity may not be accidental. This could be the result of the Romanian diaspora spread throughout the world and trying to redefine the Romanian identity, in a moment of crisis, by returning to the Dacian roots.

9.11. Memory and Dacian Identity

The memory and the relationship with the history are important for my study mainly because the history is based on collective memory, and it is part of the process of identity formation. Memory determines what people think about their past, history, ancestors, traditions, legends and myths, about the present, and it shapes their present actions.
As discussed earlier in this thesis, Michael Kammen, (1991) has written about the relationship between memory, history, myths and traditions, comparing democratic countries with totalitarian countries. He explained how these myths can be activated and reactivated in order to legitimate history. Kammen’s insights may be applied to the myths that underlie the theories regarding the Dacian origins of the Romanian people, which are evident in popular customs, traditions and superstitions. However, there are many historical sources and archeological evidence demonstrating the survival of the Dacian civilization and society prior to the Roman occupation, and still present long after the Roman retreat from Dacia, although this is not the official viewpoint of most Romanian academics. Levi-Strauss' perspectives on myths is an alternative position to the official opinion of some Romanian historians who intentionally ignore, use out of the context or omit ancient sources and evidence of the Dacian language and the continuity of Dacian civilization in the actual territory of Romania. This may suggest that, the myths about the complete Latinization of the Dacians may have been activated or reactivated to legitimize a version of the history and create a connection with other countries whose origins and histories are similar, such as France and Italy. As Maria mentioned (Interview 10, 4), these myths about Latinization may have influenced these countries to recognize Romania's independence in difficult moments of its history, such as the War for Independence with Turkey in 1877 or The Great Union in 1918. Kamen also mentions that in France, different conflicting perceptions of the past “especially of the revolution, have been a deeply divisive rather than a unifying force. In Czechoslovakia and Romania the proper interpretation of the historical myths and national legends has been politically...
contested for centuries” (1991:701). This statement underlines again the gap between the political official position and people's beliefs. Kammen explains the contrast with the United States through “The American inclination to depoliticize the past, in order to minimize the memories (and causes) of conflict: that is how we selectively remember only those aspects of heroes lives that will render them acceptable to as many people as possible” (1991:701). The same explanation can be applied to Romanian history that ignores important proofs, studies and references to the Dacian ancestry. Kammen points to the need to “reconcile tradition with democratic values, though not necessarily with the practice of democracy” (1991:701).

The invention of tradition of Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (1983), could be applied to the origins of the Romanian traditions, from two different perspectives: the one supporting the theory of Latinization and the one regarding the Dacian continuity. Both origins of the Romanian traditions, Dacian and Roman, could be considered and analyzed as being invented from Hobsbawn's perspective.

Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy's (2011) idea about the selective memory could be extended to the historians of the 18th, 19th and 20th century who have decided that the interests of the Romanian states (there were three separate states until 1918) would be better represented if people would create and accept an identity based on the Roman ancestry rather than a Dacian identity. The Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy (2011) study can also be applied in a different manner to the actual disciples of the Dacian
continuity that may be tempted to selectively use the history, the archaeological evidence and the memories about their ancestors.

If we apply Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy's (2011) statement about the past seen as a “foreign country” (2011:7), the Dacian traditions, customs, rituals, and language, probably changed and could be more or less different of what our ancestor used to celebrate 2000 years ago, before the Roman conquest. This may be the case of Junii Brasovului, Calusarii and Sanzienele, whose meanings may have been altered, re-adapted or lost.

9.12. The Identity Revival

9.12.1. The origins of the revival

The actual new theories about the Dacian culture, civilization, language and resilience are partially based either on new studies and discoveries, like the one of Leonard Velcescu (2010), or on older theories so called Protochronism. Some of the most important exponents of these ideas are Napoleon Savescu (1999) and Daniel Roxin (2013), already mentioned above. Many of their ideas related to the Romanian history, language, ethnic origins, and culture are related to Nicolae Densusianu's work “Prehistorical Dacia” (2002). His study was done at a moment when one of the Romanian provinces, where his birthplace is located, Transylvania, was under Austrian-Hungarian occupation. In this context some of his reasons for the study could have been, along with the research for historical
truth, the intention to create an interest for the Romanian history, a connection with the mythical past and a stronger Romanian identity.

9.13. Obscuring and Replacing Identities

As Cornell and Hartmann (2007) propose, sometimes stereotypes reveal strong conflicts between different ethnics or even within the same ethnic group. Analyzing the cases of Hutus and Tutsies, the two ethnic rival populations in Rwanda, Cornell and Hartmann (2007) mention physical and moral stereotypes they have about each other. Similarly to Hutus and Tutsies, the stereotypes about the Roma or the Gypsy population still exist in Europe, and they are also applied to the high number of Romanian immigrants who are identified as Romas because of the name similarity and due to the job competition they create. Both groups, Romanian and Gypsies face discrimination and marginalization. To avoid being confused with the Gypsies, the Romanian ethnics adopt a new Dacian identity or sub-identity that may help them adapt to the new social conditions. According to the interviewees, this confusion creates tensions between the local population and the Romanian immigrants in countries like Italy, Spain, France, and England, because of some prejudice associated with Gypsy ethnics. This may be one of the main reasons why the Romanian immigrants try to recreate their identities based on their Dacian ancestor’s identity, and this appear in most of the interviews and both focus groups. Some of the Romanian ethnics in these countries try to integrate as much as possible, they avoid the
Romanian language and traditions in order to be considered either members of the local communities or immigrants of origins different than Romanian. Some others develop through opposition a new Romanian identity, stronger than the previous one, more traditionalist, in which the Dacian sub-identity becomes increasingly important, sometimes replacing or being at the same level with the Romanian identity. Sometimes the two identities: Romanian and Dacian, merge, becoming one and the same. In the case of the Romanians the adoption of a Dacian identity counters negative stereotypes associated with the Roma population. For David the Dacian identity revival is “one of the keys of the national identity revival” (Interview 12, 6).


