

Nation Branding and National Identity in Romania

-An analysis of the 'Discover The Place Where You Feel Reborn' campaign-



Master Thesis

Author: Andra-Mihaela Cristea

Supervisor: John Hird

M.A. Culture, Communication and Globalization

February, 2015

Abstract

The following thesis want to explore the concept of national identity in relation to the nation brand in Romania.

The main focus will be placed on the national brand 'Explore the Carpathian Garden', with an accent of the latest communications campaign, "Discover the place where you feel reborn".

Released in June 2014, so far the campaign consists of 3 TV commercials, aired on 6 main national channels; print advertising in local newspapers; and a couple of YouTube videos, which at a first glance seem to be designed for an international audience.

However, for this research only the three commercials will be taken into account, since being broadcasted, people are more inclined to be aware of them.

Moreover, the target audience so far has been Romanians. The language in which they are narrated is Romanian and no information about them being presented to foreigners is available.

Ergo, what this research aims to do is to identify whether a connection between these commercials and the Romanian national identity exists.

I have opted for this theme bearing in mind that the campaign belongs to the 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' brand, a brand whose logo and message were rejected by the Romanian population when they were released to the public in 2010. Hence, I wanted to see if people's perception about the brand has changed over time, and if these new commercials are better than previous attempts, if they manage to capture the core essence of the national identity. Another reason for choosing this topic comes from the element of novelty. The campaign I am referring to, is still running and will end on August 2015.

In order to do so, I looked into the concept of national identity and tried to identify the elements that belong to the Romanian one. By doing so, I had to understand how national identity was shaped in time, being cognizant of all the transition periods Romania has gone through. A special focus was placed on the communist period and its impact on the national identity.

But identifying elements that aggregate national identity, did not suffice, if Romanians did not identify them as well.

Hence, for the research to be conducted, I have implemented a series of mix approaches, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. To gather data I made use of a qualitative inspired questionnaire and of in-depth interviews.

The methodological approach was supported by the theoretical framework, in which concepts such as nation branding and national identity were expanded and clarified.

Last but not least, the analysis section tried to combine all the obtained data, so that an answer and a solution to the identified problem to be found and proposed.

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Problem Formulation	7
Methodology.....	8
Philosophical considerations	8
Epistemology.....	8
Paradigm	10
The Hermeneutic Cycle	12
Research design	14
A qualitative “inspired” questionnaire	17
Semi-structured interviews.....	18
Data generation and sampling.....	20
Theoretical Framework.....	23
Nation Branding	23
The Nation Brand Hexagon	30
Criticism of nation branding	31
Brand identity and Brand image	33
Nation Branding in Central and Eastern European Countries	34
National Identity	36
Links between nation branding and national identity	38
Romanian National Identity.....	39
A description of national identity in Romania	43
Nation Branding in Romania	46
Brief History of the Branding Campaigns in Romania.....	47
Analysis and Discussion.....	52
Questionnaire analysis.....	54
Interview analysis.....	69
Discussion.....	79
Limitations	81
Conclusions	81
Further research	82

Bibliography:.....	83
Annexes.....	91

Introduction

Although a relatively new subject (Fan, 2010), in an intensively globalized world, nation branding is starting to be employed by countries all over the globe. Even though opinions on the matter might differ nation brands exist. Summarizing a couple of these opinions, it would seem that the outcomes of branding the nation would include: to remold national identities, to promote the interests of economic and political nature or to alter, improve or enhance a reputation or image that a nation has (Fan, 2010).

Seemingly, in the actual global environment, countries compete to devise sources of competitive advantages just like companies do. Therefore, it would appear that brands have become fundamental tools that can help countries differentiate one from another (Gertner and Kotler, 2002). The main goal of implementing nation branding strategies is to increase the awareness and recognition amongst potential tourists, to create a positive image and a strong brand and brand identity for the destination (Cretu, 2011).

Moreover, through efforts that national tourism offices put into this goal, a particular national self-image or political identity is intended (Light, 2001). Consequently, the tourism industry is highly implicated in the construction and reproduction of identities at a number of scales. It is a component of identity-building at the national level. Such particular issues have relevance especially for former socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe, where political transformations have brought along the need of constructing new identities and to project these newly found identities to the wider world (Light, 2001).

Hence, in order for a nation's brand to be successful, it has to be congruent with the national identity, but at the same time it must be kept in mind that a national past and a national territory are fundamental to the construction of national identities (Light, 2001). Nevertheless, nation-building is a dynamic process, so that dominant narratives of history, place and identity need to be constantly reproduced, a goal that can be accomplished through domestic tourism, whereby citizens travel within their own country so that they can connect with their nation, their history, thereby reinforcing social cohesion and collective identities (Light, 2001).

In theory, it all seems perfect, people need to reconnect with their past, their history to have a unitary national identity. But what happens in cases of former communist CEE countries, like Romania, which has done nothing but try and escape the influence of its turmoil communist ages, being in transition since 1989 when the Ceausescu regime fell. Furthermore, if it were to be taken into account that sometimes Romanians don't feel particularly proud of their country based on a study performed with the younger generation regarding Romania's national identity in 2007, the year Romania acceded

to the European, where 530 respondents were questioned, most of them under the age of 25, and in which the majority of them perceiving their country in a negative way. At that time they saw Romania as an inefficient, unsafe country with a polychromatic culture, characterized by disappointment (Nicolaescu, pdf format).

Since than Romania has had several, one might say failed attempts, to change this perception. Since a country's promotion is done through its nationals, every citizen is an image carrier for its country and contributes to the perceptions foreigners create about his or her country of origin.

Problem Formulation

This study aims to research Romania's national identity. As it was stated above, it starts from the premises that this country still struggles with the transition to Western society and with finding what truly defines its people and its territory. Hence, it wants to see whether or not the country's national identity is perceived in the same manner, no matter the age difference and regardless of historical events, that might have caused a change, and if the latest communications campaign succeeds in channeling this national identity to the target audience. In other words, it wants to investigate, if at a unitary level people identify themselves with the values depicted by the Explore the Carpathian Garden brand, with a focus on the latest campaign launched in 2014, which unlike other communication campaigns so far, addresses mainly Romanians. If what is depicted is the same with what is perceived.

Along these lines, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What is the common perception about national identity amongst Romanians? What do they identify as primary elements of their national identity, considering that the country has been through several transitional phases throughout history?
2. How do Romanians feel about the new "Discover the place where you feel reborn" campaign, part of the "Explore the Carpathian garden" branding actions, in relation to their national identity? Do they feel that the campaign displays the "essence of Romania"? And is there any possibility for this campaign to change the negative opinion that Romanians have about their country, or at least to generate an impact on how they perceive their country.
3. Do Romanians perceive and improvement in their national brand with this new campaign or are they still against it, like they were when it was first launch

Methodology

This section will explore the methodological considerations and, acting as a guide throughout the entire research.

Philosophical considerations

Any research is based on three major elements-epistemology, methodology and method. These are the ones that help structure, implement and evaluate a study's results (Carter & Little, 2007).

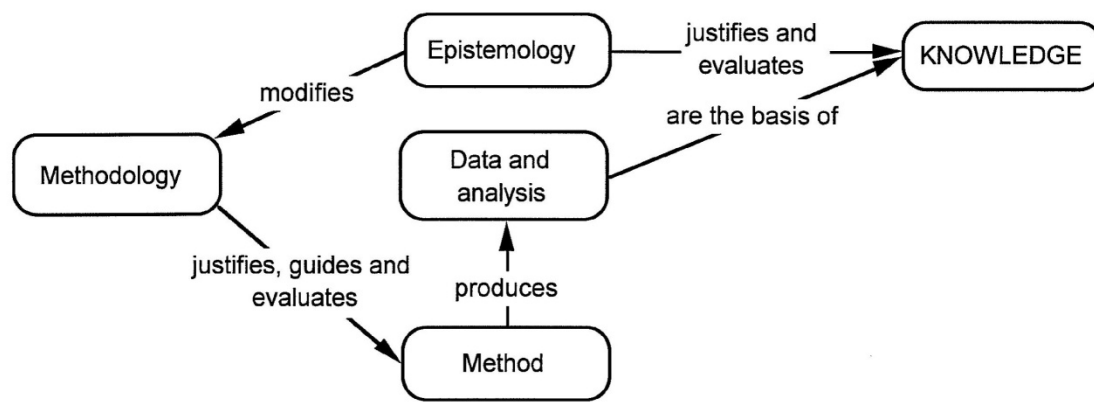


Figure 1- The simple relationship between Epistemology, Methodology and Method (Carter & Little, 2007).

Figure 1 displays the relationship built between these three facets. In other words, methodology justifies the method (Carter & Little, 2007). It is the “description, the explanation and the justification of methods, and not the methods themselves” (Kaplan, 1964:18). Methods are practical activities in the research process, like sampling, data collection, management and analysis and reporting (Carter & Little, 2007). Last but not least, epistemology modifies methodology and justifies the knowledge produced through data gathering and analysis (Carte & Little, 2007).

Epistemology

According to Saunders et. Al (2009), “*epistemology constitutes acceptable knowledge in the field of a study*” (p. 112). Schwandt defines it as “*the study of the nature of knowledge and justification*” (2001:1)

When dealing with epistemological considerations, one question that arises is whether the social world should be studied based on the principles and procedures that natural sciences are studied (Bryman, 2012). In the case of science, philosophers are interested in the nature of the scientific knowledge, in how the researcher's views are built and sustained (Kitcher, 2002). Epistemology is also interested in all the knowing techniques that help the researcher to form a belief system about the nature of knowledge. This system includes belief about certainty, complexity, structure and sources of knowledge (Klenke, 2008).

In other words, it aims at answering the questions *"how do we know what we know?"* And *"what is the relationship between the knower and what is known?"* (Klenke, 2008:16). This means that apart from dealing with the knowing techniques, epistemology is also concerned with the relationship that builds between the researcher and the researched. In this relationship, the researcher can be placed either separately from what is researched (usually this implies a quantitative research), either he can directly interact with what is being researched (qualitative research) (Klenke, 2008). By using a mixed methods approach, both situations apply in this paper's case.

But when discussing about epistemology, ontology cannot be ignored, especially since the first is *"intimately related to both ontology and methodology; ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it. Thus, ontological and epistemological assumptions are translated into specific methodological strategies"* (Klenke, 2008:17).

While ontology is concerned with what assumptions about the nature of realities and truth the researcher formulates, epistemology is, as already mentioned interested in the relationship between the inquirer and what it is known (Lincoln et, al, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Guba, 1990).

Starting from an ontological perspective, I as the author of this paper acknowledge the fact that reality and the phenomena surrounding it consists of several layers, and at the same time, start from the premises that experience is necessary in building knowledge, implying an epistemological consideration as well (Saunders et. Al, 2009; Klenke, 2008). In this paper's case, as an external researcher, I will choose the best view upon the world that can provide me with answers to my research questions (Saunders et. Al, 2009), considering that the world consists of multiple and dynamic realities, that are context-based (Guba, 1990) and individual interpretations of the reality are rooted in a rich contextual web, that cannot be generalized to other sceneries (Searle, 1995).

Accordingly, by asking Romanians about their opinion I can get access to their interpretation and realities in regards to their national identity and their nation brand. Firstly, they will be asked to express

an opinion about these two concepts through a questionnaire and secondly the information gathered will be combined with in-depth interviews for a broader overview, enabling a better understanding of the matter.