In regard to the Romanian ancestry and history, David has ideas much resembling to Maria and Rica's, considering that: Dacians were not totally defeated by the Romans, there is a Dacian continuity after the Roman retreat in 275 A. D., and it still exists today. Also he believes the Latinization of the Romanian language and culture was done in order to create a connection with Rome in the 19th century:

The Dacian identity revival is one of the key of the national identity revival . . . and this could generate a name change in Dacia, which would be much closer to the truth, because the name of Romania was given in the 19th century in order to make the connection with Rome, . . . stating the Dacians have been exterminated, although the historical proofs are abundant, showing the Romans only conquered one third of the North Danubian Dacia and that after 106 A. D. there was a very large number of Dacian wars and revolts. If the first revolt in the Roman Dacia was in 117 A. D., the year of Traian's death, this is a strong proof of the fact that the Dacians didn't disappear. After that, for almost 200 years there are tens of
wars fought by the free Dacians, Carpi, and Costoboci, against the Roman Empire in the Roman province of Dacia as well as South of Danube (Interview 12, 6, 7).

Compared to other interviewees, David’s perspective is the most complex in regard to the Dacian culture, language, identity and their connection with the Romanian language and culture. Many of the ideas he offered are not available in the history textbook used in Romania or Moldavia7. Notably, he is well informed about the Dacian identity revival and its connection with the national identity revival, seeing the first as triggering the second. And, secondly, he mentioned a name change from Romania to Dacia that would correct a historical error.

According to David, in Romania, especially in the countryside, there are still communities that consider themselves either Dacians or their direct descendants. In these communities some traditions have been preserved unchanged for at least 2000 years as well as the clothing, decorations and architecture:

There are many, there are traditional communities from Transylvania, Moldavia and other regions of Romania in which the old people consider themselves the successors of Dacians and there is an awareness of the Dacian continuity in these communities. There are the villages in the Orastie Mountains where there are some traditions like mourners who mourn at the birth (Interview 12, 1, 2).

Another interesting fact mentioned by David is that, at the last Census that took place in Romania, some respondents declared themselves Dacians: “It looks like at the last census

7 He mentions the Dacians revolt right after the death of the Roman emperor Trajan, followed by many other revolts and wars for about 200 years. Although these events are mentioned by many Roman credible sources, they are not available in the history textbooks in Romania or in the Republic of Moldavia.
some people said they consider themselves Dacians, they have registered themselves as Dacians” (Interview 12, 3). The real number of people who consider themselves Dacians could be higher, but sometimes they don't mention it in order to avoid being ridiculed, discriminated or sometimes these requests are not registered in order to prevent other persons from registering as an ethnic minority, and then ask for specific rights.

In regard to identity, based on the empirical data, the constructionist approach offers the most useful framework for explaining the making of ethnic groups and identities: basically our ethnic identity is a mixture between what other people consider us to be and what we think about ourselves Cornell and Hartmann (2007:75). The conflicting identity starts at the moment when what we think about our identity doesn't correspond with what others think about it, in this case it is the asserted Romanian identity versus the assigned Gypsy identity.

Applying this theoretical approach to the Dacian sub-identity and to the interviewees' answers we can say that the Dacian sub-identity is asserted and thick at this moment as it become increasingly important and may become assigned with time especially in the Romanian communities in Western Europe and United States if it is promoted and becomes better known by the main ethnic groups of each country.

For David, Romania is “a country under occupation” (Interview 12, 8), because the national interest is ignored and the history is recreated according to different interests, in order to destroy the Romanian identity. In this case, the invention of tradition of Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (1983), the one based on the Roman heritage, is not meant to produce cohesion and solidarity, but to induce a latent conflict between the real Dacian tradition, culture, language,
that may have survived until today, and the invented ones, based not only on Latin elements but also on an important percentage of Slavic influences that, according to the official position of the Romanian historians was most likely unilateral. For example many Romanian words are considered of Slav origins although both languages are Indo-European and the influence may have been reciprocal: Romanian words that may have entered the language through the Slav migrations, but also the other way around, words borrowed by the Slav, or borrowed by both nations from Greek.

According to David, the most devastating effects on Romanian identity were produced by the Bolsheviks:

This is the destruction of the Romanian identity and those who worked on this for centuries and especially when the Bolsheviks took over Romania, the ones who had the most aggressive attitude against the Romanian identity, did very well their job, so today many Romanian immigrants wished to erase their identity in order to look better, especially in the European countries where there is a strong perception that Romanian is the country of gypsies and the Romanian people are a nation of thieves (Interview 12, 8).

David's statement is pointing to some of the main reasons for the decline of the Romanian identity and for the revival of the Dacian identity. These reasons combined with the poor economy and corruption in Romania, with immigration, and prejudice against Romanians and Romanian Gypsies in the European Union may be accelerating the revival process of the Dacian identity. David also states that, many Greek historians consider some of the Greek ancient Gods to be borrowed from the Thracian Gods, based on archaeological evidence. Nevertheless, historians and officials of the European community reject these evidence because this may change the perception of the European historical and cultural heritage, based on the Greek and Roman civilization and cultural model:
Famous Greek historians talked since antiquity, 2,500-2,300 years ago about the rituals, the Gods borrowed from Thracian, about the Thracian Gods' mountains. There are many things that bother the European Union as they would change the perspective of the European History. At European level the starting point is the premise that the top of the European civilizations are the Greek and Romans civilizations and everything else was barbarian. The reality is different and the attack of the identity is instrumented from the outside of country with help from within (Interview 12, 10).

From a political perspective, this statement could bring a new vision on European ancestry, language, traditions and history and it would probably be rejected by some historians and European official, because it will challenge the actual political and ethnic organization.

Most of the interviewees understand the revival of the Dacian identity as a revival of the old traditions, customs, dances, foods, education, school, politics, ethics and eventually language. All these have to be completed by a strong sense of awareness, in other words the Romanians have to be aware about their Dacian identity. The revival of the Dacian identity should be basically the revival of the Romanian identity threatened by corruption, poverty, poor education and disinformation.