Paradigm

When conducting a research one of the most important parts is to establish to which research paradigm, it applies to (Saunders et al., 2009). With the help of the paradigm, the researcher can adopt different views about the world, thus influencing the choice of methods.

Starting from Guba's definition, that a paradigm is "a basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990:17), the two epistemological and ontological questions must be addressed in order to determine which paradigm is pertinent to this case, respectively: "*What relationship does the researcher have with the world*", and "*What's the nature of the world and of the reality?*" (Guba, 1990).

Ergo, for providing an answer to the above questions, and taking into account the fact that a mixed method design will be applied, the employed paradigm in this case will be pragmatism.

Within the field of mixed methods appears to be a broad consensus that the rational approach for such methods needs to be a pragmatic one (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

From the early 1980s, qualitative research methods were solely associated with constructivism, while quantitative methods were linked to positivism. This state of affairs led to the Paradigm War, which stated that qualitative and quantitative methods were incompatible (Bergman, 2008). However, the growing popularity of mixed methods research seems to have put an end to this debate, by giving way to pragmatism (Bryman, 2012).

Pragmatism argues that "*the most important determinant of epistemology, ontology and axiology you adopt is the research question*" (Saunders et. Al., 2009).

Sometimes called the only uniquely American philosophy, pragmatism is based on the premises that knowledge is an instrument for organizing experience, its main concern being how theory and practice can unite (Diggins, 1994; Joas, 1993).

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) believe that it is more appropriate for the researcher to think of the adopted philosophy as a continuum, and that at some point the knower and the known must interact. It is a concept that emphasizes how important it is to experiment with new ways of living, opening up an array of possibilities for human action (Rorty, 1989).

Just like anti-positivists, pragmatists share the same view that there are multiple interpretations of events and that the phenomena under observation can be described through different concepts and

classificatory schemes (Wicks & Freeman, 1998). Thus, the paradigm sees knowledge as *“being both constructed and based on the reality of the world we experience and live in”* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:18).

Pragmatism is helpful in seeing that *“realist assumptions do not necessarily have to go with an objectivist conception of truth; that intervention plays a crucial role in the ways in which we obtain knowledge; and that because our knowing is always a result of our actions, knowledge can provide us only with information about possible connections between actions and consequences, not with once and for all truths about a world independent from our own lives”* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010:98).

A pragmatic perspective draws on employing what works. Thusly, it uses diverse approaches putting the importance of the research problem and question first, by valuing both objective and subjective knowledge (Morgan, 2007). In other words, with the research question central, *“data collection and analysis methods are chosen as those most likely to provide insights into the question with no philosophical loyalty to any alternative paradigm”* (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, online version).

When regarded as an alternative paradigm, pragmatism accepts that both singular and multiple realities can exist and that these realities are open to empirical inquiry. In consequence, it orients itself towards solving practical problems in the real world (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, pp. 20-28; Dewey, 1925; Rorty, 1999).

Basically, it enables the researcher to be free of mental and practical constraints imposed by other paradigms (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), avoiding him to be *“the prisoner of a particular [research] method or technique”* (Robson, 1993, p. 291).

Starting from the premises that both objective and subjective inquiries aim at generating knowledge, pragmatists are anti-dualists (Rorty, 1999). They agree that the dichotomy between positivism and constructivism is irrelevant, the two sharing commonalities at an ontological and epistemological level (Hanson, 2008; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Pragmatism envisions the world as an experimental one with different elements or layers, some objective, some subjective, some a mixture of both (Dewey, 1925). Furthermore, ontologically speaking the pragmatic reality is equivocal, but grounded in terms of language, history and culture. Consequently, the knowledge is derived from experiences (Klenke, 2008). The researcher’s view upon reality is external, multiple and he can choose the one that best enables him to answer the research question (Saunders et. Al., 2009)

Epistemologically, the researcher acts as a reconstructor of the *“subjectively intended and objective meaning of the actions of others”* (Klenke, 2008:20). Either one or both observable phenomena

and subjective meanings can provide knowledge. Is all dependable to the research question (Saunders et. Al, 2009).

This paradigm was chosen, because at the foundation of this paper stands the concept that *“organisms are constantly adapting to new situations and environments. Our thinking follows a dynamic homeostatic process of belief, doubt, inquiry, modified belief, new doubt, new inquiry, . . . , in an infinite loop, where the person or researcher (and research community) constantly try to improve upon past understandings in a way that fits and works in the world in which he or she operates. The present is always a new starting point”* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:18).

Another reason for opting to enclose this research in pragmatism is that unlike other philosophies, pragmatism is more of a set of philosophical tools that can be used to address the problem (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

In order to answer the research question, both objective and subjective points of view will be taken into consideration. Objectivity will be produced through the questionnaire because this is the part that wants to analyze at a general level what elements of national identity, do respondents' identity, and to divide them into age groups. As for subjectivity, this will be generated by the in-depth interviews, where people will be asked about their opinion in regards to the newest branding campaign and their feelings towards their country and national identity.

Last but not least, one big limitation of this paper and its use of mixed methods can be the fact that there is still the belief that *“many come to pragmatism looking for a way to get around many traditional philosophical and ethical disputes. Although pragmatism has worked moderately well, when put under the microscope, many current philosophers have rejected pragmatism because of its logical (as contrasted with practical) failing as a solution to many philosophical disputes”* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:19).

The Hermeneutic Cycle

Following the literature of Guba (1990), Denzin and Lincoln (2011), in this particular case the methodology must have a hermeneutic and dialectic approach, based on the fact that part of the data is subjective.

Defined by Denzin and Lincoln as *“an approach to the analysis of texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process”* (2011:16), hermeneutics are used in the process of interpreting texts and dialects, so that later on to compare these interpretations with the help of rational discussion and analysis (Guba, 1990, Guba, 1996, Lincoln et al, 2011).

The whole process of interpretation is called the hermeneutical cycle, and while putting it into practice, the researcher achieves new understandings every time he rereads it, building new interpretation (Kvale, 2007, Pahuus, 2003).

With all these in mind, the process of understanding and gathering the data transforms into a continuing process of exposure to information, interpretation and re-exposure to the text, therefore revealing new aspects or areas for further research (Kvale, Brinkman, 2008 as quoted in Eskilden, 2014). In this particular case, hermeneutics will be applied through a constant reflection and reports of this reflection, which will provide awareness of the pre-understanding and then the understanding phases of the research. For example, the project might start up with certain 'stereotypes' in mind, but after conducting the research a new understanding and point of view might be acquired.

Ontologically, as it was already mentioned, by having multiple layers the world is perceived as relative and consisting of several realities (Saunders et al., 2009). In relation to this paper's subject, historical situations and different factors might have influenced how people have formed their opinion about the elements, that build up their national identity and how they perceive a certain nation branding campaign. For instance, it might be argued that if someone is dissatisfied with how things are being run by the government, or if they have a bad general impression about the society they live in, they might notice only the negative aspects and ignore the positive ones, including the ones pertaining to a nation branding campaign. In this particular case, just as it is presented in the theoretical part of the paper, when it was first released, the 'Explore the Carpathian Garden, campaign received a really negative feedback from Romanians, who mocked it and perceived it as a waste of money, despite the fact that the World Tourism Organization advised the competent authorities to keep the newly formed brand. So, as it may seem, different realities formed different points of view. On one hand, there was the objective perspective from the behalf of the WTO and on the other hand, there was the subjective one coming from citizens who had had to struggle with corruption and bad government for the past two and a half decades.

Epistemologically, the relationship between the world and the researcher is both of a subjective nature, as a result of multiple realities existing (Guba, 1990) and of an objective one. However, it should be mentioned that it can be hard to keep an objective standpoint, especially in the qualitative part of the research, due to the fact that people are different. No two people are the same, which is also the case when it comes to what they consider as representative elements in their national identity. Even though Romania has gone through several transitory phases: from an agrarian society to a communist and afterwards capitalist one, so that now to be part of the European scene as a member of the EU, it

has also passed through many failed attempts at building a nation brand, so it can be possible to find patterns that reveal the general perception about national identity and about the latest communications campaign for the national brand, a campaign whose target audience are Romanians and not foreigners.

With all this in mind, the fact that generalizability and the collection of reliable data are difficult to achieve in a subject involving people's opinion on their national identity and on their nation brand, must be taken into consideration. Therefore, presenting a series of patterns might be helpful in the process of trying to obtain data that is considered to be reliable.

Qualitative methods, will be employed for a more in-depth understanding and a comparison between states of mind, through the semi-structured interviews, but in this particular case the main focus will be on the survey, a method of quantitative nature, that provides a higher degree of generalizable data, in the short timeline of the project.

Research design

According to Durrheim, a research design *"is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Research designs, are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purposes with economy in procedure"* (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, Painter, 2006:36).

The researcher and implicitly this thesis aim at capturing *"multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges"* (Creswell, 2009:176).

As the topic under investigation might be described as a complex one, national identity and the brand image that people have in regards to their nation brand, being socially constructed entities, quite difficult to pin down because of their constantly changing nature, it is important to try and describe the phenomena and to understand the how of social construction (Flick et al, 2004). Hence, the study is a cross-sectional research (Bryman, 2012), that aims to take a snapshot of social constructions at the time of the research (Neuman, 2011; Flick et al., 2004), despite the fact that the writing process took only a couple of months. Also, taking into consideration that the campaign around which the study revolves is in the middle of its airing period (running on TV until august 2015), the research kind of coincides with its highest point of awareness. Six months have passed since it was first launched, so people probably know about it by now.

The cross-sectional design *“entails the collection of data on more than one case at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables, which are then examined to detect patterns of association”* (Bryman, 2012:58).

A research that opts for a cross-sectional design is interested in variation in respect of people, families, organizations etc. (Bryman, 2012). The subject of the present paper also focuses on variation, for its aim is to have respondents of different ages and with different backgrounds. The campaign aims at all the Romanians and national identity is supposed to act as a binder for people that share the same culture, history and traditions.

In cross-sectional designs, data on the variables of interest are collected more or less at the same time, unlike in the experimental research where the experimental group is pre-tested, exposed to the experiment and then post-tested, so that days, weeks, or even months may separate the research's phases (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, if an amount of time of such length were to pass between the phases of this research, people might forget about the current campaign and their interest might be shifted towards something else. Also, if the premise that national identity is shaped by history and culture, a change in this two might intervene. Plus, the campaign wants to influence people and change their attitude based on the past and the present.

Although this design is commonly associated with quantitative methods and with a deductive approach (Saunders et al., 2009), it does not mean that it excludes the qualitative one, especially when the researcher employs unstructured or semi-structured interviewing (Bryman, 2012).

Therefore, mixed methods will be used in order to acquire completeness, which, according to Bryman (2012), *“indicates that a more complete answer to a research question or set of research questions can be achieved by including both quantitative and qualitative methods. It implies that the gaps left by one method can be filled by another”* (p. 637). Consequently, a qualitative research approach to quantitative research is possible, as the contrast between them tending to sometimes be exaggerated (Bryman, 2012).