9.15. The Idealized Homeland

Maykel Verkuyten's (2005) perspective on ethnic identity focuses on the re-created and imagined homeland. As Verkuyten asserts, immigrants in two places and times: in the new country they decided to move and the idealized homeland. Rica's comments about his native language, land, and the idealized history, and his acceptance of an idealized version of Romania or Transylvania, is based on both real ties, new
studies and mythological conceptions:” the Thracian tribes occupied a large territory, from Caucasus to the actual territory and Swiss, where there is a village, where a language close to Romanian is spoken” (Focus Group 2, 2). Charles expressed a similar opinion about Dacians:

I would say that the Dacians were the bravest and the most honest among the Thracians, according to Herodotus. I believe his words. Dacians spoke the Dacian language, we have inherited many customs especially in the countryside, the culture-there is many archeological vestiges- they were good farmers, very brave when they needed to protect their territories. Dacia extended from the mouth of Bug to Caucasus during Burebista who reunited the Dacian tribes (Focus Group 2, 2).

By embracing these ideas, they are able to better resist any danger from the outside or from the inside (I am referring here to the danger of a part of Transylvania separating from Romania due to the Hungarian minorities). From this perspective, Dacians or Getae-Dacian are preferable because they are “the noblest as well as the most just of all the Thracian tribes," according to Herodotus in Histories (4.1993), and they were able to fight and resist against the greatest empire of the time, the Roman Empire, at least during the first Dacian-Roman war between 101-102 A.C. The ability to fight and resist a greater power is comparable to the resilience of the Romanian ethnics in Transylvania during the long Austrian-Hungarian occupation.

9.16. Education and Identity Revival
At this point the new theories that haven’t yet entered the school manuals although they are freely expressed in the media (on TV, radio, in the newspapers, on the internet), have influenced different categories of people: Rica and Maria. While Rica was interviewed in a focus group in the United States, Maria was interviewed individually in Romania. Despite the differences between Rica and Maria, including age, gender, profession, education, and living in two different regions, they express similar perspectives.

Many of the interviewees mentioned the school education as their main source of information about the Dacians, but some of them like Maria and David emphasized the importance of a correct education system based on scientific and historical evidence.

An important detail that is missing from the history manuals is, according to David, the Triumphal Arch of Galerius from Tessaloniki, Grece, built around 300 A.D., that has:

plenty of Dacian figures, Dacians holding the Draco in their hands, 200 years later, with the same hats, clothing, the Dacian Draco being part of Emperor Galerius's army, on which the antique sources state that he had Dacian origins. Even more, as a curiosity, a church writer from the 4th century a C., from Constantine the Great's court, the one that followed Galerius, contemporary with Galerius, mentions Galerius in a book called De Mortibus Persecutorum, the emperor had the intention to change the Title from Roman Empire to Dacian Empire and it seems that even his personal guard, his praetorian guard was made of Dacians (Interview 12, 7).

This is another proof that the Dacians have not been exterminated after the war in 106 A.D., they still had a strong identity they gave an emperor to the Roman Empire, and they kept the same war flag, the wolf head. These details, confirmed by scientific studies, if added to the history manuals in Romania will help build a stronger Romanian-Dacian identity.

David mentioned some of the important historical episodes of the Dacians, that are missing from most of the school manuals, or have been minimized: the Dacian victories
against the Roman empire at the end of the first century A. D. and the tribute paid by the Romans to the Dacians after these wars. These are a proof that Dacia was a military power at the time. Also, the numerous revolts of the Dacians in the occupied provinces, after 106 AD, demonstrate that Dacians have not been exterminated in the 105-106 AD war. Another important information mentioned by David, but missing from the history text books is regarding Regalianus, a Roman general of Dacian origin, apparently related to Decebalus, the last Dacian king before the Roman partial occupation of Dacia: “Regalianus, who has been named emperor by the legions in Pannonia and Moesia and about him it is written in this Istoria Augusta that he was worthy to become an emperor and also that he was a nephew of Decebalus.” (Interview 12, 8). This is one example of a Roman source that is ignored by the Romanian historians and academics in the history text books. He is also mentioned by Inge Mennen in Power and Status in the Roman Empire, AD 193-284 (2011: 218). Long after the Roman conquest of a part of Dacia, Regalianus, a Roman general of Dacian origin, who was a relative of the last Dacian king Decebalus, revolted against the emperor Gallenius. Regalianus was the emperor between 258-268 A.D. This event could provide some evidence that 152 years after the Roman conquest, the Dacians or some of them did not lose their identity.

9.17. The Romanians the Moldavians and the Diaspora

9.17.1. Moldavian versus Romanian
This research included interviews with Romanian ethnics from Romania, from the diaspora and from the Republic of Moldavia whose majority population is made of Romanians or people with Romanian ancestry. The Republic of Moldavia, also named Moldova or Bessarabia was part of ancient Dacia, of ancient Moldova and later it became part of the Great Romania.

This section analyzes the differences between the interviewees of the two countries, especially the ways in which they embrace the Dacian identity or sub-identity.

There are four interviewees from the Republic of Moldavia: Vasile, Adrian, Luca and Victor. All of them speak a variety of Romanian called Moldoveneasca which is very similar to the actual Romanian language and has a direct correspondence to what is spoken in the Romanian province called Moldova. The accent is slightly different and the vocabulary includes some archaic Romanian words and Slav elements. Romanian is their mother language.

The first interviewee I discuss is Vasile, a PhD student in the United States. He was born in a Romanian family in the Republic of Moldova. Vasile mentions that he speaks the official Romanian language but insists that at home he speaks Moldoveneste. Vasile has integrated into both the Romanian-American and the Moldovan-American communities. Over 70 percent of Moldavia's population is of Romanian origin and speaks Romanian, with a concentration of Russian speakers, Tatars and Turkish speakers located in the Southeastern part of the Republic in what today is called the Republic of Transnistria. He also states that he “doesn't have any explicit Dacian

---

8This small republic of about 1,600 square miles is backed by Russia's 14th army after a short war that started in 1990 and lasted for about two years. I need to mention that immediately after the occupation
identity” (Focus Group 1, 3). Although he doesn't adhere openly to this identity he considers some of the most important Romanian and Moldavian celebrations of Dacian origins:

I wanted to mention that I haven’t explicitly activated this identity, but I am aware that most of our holidays are of Dacian tradition, including the big ones: Christmas, Colinde, Uraturi referring to ploughing, that probably come from the Dacians and maybe even earlier, celebrating and pointing to the connection with the agriculture, with the land (Focus Group 1, 3).