The mixed methods research is becoming more and more attached to research practices and it is beginning to be recognized as the third major research approach (Johnson et. Al., 2007). It is extremely useful when there is a need to both explore and a explain and when either qualitative or quantitative methods alone cannot face the complexity of the research questions (Creswell, 2009). This type of methods can be best described as a strategy that makes use of one method's strengths in order to enhance the other's performance (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2009; Morgan 1998).

With mixed methods the research is not restrained to a certain type of methodology, permitting the researcher to have both a deductive and an inductive approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), which is also the case in this current paper. Deductive approach will be applied to the survey part. Based on what is known, hypotheses will be formulated and subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman, 2012). An inductive approach will be administered for the interview section. From the gathered data new concepts or hypotheses will be formulated (Merriam, 2009).

A way to conceptualize mixed methods is to picture them along a continuum, (Bronstein, Kovacs, 2013). Figure 2 describes time order decision options possible in mixed methods, this paper being enclosed in the sequential equal status category, starting with quantitative and following with qualitative.

		Time Order Decision	
		Concurrent	Sequential
Paradigm Emphasis Decision	Equal Status	QUAL + QUAN	QUAL QUAN QUAN QUAL →
	Dominant Status	QUAL + quan QUAN + qual	QUAL → quan qual QUAN → QUAN → qual quan → QUAL →

Note. "qual" stands for qualitative, "quan" stands for quantitative, "+" stands for concurrent,

Figure 2-Time Order Decision weight Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:22).

Furthermore, in accordance with Bryman (2012) when combining qualitative with quantitative methods the researcher need to have an approach on how to do so. For this reason, it has been decided that completeness applies best to the current situation. This approach, "indicates that a more complete

answer to a research question can be achieved by including both qualitative and quantitative methods” (Bryman, 2012:637). It implies that the gaps left by one method, in this case the questionnaire, can be completed by using the other, in-depth interviews (Bryman, 2012).

Despite all the benefits mixed methods bring to a research, they do have flaws.

First of all, they are more time consuming and it can be difficult for one researcher to carry out both a qualitative and quantitative research. Nonetheless, the researcher also has to learn about multiple methods and to understand how to properly mix and apply them, not to mention that methodological purists consider that it is best to remain within a qualitative or quantitative paradigm (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

A qualitative “inspired” questionnaire

Groves (2004) defines the questionnaire as *“a systematic method for gathering information from entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members”* (p. 4) While Parasuraman et al. (2007) define it as *“a set of questions designed to generate the data necessary for accomplishing a research project’s objective”* (p. 280).

No matter which definition is considered as valid, the role of the questionnaire is to gather data, being a cheaper and quicker to administrate instrument (Bryman, 2012). In addition, it is a versatile method, as questionnaires can be designed in different ways (Parasuraman et al., 2007).

When implementing questionnaires, the researcher must have a clear view on how it can help his/her research and must decide whether it will consist of structured, non-structured or mixed questions and that these questions, displayed in a clear layout, are easy to understand for the respondent (Parasurman et al., 2007).

Usually, questionnaires are applied for quantitative purposes (Silverman, Marvasti, 2008) and participants are sampled randomly (Denzin, Lincoln, 2011). Also, the responses are commonly placed into fixed categories, which the researcher has created because open-ended questions are a little more difficult to manage, especially when the data is converted into statistics (Neuman, 2006).

As a downside, questionnaires do not provide any human interactions, so they cannot be prompt in case the respondents have difficulties in answering the questions. They are also limited to a number of questions and can be read as a whole, which does not guarantee that the questions were answered in the order intended by the researcher. Last, but not least, when sending out a questionnaire

there is no certainty that the people, who the research aims at, are answering it, making it difficult to ask supplementary questions (Bryman, 2012).

In this research the questionnaire will be used for obtaining an overview of what Romanians understand by national identity, what do they identify as elements belonging to this concept and which historical period they consider to have had the most impact on their national identity. Conjointly, it is intended to see whether or not the first commercial belonging to the 'This is where I feel reborn campaign' represents them and communicates essential elements belonging to the construct of national identity. Lastly, it will also explore if the campaign had any impact on how the country and the nation brand is now perceived, making small references to factors that might have influenced these perceptions and that might have produced a change in their identity as Romanians (changes in the government system, the fall of the communism, the EU membership and the fact that people are more free to travel and explore new cultures).

To reach this goal, a questionnaire that will include mixed questions, both structured and unstructured, will be handed out. Thus, the "qualitative inspired" term, generated by the existence of two open ended questions. The total number of questions is 25, and before releasing it, the survey was pre-tested (Bryman, 2012).

However, having these two self-completion question can be in research's detriment, considering that they can generate lower response rates. According to Bryman (2012), this is one of the most damaging limitations. By reason of a low response rate, the risk of having biased findings is greater (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, because these two questions might appear boring or irrelevant to the respondents, they might be skipped, creating a problem of missing data (Bryman, 2012).

The full questionnaire will be attached in the Appendix section, as for the methods through which it was elaborated, these will be discussed in the data collection and sampling sections.

Semi-structured interviews

As Foddy (1993) says, "*asking questions is widely accepted as a cost-efficient (sometimes the only) way, of gathering information about past behaviors and experiences, private actions and motives, and beliefs, values and attitudes*" (p. 1).

With the help of interviews, questions are being asked, the researcher exploring and gaining a deeper understanding of experiences (Kapaulas, Mitic, 2012; Berg, Lune, 2012). Through interviews areas of reality that usually are inaccessible (people's attitudes and subjective experiences) can be reached (Gummerson, 2005).

Despite the above mentioned assertion, the interview does not resume to just asking and answering questions, but it implies an *“active interaction between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results”* (Fontana, Frey, 2008:119). From this, it can be inferred that interviewing is a social process, involving social actors, blending perfectly with the subjective part of the chosen paradigm.

This part of the research will be a qualitative one, considering that just as Bryman says, *“in qualitative interviewing, there is much greater interest in the interviewee’s point of view”* (Bryman, 2012:470).

The interviews will be semi-structured, which means that a list of questions or topics that need to be covered will be drafted, but at the same time, both the interviewee and the interviewer will have liberty in asking more questions and in replying (Bryman, 2012).

These questions will be based on the survey’s results, and will be included in the interview guide from the Appendix. Performing these interviews aims at grasping a more in-depth understanding of how Romanians, with a focus on the older generation, that has experienced more transition phases, relate to the national identity concept and the branding commercial in comparison with the younger generation that has been born and have lived an entire life in a democratic society.

Since, I as the researcher, cannot meet with the respondents, due to the fact that they might live in different cities, or even countries, the interviews will be performed via Skype, permitting a detailed assessment of how the interviewee feels and thinks (Murray, 1998).

Nonetheless, just as Bryman (2012) states, this method too can have a series of flaws. For example, the risk of going off track might exist, or the risk of manipulating the interview and the questions, in order to obtain the desired answers. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account how time consuming this method is and the impossibility to truly validate the trustworthiness of the received information (Bryman, 2012).

Lastly, conducting interviews via Skype, can be a little risky. For instance, the internet connection might cause problems, and this might affect the stream of questions and the same time influence the quality of the recordings. If the internet connection is poor, phrases and words might be misinterpreted and misunderstood, so in order to avoid this type of situations, the interviews will be performed from my own home, using my own internet connection and they will also be recorded on two different devices for more accuracy.

At the beginning of the interview, the respondents will be informed about the general topic that is about to be discussed and asked to state their age. This way by presenting them with what is about to happen, the interview can take the form of a conversation.

All the recordings will be found on a USB stick that adjoins this paper. Also, the translated transcript will be attached to the Appendix section.

Just as in the questionnaire's case, the sampling and data collection sections will elaborate more on this

Data generation and sampling

For this particular dissertation paper, data will be generated through both qualitative and quantitative methods, in order to answer the problem formulation in the best possible way.

The quantitative part will be carried out by the a self-completion questionnaire, that will be distributed online (posted on Facebook, Twitter). An online platform allows the respondents to faster received it and in turn forward it to others. This way, respondents in locations that are far-away from the researcher can be reached, money and time not being a barrier.

In accordance with the chosen distribution platform, online, the questionnaire will have a non-probability sample. This is determined by the fact that the population is unknown to the researcher, therefore preventing him from knowing the size or the effect of sampling errors (Saunders et. Al., 2009; Survey.cvent.com). In this research two types of non-probability samples will be used, respectively snowball and convenience sampling (Bryman, 2012).

The questionnaire is being sent out through the researcher's social media pages (Facebook, Twitter), justifying the convenience sample, which is easily accessible. Many social researches are frequently based on convenient sample, since it is less costly and does not need as much preparation as a probability one. Per contra, the problem with this type of sampling is that it makes it hard to make a generalization of the findings, caused by the population being unknown (Saunders et al, 2009; Bryman, 2012; Survey.cvent.com).

Snowball sampling takes place when the researcher makes an initial contact with a small, but relevant to the research group of people, and then uses these to establish contact with others (Bryman, 2012).

In this case it is done by the researcher, in this case myself, contacting her social network, and getting respondents to further distribute the survey. This, along with sending out the questionnaire in

various Facebook groups related to Romania and with Romanian members, makes it easier for respondents that are outside of the researcher's personal social network to be reached.

The problem with the snowball sampling is that it is unlikely to be considered representative for the population (Saunders et al, 2009; Bryman, 2012).

Because the decision of who to sample belongs to the researcher's personal judgement, and because the selection is not random, the research can be regarded as biased. This means that it cannot represent the entire population from where it is selected (Bryman, 2012).

On the other hand, the paradigmatic stance of this paper is pragmatism, which as previously expounded, places its focus on the research question, enabling researchers to have both an objective and subjective approach, offering *"the best chance of answering their specific research questions"*(Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:15).

As already stated, the survey consists mostly of closed and some open question, giving the respondents the opportunity to speak for themselves, and to define according to their perception what aspects are positive and what aspects are negative about Romania.

As an acknowledgment, this paper admits the fact that it is difficult to remove bias altogether and to deliver a truly representative sample (Bryman, 2012), especially since the researcher is the one who will try and distribute the answers from the open ended questions in main categories, trying to find patterns in what is positive and negative about Romania. Additionally, as the author of this paper I translate all the interviews from Romanian to English, based on my knowledge of both languages.

Thusly, the survey will be formulated in Romanian, in order to overcome language barriers and misunderstandings of the concepts, and at the same time to reduce cultural misunderstandings (Kvale, 2007), but a translated version will be attached to this project. It will address Romanians with ages between 20 and 50+ years old, although the fact that the older generations might not have access to the Internet or to social media is acknowledged. Also, at the end of the questionnaire, respondents will be asked if they would like to participate in an interview.

The second part of the research, the qualitative interviews will select participants, in accordance with the survey used age category they belong to out of the ones that agree to be interviewed, with a focus on the older generation (30+ years old) because they are the ones more prone to having a more vivid memory of the transition steps taken by Romania.

In this case the sample will be a generic purposive sampling, best applied to mixed methods. This sample strategy will allow *"interviewees to be selected purposively in term of criteria that were central to the main topic of research"* (Bryman, 2012:423).

The interviews will also be conducted in Romanian and subsequently translated. However, this translation process can also constitute a limitation for this paper, considering that *“when transcribing an interview, it is important that the written text reproduces exactly what the interviewee said, word for word”* (Bryman, 2012:485) a principle that might not entirely apply when translating from one language to another.

Theoretical Framework

This section aims to explore a series of theories, that will later on help the reader grasp an understanding of the branding efforts and strategies that were implemented in Romania, as well as how the Romanian national identity was shaped. As a consequence, concepts such as branding, nation branding, national identity, brand image and brand identity will be addressed, so that a framework, that will support the research, to be constructed. As it will be shown, all these concepts are applicable to this particular research, since they will contribute in building a general picture of how national identity is defined in Romania's case and how it has been correlated with the nation branding process.

The theoretical part is divided into two main categories. The first one will focus on nation branding, while the second one on national identity. The decision to opt for these two overall subjects was generated by the research questions, that targets the relation between nation branding and national identity and how these two concepts influence one another. Each main section will have subsections that will focus on the displayed concepts and how they've manifested in the Romanian society. Thus, a browse through Romania's history and nation branding efforts will help the reader to better understand why the country has shifted from one branding campaign to another, making it difficult to have a consistent message regarding its national identity, and communicating it to the national and international public.

Nation Branding

What is a nation?

Before advancing the discussion on nation branding, the concept of the nation is to be clarified, especially since there have been opposing views as to what aggregates a nation, and how this construct has been defined over time (Skinner, Kubacki, 2007).

The term 'nation' is one of the most frequently used and contested in history, political science, and their adjoining disciplines, making it a difficult task to provide it with a definition (Suszycki, Marcin, 2011).

Over the last century there has been a deluge of developments in the concept of nation. The term has been oftentimes used interchangeably with notions like nationality, nationhood, people and sometimes even nationalism (Suszycki, Marcin, 2011).

The meaning of 'nation' changes depending on when and by whom it is used, it changes throughout different historical periods and experience can shape its meaning. This also means that *"circumstances in which specific conceptual connotations of the nation are coined influence its future*

meaning. Therefore, the concept of the nation is anchored in specific experiences as well as in specific expectations.” (Suszycki, Marcin, 2011: 15).

Anthony D. Smith proposes a definition according to which ‘nation’ *“includes the territorial boundedness of separate cultural populations in their own homelands; the shared nature of myths of origin and historical memories of the community; the common bond of a mass standardized culture; a common territorial division of labor, with mobility for all members and ownership of resources by all members in the homeland; and the possession by all members of a unified system of common legal rights and duties under common laws and institutions”* (as quoted in Suszycki, Marcin, 2011: 16).

Generally, a nation refers to a large group of people of the same race and language, while the country is an area of land occupied by a nation (Fan, 2006).

Since there have been opposing views as to what constitutes a nation, several points of views of what a nation as an entity is, have been formulated (Skinner, Kubacki, 2007).

Along these lines, the nation has been envisioned as a political, cultural and both political and cultural entity (Skinner, Kubacki, 2007).

During the middle ages, states were mere political entities in no need of a connection between cultural and political ties. Hence, the nation as a political entity equates ‘nation’ with ‘country’, building the concept’s definition around political unity and discounting the nationality concept (Skinner, Kubacki 2007).

The opposing angle viewed it from an almost exclusively cultural perspective. In accordance with the standpoint developed by Ernest Gellner, a leading scholar in nationalism, if two men shared the same culture, then they were of the same nation. At this point it has to be stated that when referring to culture the author viewed it as a system of ideas, signs and associations as well as ways of communicating and behaving (Gellner, 1983).

Over time these two opposing views have tended to merge into what is now known as the ‘modern Western European conception’, according to which its combining *“a measure of free individual choice with a consciousness of the inherited traditions and values of communal life”* (Skinner, Kubacki, 2007:307).

Authors like Anderson, Billig, Gellner and Hobsbawn have shown that nations develop as *“imagined communities, in an effort to unite individuals that have belonged to heterogeneous ethnicities and class-based groupings”* (as quoted in Varga, 2013:830).

According to Hobsbawn, national commonalities were obtained through the invention of traditions: *“collections of symbolic ceremonies that were not so much recollected from the past, but*

rather invented and materialized in events, national holidays, public ceremonies, and monuments” (Hobsbawn, 1983).

Billig states that such ‘ideological habits’ began to form self and social relations, thus becoming essential ingredients of the social imaginary. Through this the expression of social cohesion and collective identity was possible (Billig, 1995).

The impact of the nation-building processes was further augmented by a proper display of cultural policy measures, important because the notion of a common cultural heritage had a part to play in inventing traditions and creating national homogeneity (Varga, 2013). Ergo, *“particular cultural expressions, architecture, monuments and artifacts belonging to both the ‘higher’ and the ‘lower’ arts became valued as prominent expressions of a nation ‘essence’. At the same time, they became instruments in the construction of a sense of national identity, or belonging, and some kind of continuity with particularly selected past events towards a shared destiny”* (Varga, 2013: 831).

Following these lines, it can be stated that this picture accentuates a constructivist perspective on how nations have materialized. Thus, in this light nation branding can be seen as the perpetuation of the prior mentioned cultural-political measures, which aspired to shape a social imaginary and to structure social relations (Varga, 2013).

Summing up all these definitions, for this paper’s particular case, ‘nation’ will be considered as a large group of people who share the same language, history, culture and traditions and who at some point may or may not share the same territory. As it will be depicted in the analysis part, not all the respondents shared the same territory, some were living abroad, but they did have the same language, history, culture and traditions in common.

Even though when indicating the concept of the nation, the focus of this paper is on the human factor, the geographical aspect is not to be ignored. Consequently, as it was stated previously, when the building process of a nation starts, the groups of people who eventually are going to share the same history and values, need to share a territory, which is their country.

What is a nation brand?

In today’s intensely globalized and competitive world, a country has to offer something special in order to differentiate itself, otherwise its ability to compete for share of mind, share of talent and share of voice it will become extremely difficult. It is, therefore, necessary to have a powerful brand image (Anholt, 2004).

As reported by Anholt (2005 as cited in Giannopoulos, Piha, Avlonitis¹), countries have been brands, in the truest sense of the word, ever since they've been on the international scene. Like any brand, nations have their own DNA, which gives them their uniqueness. Therefore, no two nations are alike. Starting with language, culture, skin color to the art style and music, countries are diverse by nature (Jaworski & Fosher, 2003).

The topic of branding appeared for the first in marketing literature over 50 years ago (Pike, 2007). Research regarding destination branding did not emerge until the late 1990s, when in 1998 the first article on this matter was published, following with the first book in 2002 (Pike, 2007).

According to the classic definition provided by the American Marketing Association, a brand is *“a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. A brand is more than just a name; it is a complex bundle of images, meanings, associations and experiences in the minds of people”* (Fan, 2010:98).

In his book *Building strong brands* (1996), Aaker provides a more elaborate definition, envisioning the brand as a *“multidimensional assortment of functional, emotional, relational and strategic elements that collectively generate a unique set of associations in the public mind”* (p. 68).

On the other hand, Simon Anholt (2013:6) affirms that the brand can mean at least three different things in the world of commerce. Firstly, it may refer to the *designed identity* of a product, for example, how the product looks, its logo and packaging, its communications, etc. The second meaning that the brand concept can sometimes be associated with, relates to the culture of the organization behind the products. Thirdly, it may pertain to the product's or company's reputation in the minds of its target audience.

Every country has a unique name and creates images in the minds of people, both inside and outside the country, thus making the affirmation that a nation does have brands pertinent (Fan, 2010).

The term *Nation Brand* was coined by Simon Anholt in the 1990's when he provided a raw definition: *“the sum of people's perceptions of a country across the following six areas of national competence: exports, governance, tourism, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, and people. Each country's strengths and weaknesses rely on each point of this “hexagon” (consisted of*

¹ http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2011/april/biec-roa-nua/destination_branding-antonios_giannopoulos.pdf, other editorial information is unavailable

the six respective angles named after the key-components of the nation brand notion)” (Giannopoulos, Piha, Avlonitis²)

Other points of view assert that a nation brand comprises all the perceptions of a nation in the minds of international stakeholders (Fan, 2010). These perceptions may contain elements like: people, culture/language, place, fashion, history, food, famous faces, global brands and so on (Fan, 2010:98). The same author believes that a nation’s brand exists even when governments do not put any conscious efforts into nation branding. Due to the fact that each and every country has its own features, it can mentally create a certain image to its international audience, be it strong, weak, clear, vague, current or outdated (Fan, 2006: 12)

Despite the fact that it is a relatively new subject, the origin of nation branding can be traced back to four main sources: country of origin, place or destination branding, public diplomacy and national identity (Fan, 2010)

Dissimilar to the studies on country of origin and place branding, where the focus is mainly on economic interests (tourism, inward investment, export), *“nation’s branding is concerned with a country’s whole image on the international stage, covering political, economic and cultural dimensions”* (Fan, 2010:98).

Nation branding both as a concept and as a practice has caught the attention and, along with it financial resources from national governments in countries that have diverse political programs and economies, because nation branding allows governments to better manage and control the image that they want to project to the world, hence attracting more investment, a growth of the tourism sector, and *“successfully competing with a growing pool of national contenders for a shrinking set of available resources”* (Aronczyk, 2008: 42).

Nation branding as a practice is justified by the decreased importance of the nation-state in the context of a globalized political, economical and cultural exchange. Nationally imagined identity is being threatened by a number of factors like cultural homogeneity, stronger allegiances at the subnational, transnational or supranational levels, mobility, media and migration (Aronczyk, 2008). Thus, branding is increasingly adopted by governments as a way to promote *“national identity while encouraging the economic benefits necessary to compete in a modern globalized world”* (Aronczyk, 2008:43).

By branding a nation, a country is practically saying what it is and what it is not and it operates in the same way that traditional public relations operate in order to persuade the public, investors,

² http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2011/april/biec-roa-nua/destination_branding-antonios_giannopoulos.pdf, other editorial information is unavailable

partners and employees to conserve a certain point of view about the state. It can easily be seen as a public relations exercise for governments (Jordan, 2013).

In the contemporary context, due to its soft power characteristic, nation branding seems to be the best choice, especially since public diplomacy requirements from behalf of nation-states are more and more 'popular'. In contrast to the hard power of military or economic assets, nation branding serves as a form of preventive control and management, a national discourse aimed at a global level (Aronczyk, 2008).

When mediating at an international level, nation branding is used for both reactive and proactive purposes such as acceding to the European Union, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations by repairing damaged by hard power reputations or by avoiding the spotlight of not so favorable media attention. Furthermore, because nation branding is a highly visible practice, through the media attention it commonly receives and through its visual iconography of symbols, logos and slogans, branding serves as a recursive function by persuading domestic elites, stakeholders and the public that their government is acting in their best interest (Aronczyk, 2008).

A close examination of some major definitions of the nation branding, performed by professor Ying Fan (2010:100) shows differences in the focus and purpose that nation branding has:

1. Olins (1999) affirms that its role is to remold national identities
2. Lee (2009) thinks that it is supposed to enhance competitiveness between nations
3. Jaffe and Nebenzahl (2001) believe that nation branding embraces political, cultural, business and sport activities
4. Rendon's (2003) and Szondi's (2007) opinion is that nation branding promotes economic and political interests both nationally and internationally
5. Gudjonsson (2005) assumes that this type of branding improves, alters or enhances a nation's image or reputation.