For him the Dacians are alive also “because we speak about them” now, but he presents a more nuanced vision about his ethnic identity:

I would say: Neanderthal-Dacian-Romanian-Moldavian-Telenestian, because I am from there, and American. I would add all these historical layers and I would add the professional identity. I consider that in this long row of my identities, the Dacian identity has a place among the many others (Focus Group 1, 6).

His identity is split between a multitude of sub-identities, he doesn't mention a prevalent one but the Romanian, Moldavian and Dacian ones are among them, the order emphasizing the time and the location: “If Dacian identity means Colinde, I miss this although one year I went singing Colinde with friend on Christmas, we didn’t specifically think about our Dacian identity, but we thought of what we did home” (Focus Group 1, 8).

At that point, Ilie who is a Romanian ethnic from the Northern part of the country, Maramures, the place where people are still called “Free Dacians” exclaimed: “Sometimes you don’t realize when you lose your identity. I just realize how much I miss some things” (Focus Group 1, 8), referring to the traditions mentioned by Vasile, that are common as well as the language to both Romanian and Moldovan-Romanian ethnics. These traditions

of Bessarabia (Republic of Moldavia) by the Russian forces in 1942 the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced in the region, replacing the Latin alphabet.
identified as Dacians by Vasile and other interviewees, are creating a connection between these individuals who live in different countries. Nevertheless, a problem is identified by Vasile who shows that Moldavian ethnics are split between East and West, between Romania and Russia, between the opposing Slav identity and the Romanian and Dacian-Roman identities: “I want to make distinctions between the Romanians that come from Romania and those from the Republic of Moldavia . . . we have to build ours because we have some competing projects. I have chosen to take the Romanian identity inclusively accepting the gypsies, and other minorities” (Focus Group 1, 9). Epstein's (2006) example of identity reconstruction through opposition can be applied here; in this case, the main opposing identities are the Moldavian and the Russian identities. If this opposition is placed in the context of the interview time frame, the Russian identity is rejected with caution in the Republic of Moldavia because it is associated with the country's structures of power, poverty, corruption, a past war, and foreign occupation in the Republic of Transnistria. On the other hand, this situation favors some people in Moldavia, especially the native Russian speakers. If we apply the actual context of Russian military aggression in Ukraine, there is an increasing threat for the Moldavian-Romanian ethnics and this fuels the opposition to the Russian identity, and strengthens the connection with the Romanian identity and the Dacian sub-identity.

According to Vasile, the traditions and the holidays in Moldavia are similar to the ones in Romania, with some regional differences. He shared the opinions of other interviewees that the Romanian identity is a mixture of Dacians and Romans, and that Romanians and Moldovans have common roots. This point of view is opposite to the one
taught in the Moldovan schools during the Soviet Era. Then, children learned that Moldovans and Romanians have different origins and traditions, and the Moldovans are related to the Russians rather than to Romanians. From a historical, functionalist perspective, Vasile adhered to the most suitable identity when he partially exchanged the Moldavian community with a Romanian-American and a Moldovan-American community. Vasile's choice of identity fluctuated as he adapts to different circumstances. If we follow this assumption, Vasile developed a Moldavian identity in Moldavia, where the school education was different from the family education and children were thought they had only few things in common with the people living in Romania, thus the fear of repressions or the need for a better status led him to adhere to this identity. In United States, the threat disappeared and was replaced by the advantage of a faster integration through the Romanian community.

When analyzing this interview it is important to consider the efforts of the Communist Party in Romania and Moldavia to shape the knowledge, beliefs, and ethnic identities of these populations. For example, when Moldavia was occupied by the Russians in 1940 following the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact in 1939, the repression against the Romanian population was strong and immediate, and reinforced by measures meant to change people’s opinions using any means including education. These campaigns occurred before Vasile was born, but they affected his grandparents and parents, and indirectly shaped his new identity. Though he does not mention this history in his

---

9https://cersipamantromanesc.wordpress.com/tag/istoria-basarabiei/
interview, many historical sources and accounts of witnesses and survivors document state that hundreds of thousands of Romanians from the Republic of Moldavia were deported to Siberia following the Russian occupation in 1940\(^\text{10}\). Many of them have starved to death, froze to death or have been killed by the Russian army.

Vasile's experience can also be interpreted through the framework of symbolic interactionism applied to the process of identity reconstruction, Epstein (2006). Ethnicity is one aspect of the self, and as the self is formed beginning in early childhood, figures to which the child has strong emotional ties like parents and grandparents exert strong influences. In Vasile's case, who was about 30 years old at the time of the interview, it is likely that the influence of his Romanian grandparents led to his adoption of a Romanian identity.

Epstein's (2006) example of the reviving Jewish community in Yankee City could be partially used in cases similar to Vasile's although there was no opposition against the use of the maternal language in Yankee City. Today, another difference is made by the advance of media, transportation and their reduced costs, compared to the time of Epstein's study. All these make possible better communication between the immigrants and their family and friends, they preserve the original connections with their country of origin, and reduce the process of acculturation. In Vasile's case, the process is somewhat different because he and his family could not use the Romanian language in public, and de-emphasized their

\(^{10}\text{http://www.moldova.org/70-years-ago-today-13-14-june-1941-300000-were-deported-from-bessarabia-221894-eng/}\)
Romanian identity. This changed with Vasile's immigration to the United States. Claiming this new Romanian-Moldavian-Soviet identity was easier for Vasile who grew up in that new society, but it was difficult for his grandparents. His Romanian or Dacian-Romanian identity re-emerged later on, maybe as a result of the Russian-Moldavian conflict in 1990 in Transnistria or as a result of him immigrating to the United States. His identity is probably different than his grandfather's identity due to the influences of the new environment. In this case, it is a recreation of the Romanian or Dacian-Romanian identity based on a double opposition: with the identity of the occupant and with the identities of the new society of immigration. Vasile's case may differ from other cases of Romanians who recreated a Dacian or Romanian-Dacian identity or sub-identity after they have immigrated to countries of Western Europe or to United States. In later sections, I presented interviews of subjects who have immigrated to Western Europe, United States or have just visited other countries yet lived in Romania.

Adrian, a 17-year-old man from the Republic of Moldova, has a different perspective about the Dacian identity. He is not sure if he is a Dacian or not. However, he considers it a source for pride. He mentioned that he didn't learn about it from his parents but from school and this is probably the case for the most Romanians and Moldavians who live in the cities. Unlike them, people from the countryside associate some of their daily activities, traditions, customs, dances and songs with the Dacian heritage. This is the case of Ilie, who is from the Northern part of the country, named the area of the “Free Dacians,” because they were not conquered by the Romans:

I have never been too good at history but as I know there were free Dacians who have never been conquered, at list in my area, Maramures, in terms of personality
I believe we resemble because we are a little independent. There are all sorts of customs, for example ploughing, seeding, Tanjaua, celebrating the first men going bunch planting in the village, and I believe there are all very old kinds of customs meant to create competition to make everybody participate and become as productive as possible (Focus group 1, 2).

Similarly, Vasile mentioned he is aware that many of the traditions in Moldavia are of Dacian origins. Ilie compared the actual Moti with the Dacians from Trajan's Column due to their beards and the Dacian hats, stating they may or may not preserve their identity in a European Union that standardizes and connects people with different ethnicity.

Vasile mentioned an interesting aspect of the Dacian sub-identity in Chisinau, Moldavia: the identity reconstruction using fragments of other old civilizations with origins that may be different from the Dacians:

There are many social networks of Dacians, especially online, there are organized groups very interesting phenomena, and we should be studying the groups that identify themselves as Dacians. I remember that in Chisinau there were some strange groups that called themselves Dacians, they gathered, doing Saslac, they party, they ate Caucasian food and drink beer (none of them traditional Dacians drinks or foods). They connected all these in a Dacian feeling (Focus Group 1, 5).

Victor, another interviewee from the republic of Moldavia, has similar opinions to other Moldavian interviewees, in regard to the Dacians and Dacian identity:

I don’t think they have disappeared, I mean, the common sense…the Romans are the descendants of Dacians, the Dacians are still alive through their descendants and . . . ok, let’s say in the meantime they were subjects to different changes, but they are still alive even in other regions of Europe (interview 1, 1).

Also, he states that: “I think that I was born Romanian and I’ll be always proud to be Romanian despite the bad attitude or facts. In a way I know guys who don’t like being born Romanian, but I am proud of being Romanian“(interview 1, 3). This demonstrates that both being of Dacian ancestry and Romanian are connected and very important at least for some
of the Moldavians who consider themselves Romanians. This wasn't a focus group, it was the first interview; thus the possibility that the Moldavian interviewee was influenced by the Romanian respondents is excluded.

The Moldavian identity or a new Romanian-Moldavian identity would be slightly different from the actual Romanian identity because it will have to encompass along with the Dacian sub-identity the identities of the minorities who live in the Republic of Moldavia, mainly Russians and Gagauzi. From this perspective, the Dacian revival movement may have two effects in both Romania and Moldavia:

First, and authentic Dacian or Dacian-Romanian sub-identity or identity emerging from old traditions, customs, folklore, foods, clothing, and celebrations that are common to the Romanian ethnics (including the Moldavians). This would be a strong connector between the Romanians and Moldavians that will help them build a common identity with the inclusion of minorities in both Romania and the Republic of Moldavia: Russians, Hungarians, Tigani (Gypsies) and Gagauzi (Bulgarians from Moldavia).

Second, a newly imagined community based on different, invented or borrowed cultures and civilizations (like the groups from Chisinau, mentioned by Vasile), with limited adherence that wouldn't be strong enough to connect the two identities: Romanian and Moldovan, because it wouldn't include the common traditions and it wouldn't be authentic. This would be similar to the famous invention of tradition of Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger (1983) used by the European states after the World War I to gain the lost legitimacy. In the actual circumstances in the European Union, considering the increasing pressure of Russia, this wouldn't be strong enough to help merge the two identities.
This comparison demonstrates the common cultural, linguistic, historical, and ethnic heritage of the Romanians and Moldavians, the Dacian sub-identity being one of the connectors between the two identities and a possible base for the Moldavian identity to integrate and merge with the Romanian identity. The Dacian sub-identity could be the starting point of a new imagined community for Moldavians and Romanians, a promoter of the re-unification between Romania and Moldavia in one state.

9.18. Diaspora versus Homeland

As mentioned in the beginning of this analysis, people from both Romania and the diaspora were interviewed in order to find out if there are any differences regarding their attitude towards the Dacian sub-identity, to check if there is a revival process and to find out what drives this process. I did five interviews in Romania with Romanian ethnics from different areas of the country, one of them via phone. I also did two interviews in the United States with Romanian ethnics who were just visiting this country for a short period of time, but they live in Romania, and five interviews and two focus groups (with five and six interviewees each) with Romanian ethnics from Romania and the Republic of Moldavia who have immigrated to United States.

Five out of seven interviews done with Romanian ethnics who live in Romania (including the two interviews with students visiting United States) present similar characteristics:
they refer to the information received during the school years, stating the Dacians have been conquered by the Romans and then Latinized, the culture and language being mostly of Roman origin.

They associate the Dacian sub-identity with traditions, clothing, foods, and dances, and sometimes with honesty and hard work as opposed to the countries where they visited or they migrated.

For example, Costel who lived for a while in Italy and then he returned to Romania, probably rediscovered his Dacian sub-identity through opposition with the Italian identity, similarly to Epstein (2006:101-102): “ethnic identity is . . . inner perception and outer response”.

four out of seven interviewees state the Dacian ethnicity should be recognized officially.

Due to the media development, people have more access to varied information and this is one reason why the interviews of the Romanians from the diaspora are similar to those of the ones in Romania. Another common element in this case is the education and the traditions inherited from their grandparents in Romania. These can be applied to the Romanians from diaspora in United States, in Europe, also to those in Romania and the Republic of Moldavia.