In the same article (Fan: 2010) several interpretations of the concept are portrayed, divided into several levels. At level A, a nation's brand is treated in the simplest way as a visual symbol, slogan or strapline. At level B, it is an umbrella brand that encompasses many sector brands, for example in tourism or exports. Level C is about the country's image, reputation and positioning. This level shows the nation's branding role as quite similar to that of corporate branding. At level D, nation branding intends to build and sustain a nation's competitiveness. In level E, it can be used as an important tool in developing and maintaining the soft power of a nation by creating a more favorable image among the

international audience. At level F, nation branding is linked to national identity, since a nation's brand is to be firmly rooted in the reality and essence of the nation (Fan, 2010).

Since this paper's goal is to research attitudes towards the effects of the recent communications campaign "Discover the place where you feel reborn" within the last branding strategy in Romania, level C, referring to Romania's reputation and image within its own borders, and F, since the purpose is to identify whether or not the broadcasted commercials contain elements of national identity, will be taken into consideration when conducting the research. Nonetheless, it must be mentioned that when linking nation branding with national identity, a distinction between the terms must be made, the two of them are totally different constructs. In order to do so, the second part of the theory section will elaborate more, as mentioned in the beginning, on the concept of national identity.

In accordance with Varga's statements, nation branding is usually discussed as an externally oriented strategy aiming to communicate a certain competitive image in order to draw international attention. Recurrently the fact that it also has a crucial inner-oriented feature is neglected. This inner orientation is a basic condition for a nation branding campaign to be successful, considering that such actions cannot be effective without the participation of citizens, who are simultaneously stakeholders, representatives and customers of the brand (Varga, 2013).

Moreover, a nation branding campaign's purpose is to *"enhance the cultural stability of a nation, to ameliorate social integration and cohesion by advancing national confidence, and to bring together local and national interests. In other words, the claim is that nation branding in many ways equals nation-building and hence represents some kind of public good"* (Varga, 2013: 829).

Nation branding cannot be valid without the active participation of its citizens, who are urged to 'live the brand' by acting and thinking in ways that are in accordance with the general definitions of the national brand (Varga, 2013). Hence, citizens are asked to act like brand ambassadors, a role which *"consists in always carrying the 'microbes' of the brand identity and spreading it by 'infecting' those with whom they come into contact"* (Varga, 2013: 836).

In essence, the beliefs and history that a nation's people have, construct a nation's brand identity and core values, which enables a nation's brand effect, which in turn forms a full cycle of brand building by sustaining and reinforcing both (Jaworski, Fosher, 2003).

Starting from these considerations, this paper's direction is towards the inner implications that nation branding campaigns have or have not produced in Romania, focusing on its citizens and on their national identity.

The Nation Brand Hexagon

Simon Anholt believes that a nation's brand is the sum of peoples' perception about a country around 6 areas of national competence. Gathering all these areas, he created what is now called the Nation Brand Hexagon (superbrands.com).

Every country has its brand weaknesses and strengths, so for each point of the hexagon there can be a 'winner' or a 'loser' (Anholt, 2005).



Figure 1-Nation Brand Hexagon (Anholt, 2007)

As it can be seen from Figure 1, the 6 areas that are dealt with are: tourism, the exports, the governance, the country's approach towards investment and immigration, culture and heritage and last but not least the people.

Tourism is probably the most promoted aspects in nation branding. The most marketing efforts are put into "selling" the country around the world. Therefore, because images are usually so aggressively promoted, they can have an impact on peoples' perceptions about a country (Anholt, 2005).

The exports help understand what image the public has about products and services from each country. This area is connected with the country of origin concept, so as long as people know where the products come from, exported goods can create an impact on their minds and can act like ambassadors for their country's image (Anholt, 2007).

Governance wants to convey the public opinion about the national government's capability to govern and the justice system. Mostly, this area describes individuals' views about their government

system. Also, foreign and domestic policies that a country engages in can affect the nation's brand, particularly when the international media turns them into news (Anholt, 2007).

On the investment and immigration point of the hexagon the attention goes towards the 'business to business' aspect of the nation brand and towards the willingness of people to study, live or work in that country or abroad (Anholt, 2005).

Culture and heritage present the global feeling that each nation has about its heritage and its modern culture (art, film, sports, music, literature). At the same time, the cultural exchange can build up or destroy a nations' brand (Anholt, 2007).

The last point of the hexagon, the people, wants to understand the human capital (Anholt, 2005). Therefore, it deals with the population's reputation, how well educated, they are, how sociable and also their behavior abroad and towards visitors in their country (Anholt, 2007).

Criticism of nation branding

The concept of nation branding finds itself at crossroads. Over the past years, the interests and activities in the field have grown immensely in the form of publications, studies and consulting projects (Fan, 2010). On the other hand, there is still a lack of progress in conceptual development, an essential step for the subject to move forward (Fan, 2010). As a result, nation branding faces serious challenges such as outright objection and cynical skepticism among the public (Olins, 2002; Kabn, 2006 as cited in Fan, 2010).

In line with Keith Dinnie's opinion, nation branding has not caught as rapidly as organizational branding or even personal branding, due to the fact that it must be governmentally sponsored. On this account, considering that governments are elected for a determined and limited period, branding campaigns change and do not have the necessary amount of time to produce the anticipated results (Dinnie, 2008: 171). Additionally, *"governments have not always been stellar exhibitors of promotion. Which department must helm a nation-branding campaign? Groupthink tends to set in (or worse, corruption), and the resulting nation brand is no different to what the country started out with"* (Dinnie, 2008:171).

Simon Anholt is also skeptical about the idea of nation branding, despite the fact that he was the one to invent the term, as previously mentioned. In view of his assertion, nation branding does not

exist, it is just a dangerous myth. Thinking that a country (or region, or city) can be branded just like services and products are being branded, is vain and foolish (Kommunikationsmaaling.dk³).

Anholt acknowledges the fact that branding may have some relevance to countries and the way they present themselves to the rest of the world, *“but is a humdrum business, which doesn’t begin to justify the excitement about nation branding”* (Anholt, 2013:7⁴). Having state agencies, plentiful dealings with various professional audiences around the world and materials to support their transactions (a single logo, stationary, information leaflets, website, corporate videos) is not enough. These elements do give the impression of a well-organized, modern, self-respecting state, but the branding process at this level is reduced to a passive operation. It cannot win any new customers or change minds, it cannot even increase market share or affect the country’s likelihood, it is just good practice and a useful PR exercise (Anholt, 2013:7). The marketing campaigns associated with nation branding *“can only be empty propaganda: instead of saying ‘please try this product’, they are basically saying ‘please change your mind about this country’, and the message misfires”* (Kommunikationsmaaling.dk).

Unlike products, where the wrapping and the design make the difference, a country is not for sale, it is not so easily mistakable for another, it cannot be a fast-moving consumer good, so the principle of branding is not transferable (Anholt, 2013). What’s more, *“if a country is serious about enhancing its international image, it should concentrate on product development and marketing rather than chase after the chimera of branding. There are no short cuts. Only a consistent, coordinated and unbroken stream of useful, noticeable, world-class, and above all, relevant ideas, products, and policies can, gradually, enhance the reputation of the country that produces them”* (Anholt, 2013:7).

Another flaw in nation branding might be the reputation and the image that a country already has. For example, places with a reputation for being poor, dangerous, uncultured or corrupt find that all their efforts to prove that they do not conform to the national stereotypes are useless. On the other hand, for countries, cities or regions that have acquired a positive reputation, their brand goes before them, creating trust and respect (Kommunikationsmaaling.dk). In other words, the national image that has been built over decades determines how countries are perceived, all other efforts and branding strategies being in vain (Kommunikationsmaaling.dk).

³ <http://kommunikationsmaaling.dk/artikel/why-nation-branding-does-not-exist/>

⁴ http://www.exchangediplomacy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/1.-Simon-Anholt_Beyond-the-Nation-Brand-The-Role-of-Image-and-Identity-in-International-Relations.pdf no other editorial information available

Brand identity and Brand image

The brand identity consists of the visual and verbal representation of a brand. Basically, it is a portrayal of the way a company, product, service wants to be perceived by consumers. The brand identity depicts the core values expressed through logos, name and other communication tools present both internally and externally. To affirm that a company has a good brand identity, means to confirm that what it offers is meaningful, authentic, memorable, sustainable and differentiated from other similar services (Wheeler, 2006).

A strong brand has elements that complete each other, consistent brand elements “*serve to unify the entire process of image formation and building, which in turn contributes to the strength and uniqueness of the brand identity*” (Cai, 2002:722).

However, unlike typical goods and services, when branding a nation, some of the brand identity elements, like the name, cannot be changed (Cai, 2002).

Nations are social constructs that contain people drawn together by a collective sense of national identity, thus a nation’s brand identity is “*a unique set of associations that the brand strategists aspire to create and maintain, that originates through the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses embedded in the tangible and intangible attributes of the nation*” (Rojas-Mendez, 2013:464).

How people perceive a nation’s brand identity reflects their self-identity and aspirations, this is why it is important to maintain the core essence of the brand in every branding decision (Hakala, Lemmetyinen, 2011).

As for the brand image, Collins Cobuild Dictionary provides the following definition of an image: “*the image of a person, a group, or organization is the way that they appear to other people*” (Cobuild, 2006).

Brand image “*refers to the meaning that the stakeholders associate with the product (nation) based on experiences, impressions and perceptions of the functional, emotional and symbolic benefits of the brand*”(Rojas-Mendez, 2013:464).

As stated in an article by Papadopoulos and Heslop, every nation has its own image, whether if it is a positive or negative one, focused or diffused, formed from education, media, travel, product purchases, or any other combination of sources and interactions, and this image unlike a product’s image does not fall directly under the marketer’s control (Papadopoulos, Heslop, 2002).

According to Gun (1972), the images are formed through a process, that can be separated into two parts: organic and induced images. The organic images come from personal experiences and

unbiased sources, over which there is no control, while the induced images are based on the marketers' efforts to promote, develop and advertise a specific country (Gun 1972)

Some of the perceptions regarding a nation's image might include images of natural resources, of general infrastructure, of the place itself, its products and its companies, its people and its culture, of history and traditions (Hakala, Lemmetyinen, 2011).

Moreover, the image of a place is considered to be strongly connected to the perception of the quality of products made in it and it can be influenced by previous knowledge and by internationally circulated stereotypes. In consequence, by stereotyping, nations and their people are placed in different categories, usually with negative undertones and thus shortcuts to perceptions of attitudes and intentional orientations are created (Hakala, Lemmetyinen, Kantola, 2013).

No matter how it is created, one thing is for sure, *"the brand image is a reflection of the brand identity and plays an essential role in the construction of identity. The consumers acquire an image based on the brand identity projected by the sender (destination marketers); the marketers determine and enhance the identity based on the research done around the consumers' image about a destination"* (Cretu, 2011:12).

Nation Branding in Central and Eastern European Countries

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in Central and Eastern Europe, countries in the area have emerged out of the influence of the communist block (Szondi, 2006). From that moment on these newly developed states have engaged in a complex and substantial process to position themselves on Europe's and the world's geographical and mental map, as politically stable countries with promising and emerging market economies (Szondi, 2006).

The transition to a market economy from a central planning and from a one-party system of democracy engaged a systematic image and identity transformation, driven both internally and externally (Szondi, 2006).