9.19. The new Romanian Identity versus the Old Romanian Identity

9.19.1. Communism and freedom
Before the Revolution in December 1989, that determined the end of Communism, Romania was a closed country, where people could not travel in or out, could not freely express opinions, protest, take initiatives, exchange opinions with foreigners. In short, people's freedom to choose and act was restrained. After the Revolution the people regained their rights, they were able to express their opinions without the fear of being imprisoned, they could travel again, and they were able to elect their Government in a more democratic way. However, the old Communist power structures didn't disappear, they changed quickly, showing a democratic face, and taking over the main institutions of the state, the state owned companies, completely controlling the political, social and economic aspects of the country. Favoring generalized corruption, the authorities ruined most of the state companies and then sold them almost for nothing to companies owned by relatives or friends, making huge profits. This generated high unemployment rates, increased poverty, and as a consequence millions left the country to work in Western European countries. In the last 25 years the Romanian society changed radically, losing much of its young and specialized work force dealing with an increasing number of retired people. Basically a high percentage of the Romanian population is now made of grandparents and nephews. Many young adults have left to work outside the country for years. The actual income in Romania is way below the European average salary, and this is another reason why many young people intend to leave the country once they have finished the high school. As a result the Romanian identity suffered strong transformations, with some differences between the Romanian immigrants and those who
stayed in Romania. For those who live in Romania, the Romanian identity became in a certain way associated with the corruption, lies, dishonesty, and lack of determination because of the generalized political, economic and legislative corruption. This wasn't generated only by the Romanian inner perception, but also by the outer perception of Romania by the European countries. The result was either to blame or shame of the Romanian identity, or a strong resurrection of the Dacian-Romanian identity.

In regard to the Romanians immigrants, the perception is a little different. They don't generalize the blame to the whole Romanian society, but only to the corrupted political class. However, the negative perceptions of the Romanian ethnics in Europe, associated with the nostalgia for their idealized homeland determines some of them to turn to the Romanian-Dacian identity or even to a pure Dacian identity, and to revive it along with many traditions, customs, popular clothing (like the very recent successful celebration of the Romanian Blouse) and foods.
10. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In the beginning of this research, I stated that one possible finding will be
some groups of Romanian ethnics who live in Romania, Moldavia or in the Diaspora who
consider themselves Dacians, and inside and outside these groups there is a strong
relationship between the Romanian identity and the Dacian and Roman sub-identities,
with an increase of the Dacian sub-identity. The history sections based on interviews and
the literature review showed and confirmed the strong connection between the Romanian
identity and the Dacian and Roman sub-identities. I also found that the Dacian and
Roman sub-identities are influenced by the education, especially by the school education.
Most of the people interviewed consider themselves a mixture of Dacians, Romans and
possible other ethnics, based on their school education. However, when they discuss
tradition, folk culture, myths, songs, customs, traditional clothing and foods, most of
those I interviewed indicate these are mainly of Dacian origin. As a result, people from
the countryside, more conservative and connected to traditions and myths, have a
stronger Dacian identity or sub-identity than people from the cities, although they may
not be aware of it or that may confuse it with a local identity, for example people from Jiu
Valley, called momarlani or from Oas and Maramures regions, who consider themselves
free Dacians or the descendants of the free Dacians.
The study showed that school education is important for the identity of the Romanian ethnics from Romania, the Republic of Moldavia and diaspora, shaping what they believe about their own identity. From this perspectives, new scientific studies about the Dacian history, language, identity, culture and traditions that show the Dacian continuity and resilience after the partial Roman conquest are important for the revival of Dacian identity. Three of the interviewees who demonstrate the strongest Dacian identities: Maria, David and Rica have reconstructed their identities on the basis of the customs, traditions, language, applying the new studies about Dacians, not yet officially accepted. Unfortunately there is a gap between the official position, people's beliefs and the new scientific proofs. For example, the government and the official history don't recognize the existence of the Dacian communities in regions like Maramures, Oas, and Jiu Valley, because this would determine the recognition of the Dacian continuity, of the Dacian ethnicity and identity, changing the official history and creating similar requests from other minorities.

Another interesting finding is the similarity of the ethnicity, language, traditions, customs and history between the interviewees from Romania and the Republic of Moldavia correlated with their beliefs in a common Dacian ancestry and heritage. From this perspective the Dacian sub-identity has a cohesive role and it could be one of the connectors between the two nations that would possibly lead to their reunification. A potential problem here would be the one identified by Vasile, who shows that Moldavian ethnics are split between East and West, between Romania and Russia, between the opposing Slav identity and the Romanian identity.
It looks like the young interviewees, between 20 and 40, especially from Transylvania region, tend to have a stronger Dacian identity or Dacian-Romanian sub-identity.

It looks like there is a crisis of the Romanian identity, especially for the Romanians who immigrated to some Western European countries, mainly because of the negative publicity made by the media and because of the name confusion between Romanian and “Romani” or Gypsies and the prejudice associated with the gypsies. As a result many Romanian immigrants in Europe either hide their identity or recreate a new Dacian-Romanian identity.

As a result, a new identity is about to emerge, based on both Romanian identity and Dacian sub-identity and influenced by the new studies and theories. This new identity will reflect the new social realities in Romania and the Romanian diaspora, as part of the European Union. The new identity is being built on genuine traditions, customs and language, but it could also be imagined and re-imagined, using elements of other old cultures, like in example of the Dacians from Chsinau, the Capital of the Republic of Moldavia, given by Victor. Depending on how much popularity it will gain in the near future, it will be a new Romanian identity, supported by a strong Dacian sub-identity, or it will become a Dacian-Romanian identity that may include the Moldavian identity and those of the national minorities.
11. LIMITATIONS

The interview task was a little challenging, especially in the beginning because the Romanian community in the United States is not very large, compared to the Romanian diaspora in other European countries. This situation is generated by the distance and by the visa requirements for the Romanians who want to travel to the United States. Also, the population is scattered on a large territory with small communities spread around the large metropolitan areas of New York, Washington DC, Chicago, Los Angeles, and this made the search for potential subjects more difficult. To reach out to the future interviewees I contacted via phone, e-mail, Skype or in person different Romanian and American friends who lived in different cities, who were able to introduce me to these communities, to recruit the future interviewees. I even met some future interviewees on Facebook, through friends who were organizing protests in front of the White House against the cyanide exploitation of an old Roman mine in Romania and I was able to connect with them while participating to the protest.