In its most simplistic definition, transition was understood *"as a period during which CEE countries were supposed to undergo a linear transformation from state command economies to free market ones, and from authoritarian one-party systems to liberal democracies"* (Kaneva, 2011:6). From this point of view, any study of the post-communist transition, is a study of the struggle of ideologies between the meaning of the past and the direction of the future (Kaneva, 2011).

Integration into the global economy and adhesion to the European Union has been one of the primary foreign policies. Therefore, for all the countries in the region, particularly for those newly

independent from former federations, marketing and promotion strategies have become inevitably linked with the portrayal of a new national image and identity (Hall, 1999).

In the case of CEE countries the main goal was to distance themselves from the images of communism and all the negative connotations that were evoked (despair, something poor or inferior) when people referred to Eastern Europe (Szondi, 2006). Not to mention, that during the Cold War, Eastern Europe and communism became synonyms and were used interchangeably. This is another reason why some countries in transition have tried to position themselves as Central European. The problem was with the one situated at the northern or southern edges of the region, who had to fight with another misconception and had to disassociate themselves from the 'Balkan' label, as well (Szondi, 2006).

Located at the Western edge of the Islamic world, *"the Balkans, a term loosely coterminous with south-eastern Europe, is a region which has been subjected in recent history to largely pejorative constructions in the West"* (Hall, 1999: 232).

However, in regards to the country under analysis, Romanians are not very fond of the association with Balkanism, a main reason for this reluctance is due to the fact that *"such words as the Balkans, Balkan, Balkanism, to Balkanize, are usually perceived not as value-free terms, but, for most people, they have strong negative implications"* (Baicoianu, 2008: 9). According to the same author, these implications are divided into two categories, that of 'excess' and that of 'lack'(Baicoianu, 2008:9). In other words, *"everything Balkan is perceived and described as either primitive, disrupted/disruptive, pre-or-even anti-modern, or wild, violent, and fiercely attached to a certain set of values and beliefs"* (Baicoianu, 2008:9).

Accompanying the crisis of representation in CEE are ideological oppositions, specifically, the opposition of East and West. Practically, the East has been self-colonizing itself, a trend, particularly relevant to national identity narratives in the entire CEE region (Kaneva, 2011).

Thus, the East/West hermeneutics implicate nation branding and provides a reason for its historical necessity in the former communist nations, a reason consistent with the concept *"modernization by imitation"* (Kaneva, 2011).

Basically, the national identity struggles were struck by a desire to *"return to Europe"*, which led former communist countries to seek formal acceptance into the European Union. In this context of this clash between national self-identification and of European integration, nation branding provided *"a discourse of identity construction that could, at least superficially, accommodate the conflicting pressures of differentiation and integration"* (Kaneva, 2011:9).

Nonetheless, the gospel of nation branding was also imported from the West. Following the lead of Western branding gurus, the region became active in debating and negotiating over national identity within the framework of nation branding (Kaneva, 2011).

Nation branding was meant to change negative or false stereotypes about the countries and their people or at least try to build up the positive ones. This function was particularly true for countries whose name or territory did not change, like Poland, Romania or Hungary (Szondi, 2006).

Even though the transition period is viewed as completed, once these states have acceded to the European Union (Kaneva, 2011), most countries in the region are at a very early stage in developing a coherent and strategic nation brand (Szondi, 2006).

Out of all the states in the CEE, this study will focus on Romania, a semi-presidential republic, a member of the European Union since 2007, located in the South-East Central Europe.

Having gone through several branding campaigns since the fall of the Ceausecu regime in 1989. Romania is an example of how difficult it was for a post-socialist country to reimagine itself, in order to present a new identity to the wider world (Light, 2001).

Faced with corruption, bad governance, a decline in living standards and health care, most of Romania's branding efforts have focused so far on tourism and elite culture and less on actions aimed at foreign investment, innovation, export brands and internal policy measures. In other words, the country ended up focusing on saying rather than doing something (Sepi, 2013).

In the light of these events, and due to the fact that their lives failed to improve, many Romanians started to disassociate and distance themselves from the Romanian identity as a whole (Sepi, 2013). Badmouthing the country and everything that is Romanian, became a national sport (Sepi, 2013) and this is precisely one of the motives why this paper wants to research Romania's national identity and how it is depicted in the recent communications campaign "Here is where I feel reborn".

National Identity

A sense of national identity is without doubt important for many people, giving them a feeling of affiliation and identification with a particular group, that is distinct from other groups (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997).

National identity "*provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world, and connects a group of people to a particular geographic place*" (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997:28).

Defining national identity is a challenge, considering that the concept is a multidimensional and multifaceted one (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997). According to Anthony Smith (1991) the concept of national identity incorporates a homeland or a historic territory, historical memories and common myths, a common culture or at least a predominant one, a common economy, common legal rights and duties for all its members, and last but not least an increased territorial mobility for its members.

On the other hand, another definition provided by Anderson (1983) envisions the national identity as an imagined political community, and by imagined the author makes a reference to the sense that it consists of a group of people who will never meet or know one another, but who share a common belief that they belong to the same community (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997).

A national identity "is fundamentally multi-dimensional; it can never be reduced to a single element. The formation of national identity is by nature a subjective process and submits to change along with the progression of time. The attempt to even it out across cultural barriers or to paste past constructions of national identity over the present day structures, will fail to acknowledge the intrinsic subjective and fluid nature of national identity. An identity is not a thing, it is a description of ways of speaking about self and the community, yourself and your community accordingly, it does not develop in a social void, but rather in a relation to manifest forms of existence, identity is a form of life" (Michael Billig, 1995:69 as quoted in Georgescu and Botescu, 2004:6).

Lowenthal has observed that national identity stands in need for heritage and for the feeling of uniqueness. This is where the nationalists' point of view comes to live, as a result of their focus on the past made out of legends and landscapes, which empowers a nation to ground itself in both space and time (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997). Therefore, since the rise of nationalism in the eighteenth century, the nation-building process has dedicated most of its attention to the assembly of a national past, which *"is a constructed from a collective of myths, traditions and legends. These typically include myths of origin, ancestry, migration, liberation, a golden age, decline and rebirth. Central to a national past is the idea of an idealized and glorious 'golden age'-a time of communal splendor, with its sages, saints and heroes, the era in which the community achieved its classical form and which bequeathed a legacy of glorious memories and cultural achievements"* (Smith, 1986:191).

Pertaining to the concept of myths in relation with national identity, Roland Barthes (1957) argues that they are not fictitious tales, rather they are *"the perpetual upholding of mass-culture upon the world"* (Georgescu, Botescu, 2004:8). Barthes questions what is beyond the images that are shown to us and how this image can affect us on an ideological level and whether or not these myths can be broken so that what lies beneath them to be disclosed. At the same time, he argues that what appears

to be natural is in fact an illusive reality constructed by the structures looking to obtain power in society. From this point of view, he might be considered one of the first critics of nation branding (Georgescu, Botescu, 2004).

However, nowadays this mythical perspective presented by Barthes is challenged by other multiple complex structures and phenomena. Along with the globalization phenomenon came along uncertainty in term of identity and the feeling of belonging. On one side it has generated new cosmopolitan identities and it has encouraged the translation of cultures, on the other hand, in some parts of the world it has received opposed reactions. Coming along these lines, the past is being increasingly used as a foundation in delimiting and defining identities (Georgescu, Botescu, 2004).

McGuigan (1992) believes that the formation of national identity was connected with the industrialization and democratization, the three of them forming the modernity, a point of view contradicting the postmodern argument, which affirms that the *“search for a national identity in a postmodern society has become fashionable because people are not sure who they are, and that the research agenda has been driven, at least in the social sciences, by a response to the recent dramatic changes that have taken place in Europe and other parts of the world”* (Bechhofer et al., 1999:516).

On the other hand, Mayer and Palmowski (2004) admit that national identities are constructed and afterwards accepted both from within and from outside the nation, the external recognition being a crucial determining factor in the process of creation of identities.

Considering all the pressures it had to endure, national identity remained strong and persistent, thanks to one of its main functions of providing *“a certain fulfilling answer to personal identification. Identification with a nation is a way to ensure a measure of personal immortality through association with the nation’s enduring history, through a feeling of community, and destiny along with the restoring of a collective faith”*(Georgescu, Botescu, 2004:16).

Links between nation branding and national identity

With all these in mind, the question ‘what connection is there between nation branding and national identity?’, arises. Therefore, as reported by Dinnie (2008), *“national identity plays a key role in nation branding. An awareness and understanding of the core features of national identity are a prerequisite for developing nation-branding campaigns, as the essence of any nation-brand derives not only from the country’s companies and brands but also for its culture in the widest sense-language, literature, music, sport, architecture, and so on all embody the soul of a nation [...] A deep and authentic nation brand must include the many elements and expressions of a nation’s culture”* (pp. 111-112).

After all, branding not only explains to the world everything there is to know about other nations, it also reinterprets national identity *“in market terms and provides new narratives for domestic consumption”* (Jansen, 2008:122). According to the same author’s opinion, nation branding aims at selecting and exposing only those aspects of nation’s identity, that are more likely to increase its marketability and thus, the identity has to be *“forged through representational practices that are historically and socially conditioned, multi-layered and dispersed”* (Jansen, 2008:122 as quoted in Lambrea, 2014:18).

Notwithstanding the growing similarities between strategies that countries and companies use to promote themselves, a nation’s brand still differs from the majority of brands both in length and in depth. Nation-brands own through their essence of their national identity more varied and deeper cultural resources than any other type of brands. Moreover, it can be asserted that despite the fact that similarities between nation branding strategies can be traced down, there is a clear differentiation between these brands generated by their varied cultural resources and their unique national identity. (Budnitskiy, 2012).

Some authors, like Simon Anholt go as far as stating that national identity equals with nation branding, reducing the latter to a mere *“tangible, robust, communicable and above all useful version”* of the former (Budnitskiy, 2012:18).

Nonetheless, when designing a brand for a specific country, the image that is thus created has to be *“consistent with existing national values and to correspond to reality. In this context, national identity is one input element in the process of country building strategy and it is also one component of a country's image. Speaking about national identity is generally accepted that it refers to common history, culture and developments of nation”* (Nicolescu, Paun, Popescu, Draghici, 2007:79).

In regards to transitional countries, such as in Romania, *“national identity serves as the starting point for the development of a nation brand, with campaign designers advised to develop an understanding of it and the way it should be synthesized within marketing and branding strategies”* (Lambrea, 2014:18).

Romanian National Identity

Before describing the Romanian national identity, a brief review of the major historical periods will be made. This will help the reader learn how Romania’s national identity was shaped over time through historical events.

In consequence, for research purposes, this section will focus on four major historical periods: the ancient Daco-roman period, the medieval period, the Interwar period and the Communist period. They were chosen because they compress major historical events that have led to what Romania is today.

It is to be mentioned that Romania's history does not resume to these four alone, but in this paper's case only these will be analyzed and researched later on when the research subjects will be asked to express an opinion about them and their impact on the country's national identity.

The ancient Daco-Roman period

According to Hitchins (2014), distant origins and the debates surrounding them lie at the heart of Romanian identity. At the center of these debates involving the beginning and the identity of Romanians was the nature of the Roman conquest and settlement of Dacia, *"the land that was to form the core of modern Romania both geographically and psychologically"* (Hitchins, 2014: 6).

During the centuries before the Roman occupation (early second century AD), the territory was home to various Thracian people, the most historically known being the Getae and the Dacians, but the fate of the Dacians is the one that matters in Romanian history, these *"indigenous inhabitants of the land, who were subjected to Roman rule and acculturation for a century and a half"* (Hitchins, 2014:6).

The Romans recorded their expansion north of the Danube, most of Romania's territory today, on two famous monuments: Trajan's Column in Rome and the 'Tropaeum Trajani' at Adamclisi, on the site of their victory in Dobrogea (lonelyplanet.com). They brought with them a superior civilization and by mixing with the conquered tribes they formed Daco-Roman people, who spoke Latin (lonelyplanet.com).

In the year 271 AD, the Goths attacked, forcing Emperor Aurelian to withdraw his Roman legions south of Danube. This means that the region was governed by Rome for almost 175 years. After their retreat, Romanised peasants remained in Dacia, mixing with the locals. Hence the Romanian people were born and hence the Roman heritage contemporary Romanians have (lonelyplanet.com).

The medieval period

For this particular paper, the medieval period will encompass events starting from the middle ages and ending with the Great Union of the three main principalities from 1918.

Starting from the 4th century until the 10th, waves of migrating people (Huns, Slavs, Bulgars, Magyars) swept across the Romania's territory, each leaving their mark on the local culture, gene pool

and language (lonelyplanet.com). Romanians survived in village communities, assimilating the Slavs and other other migrants who settled on the territory (lonelyplanet.com).

From the 10th century, Magyars extended into Transylvania, turning the region into an autonomous principality under the Hungarian crown of the 13th century (lonelyplanet.com).

By the 14th century, Prince Basarb I, *"united various political formations in the region south of the Carpathians to create the first Romanian principality – Wallachia, dubbed Țara Românească (Romanian Land). Its indigenous peasantry became known as Vlachs"* (lonelyplanet.com).

Wallachia and Moldavia became the two major medieval principalities, ruled by a prince who was also the military leader and were dominated by peasant populations (lonelyplanet.com).

These two offered a strong resistance to the Ottoman's northward expansion throughout the 14th and 15th century. Due to this, rulers like Mircea the Old, Vlad the Impaler and Stefan the great became legendary figures (lonelyplanet.com).

Despite all the efforts to resist the Ottoman Empire, Transylvania became a vassal, when the Turks conquered Hungary. Therefore, Wallachia and Moldavia had to pay a tribute to the sultan, just like Transylvania did, in order to maintain autonomy (lonelyplanet.com).

In 1600 Mihai the Great succeeded for a brief period of time, to unite the three principalities, so that he could defeat the Turks. This first political union lasted almost a year, Mihai the Great being defeated by a joint Habsburg-Transylvanian noble army and beheaded in 1601 (lonelyplanet.com).

The 17th century marked a period of peace and prosperity for Wallachia under the rule of Constantin Brancoveanu. This period was characterized by great cultural and artistic Renaissance, but by 1828 Moldavia and Wallachia became Russian protectorates, due to the defeat the Turks suffered in the Russo-Turkish war (lonelyplanet.com).

Following the revolutionary spirit that gripped much of Europe in the years leading up to 1848, Transylvania was involved in the Hungarian revolution, between the Hungarians and the Romanians in the region. As a result, the region fell under direct rule of Austria-Hungary, Hungarian was established as the official language and any Romanians who dared to oppose this regime suffered severe punishments (lonelyplanet.com).

In contrast, Wallachia and Moldavia prospered under the rule of Alexandru Ioan Cuza. With the support of the French, in 1859 he was elected ruler in both principalities. By 1861, he created a national, state known as United Romanian Principalities, known as Romania starting with 1862 (lonelyplanet.com).

Cuza was forced to abdicate in 1866 and after a series of events in which Romania declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire and regained Dobrogea, the country's independence was finally recognized in 1878. In 1881 it was proclaimed a kingdom and Carol I was crowned as the first king of Romania (lonelyplanet.com).

The years that followed, up until World War I are considered Romania's Belle Epoque. This was a time of prosperity, of cultural and artistic bloom. During this time Romania knew a great industrial and technological development: electricity, the telegraph, Kodak camera, and it also discovered French cuisine and culture. All these combined with all the travelling abroad left a mark on how the modern man was built (stiri.tvr.ro).

1900 is the peak year when at the Universal Exposition from Paris Romania had four pavilions. The exhibit proved that Romanian under Carol's the first enterprising rule belonged to the European civilization (stiri.tvr.ro).

The capital, Bucharest, was slowly turning into a European city and got the nickname Little Paris and the Romanian society was blooming (stiri.tvr.ro).

The Interwar period

Romania had a lot to gain from World War I. The defeat of Austria-Hungary in 1918, *"paved the way for the formation of modern Romania. Bassarabia, the area east of the Prut River, which had been part of Moldavia until 1812 when it was taken by the Russians, was joined to Romania. Likewise, Bucovina, which had been in Austro-Hungarian hands since 1775, was also reunited with Romania. Part of the Austrian-Hungarian Banat, which had been incorporated in Romania, was also handed over. Furthermore, Transylvania was finally united with Romania. Hence, at the end of WWI, Romania – now known as Greater Romania – more than doubled its territory"* (lonelyplanet.com).

The communist period

When World War II ended, Romania was one of the countries that burst forward into the mass-industrialized communist experiment. But, being an overwhelmingly rural, agricultural country, it was ill-prepared for this experiment. In 1946 the communists forced king Michael to abdicate, thus abolishing the monarchy and proclaiming Romania the People's Republic (lonelyplanet.com).

The regime nationalized factories and businesses and in 1953 they introduced a new Slavicised orthography to eradicate Romanian language's Latin roots. Also, the streets and towns were renamed to honor soviet figures. What followed was *"a period of terror ensued in which all the prewar leaders,*

prominent intellectuals and suspected dissidents were imprisoned or interned in hard-labor camps” (lonelyplanet.com).

After the Soviet troops retreat in 1958, names of the streets and towns were once again changed to emphasize the Roman heritage. After 1960 the country adopted an independent foreign policy under two rulers: Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej and his protege, Nicolae Ceausescu (lonelyplanet.com).

During Nicolae Ceaucescu’s dictatorship, which lasted for 25 years, Romanians suffered painfully: *“thousands were imprisoned or repressed by the much-feared secret police (Securitate), huge amounts of money were squandered on megalomaniacal, grandiose projects and the population lived in abject poverty”* (lonelyplanet.com).

The regime came to an end in late 1989, as the world watched how communist regimes collapsed one after another. Therefore, it was only a matter of time before Romania’s turn would come: *“the Romanian revolution was carried out with Latin passion and intensity. Of all the Soviet Bloc countries, only Romania’s government transfer ended with a dead leader”* (lonelyplanet.com).

A description of national identity in Romania

Anthony Smith (1992 as quoted in Nicolescu et. Al., 2007) thinks that *“we may understand the entire cultural history of mankind as a successive differentiation (and also an enlargement) of the identification processes. In the modern era of industrial capitalism and the bureaucracy, the number and, particularly, the scale of possible identities have increased in a way never seen before, and the national identity has become a cultural and political norm, exceeding any other loyalties in size and power”* (p. 80).

As in many Eastern European countries, the past is an important component of the Romanian national consciousness (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997). At the heart of this consciousness stands the belief that the origins of the Romanian people can be traced back to the Roman Empire. Known as the Daco-Roman continuity, this belief is a tenet of Romanian national identity and a considerable focus in historiography. Along with this theory and the obvious Latin character of their language, the national identity of Romanians and the nation-building process emerged. These two characteristics have been used by nationals to differentiate themselves from their Slavs and Magyars neighbors (Light, Dumbraveanu-Andone, 1997).

Throughout history, the national identity in Romania has become a synonym with ethnic identity, a short review of the most important visions upon the Romanian national identity summing it up to a concept known as “the Romanian soul” (Schifirnet, 2009).

Some of the greatest Romanian authors and philosophers, like Lucian Blaga, Constantin Noica, Mircea Vulcanescu, have introduced a description of the autochthonous ethnic reality, and all these points of view have converged into a delimitation on different levels about what defines the specific or Romania (Schifirnet, 2009).

On the religion level, orthodoxy is the element that conserves the Romanian culture and spirituality; on the linguistic level, the language is the binder of the ethnic national identity. This is perhaps the only dimension of the Romanian identity, whose legitimacy was almost never questioned. On the cultural level, Romanians have vast popular culture, the ground of the nation-building process; economically, Romania is an agrarian and pastoral country, which had troubles in adapting to capitalism and industrialization. On the psychological level, Romanians are tolerant, hospitable, skeptical, scoffer, adaptable, with a tendency towards inactivity and geopolitically, the Romanian culture could be a fusion between the East and the West, the country's territory being an island of Latinity in a region predominant with Slavs (Schifirnet, 2009).

The focus point of the entire debate limits Romanian national identity to tradition. The main trait of the Romanian people is their "herd instinct", a state imposed by traditions and different circumstances. Without this trait the language's and religion's unity would not have been possible (Schifirnet, 2009).

If a look back into history were to be taken, it would notice that before World War II the national identity in Romania sprung from a mostly rural society, the transition period affecting this identity and turning it into a society of consumption (Schifirnet, 2009). It appears that the Romanian national identity has been greatly influenced by the historical events of the last decade, when communism destroyed the village and its traditions alongside with the cultural elite of the interwar period, hiding their works and writings (Nicolescu et. Al., 2007).

Being the only communist country to suffer a violent revolution, Romania entered with a dramatic splash into the arena of national redefinition (Kaneva, Popescu, 2011).

If the communist ideology searched to systematically destroy the authentic Romanian culture by promoting false values (Marcus⁵), today Romania has a focus on rural tourism, allowing its post-socialist identity to manifest itself, by stressing an earlier, pre-socialist past and by allowing rural landscapes and lifestyles that survived socialism to continue into the present (Light, 2001).

⁵ http://web.adatbank.transindex.ro/pdfdok/web1_10_Marcus.pdf, no other editorial information available

Culturally speaking, after 1989 Romanians searched to revive the interwar period, considered to be the last normal period in the country's history, when traditions were still followed and when a cultural elite was blooming (Marcus).

Following the above presented, it can be asserted that the country's uniqueness comes from three major coordinates: geographic, cultural and historical (Baicoianu, 2008).

Geographically imagined, Romania is singled out by outlining its diverse relief and its abundance of natural resources, the insufficient exploited tourism potential triggering a *"feeling of smothered discontent and the melancholic envy towards the successes in this field of countries, presumably less endowed, but more skilled when it comes to promoting such opportunities"* (Baicoianu, 2008: 10). Nonetheless, its strategic position between the Orient and the Occident is emphasized, molding it into a *"turning point"* and a defense barrier against all invasions (Baicoianu, 2008).

Historically and culturally, the Romanian origins are recurrently found in the writings *is "called to claim superiority over the closest neighbor and to legitimate Romania's position as a rightful member of the European choir of nations"* (Baicoianu, 2008:10).