Another challenge was determined by the fact that some of the interviews were performed in Romania, the travel time was limited and I couldn’t schedule as many interviews as I wanted to. Also, for a better representation I should have visited and interviewed people from most of the country’s regions, from the cities and the countryside, in their actual environment, but I was only able to travel to Oltenia,
Moldavia and Bucharest. Nevertheless, I had the chance to meet and interview people from other regions who were traveling and had the experience of living and working in a foreign country.

For a better understanding of the status of the Dacian sub-identity and for a wider variety of answers, I intended to interview people who also live in isolated villages in Romania, who didn’t have much access to the cities, to the media and weren’t affected by the recent transformation of the Romanian society and the new discourses on national identity that have proliferated recently. These populations usually live in mountain area and I was especially interested in the ones located in the Central, Eastern and Northern parts of the country, so called areas of the Free Dacians, because they could have preserved old traditions, vocabulary, stories and myths related to Dacians. Unfortunately this wasn’t possible due the limited time, costs and road access. On the other hand I had to occasion to interview people from these areas, in the United States, especially people from Maramures region, for example Ilie and Nicole. When I did the second Focus Group, the limitation was that I did not have the chance to interview people in their original environments, people that have never left their native lands, in order to compare their answers with those of the people born in the same areas, who later migrated and lived in the United States.

For some interviews I could have used the snowball sampling technique, for example Christine’s interview, in which she mentioned about her father as a potential subject that may have a Dacian identity. She has also mentioned about the Costesti
legend, village that she visited, where people would consider themselves the guardians of the Dacian secrets and treasures, but they wouldn’t talk about that to a person that was not initiated in their secrets. In these cases the difficulty was posed by the distance, the time needed to travel to the location, gaining access to the specific group or to the gatekeepers and the additional material costs determined by the travel.

In regard to the gender of the interviewees there were more men who accepted to do the interviews than women. There were two women who actually participated in the individual interviews, but there were at least three in each of the focus groups. This happened mainly because women were more skeptical about giving an interview to a stranger, and also because the main place I was recruiting interviewees in the United States was the church, and women usually had extra duties before or after the religious services. The Romanian Orthodox Church gathers most of the Romanian ethnics in the United States, being the place where individuals meet regularly; it is also representative for the population in Romania as most of them are religious and about 81% of them declare themselves Christian Orthodox\(^\text{11}\). These communities also include Romanian ethnics who are not religious but come to church in order to socialize and create new connections, as a consequence, in these groups there may be a wider diversity compared to the population in Romania, which is Christian-Orthodox in proportion of about 86%.

Some people did not want to recognize their Dacian sub-identity for different reasons: fear of discrimination, fear to become ridiculed. It was difficult to find isolated

\(^{11}\)http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/
or closed communities that were able to keep their Dacian identity. It was a little difficult to interview somebody from organizations like “Asociatia Geto-Dacică”, in English the Getae-Dacians Association, but in the end one of its members accepted to take the interview. Also, the data about the Dacian identity, language and culture was limited and difficult to access, because many of the studies about Dacians can only be found in Romania, the Dacian language is officially considered extinct and there are no new studies available yet. Also, the interest in Dacian language and culture has been resuscitated recently.
APPENDIX 1

Informed Consent

The Remaking of the Dacian Identity in Romania and the Romanian Diaspora

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research will investigate if there is a Dacian sub-identity and if it is still alive and relevant for the Romanians ethnics. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in a focus group or/and interview between 30 minutes and 2 hours. You will be asked open ended questions and we will discuss about your origins, ethnicity, culture, language, preferences, traditions, ancestors, history.

The interviews and focus groups will be audio and video recorded.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research in the study of the Dacian sub-identity.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential. For coded identifiable data like interviews and focus group the participant’s name will not be included on the collected data and a code will be placed on the collected data. Through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link the interviews and the focus group to the participant's identity. Only the researcher will have access to the identification key. I will keep the material for at least 3 years, in my laptop, and I will be the only person who has access to
it. Also, recordings will be erased after they are transcribed and coded, after at least 3
years, if not further needed for the research.

Although focus group participants will be asked to keep the contents of the discussion
confidential, due to the nature of a focus group, the researcher cannot control what
participants might say outside of the research setting.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for
any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no
penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you
or any other party.

CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Lucian Rosca at George Mason University. He may
be reached at 646 897 5970 for questions or to report a research-related problem. The
faculty advisor for this research is Professor Patricia Masters who may be reached at
pmasters@gmu.edu or through the Sociology department at 703 471-9830. You may
contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 703-
993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the
research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures
governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT
I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

__________________________
Name

__________________________
Date of Signature

Version date:
APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions

The Remaking of the Dacian Identity in Romania and the Romanian Diaspora

1. Please tell me something about yourself: where you grew up, your family, (when did you come to US? For the US interviewees), anything else that you would like to share.

2. What is your native language? Did you ever speak a Romanian dialect? How about your parents, relatives or ancestors? Please explain.

3. What is your nationality? How about your family, relatives and ancestors?

4. How would you define Dacians in terms of language, traditions, culture, holidays, location, and ethnicity?

5. Do you believe the Dacians have disappeared or are they an integral part of the Romanian people?

6. How would you describe Dacians?
7. Are there any differences between Romanians and Dacians? How could you distinguish them? Please explain.

8. If you believe the Dacians still exist, where do they live now?

9. Do you know people who consider themselves Dacians or Dacian-Romanians? What do you think about them?

10. How are they different from the other Romanians?

11. How would you describe their traditions, language dialect, and cultural heritage?

11. Do you consider that the Dacian ethnicity should be recognized by the Romanian Government? Why? Please explain.

12. Are the Dacians aware of their identity and origins?

13. Do you consider yourself just Dacian, Dacian-Romanian, Dacian-Roman, Romanian as the result of the mixture between the Dacians and Romans or just Romanian? Please explain.

14. How are all these ethnicities different?

15. Can you please name and describe some Dacian traditions?

16. Are there any Dacian traditions incorporated into the actual Romanian traditions or religious practices? Please elaborate.

17. Did you live in other countries? Please describe that experience.
18. What do you feel about your Romanian origin?

19. What do the people from other countries believe about the Romanian ethnics?

20. Are you proud of your Dacian origin/heritage? Please explain.

21. Are you aware of how people from other countries perceive the Dacian identity?

22. Did you feel discriminated or appreciated as a Romanian ethnic? Please explain.

23. How does the attitude towards the Romanian ethnics influence your Dacian identity?

24. Are there any advantages of being considered Dacians for the Romanians in the Diaspora?
APPENDIX 3

Focus Group Questions

The Remaking of the Dacian Identity in Romania and the Romanian Diaspora

The influence of Romanian Immigration on the status of Dacian Sub-Identity in Romania and the Romanian Diaspora, as part of the Romanian Identity.

The first Focus Group, complementary to the in-depth interviews, will help me better answer my research questions:

(1) How is the Dacian sub-identity shaping the Romanian identity today?

(2) What is the Romanian people’s attitude about this sub-identity in the context of massive immigration to the Western countries of the European Community and to the United States?

It will be organized in Queens, New York in a private setting and it will include 6,7 persons, Romanian ethnics who don’t know each other, men and women of different ages and socio-professional categories, first generation immigrants to the United States.
A. Welcome.

I would like to thank you for being here today. My name is Lucian Rosca, I will be the facilitator of this discussion. I am a graduate student at George Mason University and this study is for my Master Thesis. I also have Paula Rosca with me to take notes for us.

I invited you to be part of this research because you are all Romanian nationals, first-generation immigrants and some of you may consider yourselves successors of the ancient Dacians. This research will help me find out if the Dacian sub-identity is still alive and the relationship with the Romanian identity in the context of immigration. This research will also help you better understand your identity and cultural heritage and how are these shaped when moving to a different country.

B. Ground rules: Before we start, I would like to mention a few ground rules for the research:

a. I will ask you several questions and we do not have to go in any order but we do want everyone to be part of the discussion. Only one person should speak at a time.

b. We want to hear your opinions, there is no right or wrong answer and we want to learn from your experience.

c. It is fine to have a different opinion than other participants, but please respect the answers and opinions of other participants.

d. You don’t have to answer questions you don’t want to. Your answers are confidential.
We will not ask for anything that could identify you and we will only use first names during the discussion. We also ask you to respect the privacy of everyone in the room and not share or repeat what is said here in any way that could identify anyone present in this room.

f. We will tape recording the discussion and we will also take notes because we don’t want to miss any of your comments. Once we start the tape recorder we will not use anyone’s full name and we ask that you do the same. Is everyone ok with this session being tape recorded? (I will get the verbal consent).

   We will not include your names or any other information that could identify you in any notes or reports we will write. We are going to destroy the notes and audiotapes after we will finish this study.

h. The discussion is going to take about two hours and we will like you to stay until the end of the interview.

Do you have any questions before we start?

   C. **Introductions**: I will ask everyone to introduce himself/herself to mention the place of birth and to tell us a little bit about you. (5 minutes, I will start recording)

   D. **Group Discussion, Topic 1 (20 minutes)**

1. Please tell us about the region where you were born, your native language, ethnicity, traditions and culture.

   a. **Probe**: What is your native language? Have you ever spoken a Romanian dialect? How about your parents, relatives or ancestors? Please explain.
b. Probe: What is your nationality? How about your family, relatives and ancestors?

c. Probe: How would you define Dacians in terms of language, traditions, culture, holidays, location, and ethnicity?

2. Do you believe the Dacians have disappeared or are they an integral part of the Romanian people?
   a. Probe: Are there any differences between Romanians and Dacians? How could you distinguish them? Please explain.
   b. Probe: If you believe the Dacians still exist, how would you describe the contemporary Dacians?
   c. Probe: Do you know people who consider themselves Dacians or Daco-Romanians? What do you think about them?
   d. Probe: How would you describe their traditions, language dialect, and cultural heritage?

E. **Group Discussion, Topic 2 (20 minutes)**

3. I would like to discuss about the Dacian identity awareness and recognition.
   a. Probe: Are the Dacians aware of their identity and origins?
   b. Probe: Do you consider yourself just Dacian, Daco-Romanian, Daco-Roman, Romanian as the result of the mixture between the Dacians and Romans or just Romanian? Please explain.
   c. Probe: How are all these ethnicities different?
d. Probe: Can you please name and describe some Dacian traditions?

e. Probe: Are there any Dacian traditions incorporated into the actual Romanian traditions or religious practices? Please elaborate.

f. Probe: Do you consider that the Dacian ethnicity should be recognized by the Romanian Government? Why? Please explain.

F. Group Discussion, Topic 2 (25 minutes)

4. Romanian immigrants experience and the Dacian sub-identity.

a. Probe: Have you ever lived in other countries? Please describe that experience.

b. Probe: What do you feel about your Romanian origin?

c. Probe: What do the people from other countries believe about the Romanian ethnics?

d. Probe: Are you proud of your Dacian origin/heritage? Please explain.

e. Probe: Are you aware of how people from other countries perceive the Dacian identity?

f. Probe: Have you ever felt discriminated or appreciated as a Romanian ethnic? Please explain.

g. Probe: How does the attitude towards the Romanian ethnics influence your Dacian identity? (is it a refugee against discrimination?)
h. Probe: Do you know any Diaspora Romanians who consider themselves Dacians? Please describe them. Please describe their attitude towards the other Romanian ethnics.

i. Probe: Are there any advantages of being considered Dacians for the Romanians in the Diaspora?

G. Final Thoughts (5 minutes)

5. Does anyone have any final thoughts about the Dacian sub-identity that they haven’t shared yet?

H. Review, end of the interview.

Thank you for participating today and for sharing your opinions and experience with us. We hope you enjoyed our discussion!
REFERENCES


(http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Tyranni_XXX*.html)


(http://people.ucalgary.ca/~vandersp/Courses/texts/lactant/lactperf.html).


“70 years ago today: 13-14 June 1941, 300,000 were deported from Bessarabia”. June 15th, 2011. Retrieved on February 5th 2015
(http://www.moldova.org/70-years-ago-today-13-14-june-1941-300000-were-deported-from-bessarabia-221894-eng/).
BIOGRAPHY

Lucian I. Rosca graduated from Alexandru Lahovari High School, Ramnicu Valcea, Romania, in 1998. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Bucharest in 2004. He was employed as Customer Value Representative in Herndon for three years and started a Master of Arts in Sociology at George Mason University in 2012.