Converting the idea of uniqueness into a framework of Romanian national identity came as a reaction against competing identity projects enabled by neighboring countries, that were also struggling to find new national ideologies. Thus, the threat of Slavism was answered with a powerful reassertion of Latinity (Baicoianu, 2008). Thusly, *"by contrasting itself to an imagined Europe, the Romanian identity (re)discovers, anguished its constitutive tensions"* (Baicoianu, 2008:11).

Nowadays, Romania's national identity goes once again through a redefining phase, due to its new quality of UE member. Of course, the post communist realities are not to be forgotten, but in theory new changes are to be expected as a result of the custom's liberalization and all the other opportunities that the country now has access to (for example, working or studying abroad). The problem arises when mentalities and demeanors, modeled by history and society are incongruous with the European modern culture (Schifirnet, 2009).

Another relevant aspect of the Romanian national identity is provided by how Romanians perceive themselves. They can evaluate themselves through symbols, traditions and customs, the first three qualities appointed to them being: hospitality, diligence and amiability (Schifirnet, 2009). However, an empirical study conducted by Alina Mungiu professes the idea that at an abstract level, Romanians are patriots, but they do not idealize themselves in more concrete aspects. For example, 1 out of 10 Romanians takes into consideration to emigrate, and affirmations like *"It does not matter if I'm Romanian and that we have such a beautiful country, if the economy does not work and we are*

starving” are frequent (Marcus). Moreover, 21% of citizens consider Romania a poor country and 20% find it corrupt (Sepi, 2013).

An additional study (Nicolescu et. Al., 2007) avouches that Romanians consider that they have less positive attributes in comparison with other European citizens, *“they characterize themselves negatively as not caring about the others, having a certain tendency towards aggressiveness and authoritativeness, acting on the edge of honest and dishonest behavior, being pretty disorganized, idealists, superficial and conservators”*(p. 80).

With the above presented in mind, this paper’s desideratum is to find out if in terms of national identity the young generation feels the same as the older generation, who has suffered more transitory phases and if the ‘Explore the Carpathian Garden’ brand’s new communication campaign portrays the core essence of this identity, or if it fails to have an impact.

For research purposes, in this particular case, the national identity will be considered as compiled of the following elements: the orthodox religion, the Romanian language, the country’s history, the Romanian popular culture, the country’s territory and geographical particularities.

Nation Branding in Romania

It is said that to build a nation brand means to tell a good story (Dolea, Tarus 2009). If that is the case, then what is Romania’s story? Where should it begin and where should it end?

Romania, one of the most relatively recent European Union member state is the 7th largest populated European country after Germany, France, UK, Italy, Spain and Poland and the 9th largest European country by surface (Dumbraveanu⁶).

Over the last 25 years the country has been trying to escape from a 50-years communism experience and *“considering the unstable internal political environment, the struggle for power, the ‘prioritization’ of personal interest against the public interest, and also the reduced national feeling which animates all these, is easy to realize how difficult and arduous the path to success becomes, taking into account the need of promoting, affirming and developing the image and identity of Romania”* (Cotirlea, 2013:181).

Communism left Romania with relics of devastation, including destruction of many national cultural treasures. During 1979 and 1989 much of the historical center of Bucharest was destroyed (Light, Young, 2001) and afterwards the country was stigmatized with two stereotypes: “communist Romania” or “Dracula Romania” (Ragalie, 2014).

⁶ http://humangeographies.org.ro/articles/32/324_Dumbraveanu.pdf , no other editorial information available

Therefore, it must be said up front that the term 'nation branding' does not truly apply to Romania. If a brand emerged, it was more the result of spontaneous forces and not the product of structured and consistent government actions (Sepi, 2013).

Taking into consideration that a nation's image is rooted in its identity, *"the creation and the change of Romania's image can be conceived only through a revision of the past, through a return to its own origins, in order to try to express who we really are and which are in essence, the representative elements of Romanian culture and civilization"* (Cotirlea, 2013:184).

Brief History of the Branding Campaigns in Romania

After the fall of the Ceausecu regime, Romania's leaders found by the mid 1990s that the country had a poor standing abroad and at the same they acknowledged the need for Western political and economical support. By then, the former president Ion Iliescu decided to drop his hostility towards Western values, and consequently, Romania launched a series of measures meant to enhance its image among the international community. Thus, the country began to be portrayed as a reborn, free and shaken off its totalitarian past (Light, 2011).

The first branding actions that Romania took were reunited in the so called "The Eternal and Fascinating Romania" Campaign in 1995. Although it was not a campaign in the truest sense of the concept (the promotion consisted in a premium photo album), its goal was to portray Romania in a positive light to the international public. Although the initiative was paved with good intentions, its mediatic visibility was generated by a scandal of fraud (Dolea, Tarus, 2009). The target audience were potential investors and tourist in 144 countries around the globe (Sepi, 2013).

"Made in Romania" was the second attempt of amending Romania's already darkened image. This was a public-private initiative launched in 2000 to stop the decline of the manufacturing industry. At that time, the citizens had a very bad perception of Romanian-made products, so this campaign wanted to fight and reverse the prejudice of Romanian consumers towards the country's products. Romanian consumers of all ages were considered a target group (Sepi, 2013).

Approximately the same year, the Ministry of Tourism started investing in a large amusement park, "Dracula Park", which was supposed to help Romania capitalize on Bram Stoker's famous novel. In the beginning, the park was to be built near Sighisoara, the birth place of Vlad the Impaler, but due to locals' objections, who did not identify with the vampire legends, the decision to move the location to Snagov, near Bucharest, where Vlad's burial site is located, was taken. Unfortunately, it never got off

ground for lack of funds and local support, and this too ended up in prosecution. This campaign was supposed to address tourists and vampire fanatics, especially from USA and UK (Sepi, 2013).

In 2004, the first destination branding project was pitched. "Romania, Always Surprising" tried to alter the perception about the country, that circulated in Europe and in the USA. It presented the country as a tourism destination together with the message: Romania has changed and it can pleasantly surprise you. It was basically an advertising campaign in print and TV with commercial spots aired on international TV channels as well. This campaign was also canceled, because the World Tourism Organization felt like it sent mixed signals and did not communicate the Romanian essence (Dolea, Tarus, 2009). It targeted potential tourists with ages between 20 and 55 years old, from the USA and UE, with a medium income, in search for a new experience, culture and history (Sepi, 2013).

After the expressed criticism, in 2006 a new campaign was launched, "Romania Fabulospirit". The aim was to discover what is typically Romanian. So, for the first time, a campaign in Romania focused on people and their spiritual heritage, presenting them as spiritual people, who like to enjoy life, tell stories, make jokes and with whom you will never get bored. This campaign was a failure as well, due to the fact that it was interrupted when the Minister in charge resigned (Sepi, 2013).

Moving along the path of this brief history, in 2008 the Government set in motion "Romanians in Europe", a campaign that was meant to improve the image of Romanian citizens in countries with large numbers of Romanian immigrants (Spain and Italy). The government decided to make Romanians known as honest, hard-working people in search of a better future, but it all backfired when everybody learned that instead of using actual immigrants in the spots, they were using actors. The campaign was meant to address general publics in the UE (Sepi, 2013).

Then came the "Land of choice" campaign. By using unofficial ambassadors, who were well known personalities (Nadia Comaneci, Ilie Nastase, Gheorghe Hagi), Romania was to be presented as a diverse and attractive tourism destination to potential tourists, especially from English-speaking countries, with a major focus on the United States. Despite the high investment, 1.5 million Euros, the campaign failed again to build a unison inside the country (Sepi, 2013).

Finally, the last and most current branding campaign was pitched in 2010 and it is currently trying to build a nation brand. First presented at the World Exhibition in Shanghai, it runs under the slogan "Explore the Capathian Garden", and its main objectives are to create a positive image, to increase Romania's attractiveness as a tourism destination, and as a business opportunity (Cretu, 2011).



Figure 2. (romania.travel)

The Spanish company that created the brand did a quantitative research in 2002 and came to the conclusion that reality is better than the perception. Tourists impressions improve after visiting the country, thus the problem is the lack of information about Romania as a tourism destination (Cretu, 2011).

Unfortunately, the same company was accused of plagiarism, on the grounds that, allegedly, the leaf that was used to create the logo was not an original creation, as the Government requested. Instead, it was taken from an image database and was being used by other companies as well (Sepi, 2011).

However, the Tourism Ministry and Government officials decided to keep the logo, the new brand promoting *“the return to nature, authenticity and traditions, its creation taking into consideration the Romanian cultural heritage, folklore and rural life style. After research both inside and outside the country, the marketers defined the brand’s personality as: green and rural, authentic, pure, innocent, kind”* (Sepi, 2011).

Additionally to all the efforts put into creating the campaign, a trilogy of documentaries titled *“Wild Carpathia”* was filmed with the support of His Royal Highness Prince Charles of Wales. Despite the fact that Romanians mocked their new country brand logo and slogan, this series of documentaries on Travel Channel managed to raise a lot of patriotic sentiment, Prince Charles himself making comments about how remarkable and resilient Romanians are (Sepi, 2013).

But like any other branding campaign in Romania, this did not escape from criticism. A research study conducted in 2013 on a sample of 223 respondents with ages between 20 and 45 plus years old, concluded that 44% out of the people asked, thought that Romania still needs a branding strategy, while 53.8% did not know the answer to this question. Furthermore, 36.3% said that the lack of a strategy compatible with what the country actually represent was at fault for the lack of a national brand, and at the same time, 93.8% was not satisfied with how the country was promoted so far. Also, when asked

what do they think about the country's brand image, 37.2% said that it is a bad image, while 37.2% said that it is a satisfactory one. All in all, 66.0% characterized the country in a positive manner (beautiful, home, wonderful, diversity, picturesque, were the top 5 attributes), while 33.6 % in a negative one (corruption, poverty, chaos, paradox, theft, were the top 5 attributes) (mihaelaivan.ro⁷).

Nonetheless, some analysts expressed critics as well: *"the colour green and the leaf are generic and not unique; the word garden brings to mind a man-made area, orderly and carefully trimmed, whereas Romania prides itself on being the last wilderness of Europe; the Carpathian mountains extend beyond Romania, to the Ukraine and Slovakia, so confusions are possible; the font of the writing and the language used are neutral and remind us of a mass product rather than a niche discovery; they are rather bland"* (Sepi, 2013: 10), but the World Tourism Organization suggested to maintain the focus on the authentic rural experience, adventure tourism (Sepi, 2013).

In the beginning, the 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' had a general target audience divided into eight major markets: Germany, US, UK, Israel, France, Italy, Russia, Austria and Hungary (Sepi, 2013), but taking the WTO' advice, starting from June 2014 until august 2015 a new campaign about Romania will run on national TV stations and in the main newspapers. It is called "Aici simt ca renasc" (Here is where I feel reborn/ Discover the place where you feel reborn) and its main goal is to internally implement operational marketing plans for the nation's brand. In other words, the campaign addressed solely to Romanians (Economie. Hotnews. ro). The commercials are aired on national TV stations and the spoken language is Romanian. A first commercial was released in the summer, this is the one included in the questionnaire part of the research and two more others were released in December. These two will be presented towards analysis to respondents through interviews.

The creative concept is rebirth and it expresses the emotional gain that tourists from the target audience receive. Mentioning the target audience, it appears that the campaign concentrates on the explorer type of traveler (paginademededia. ro).

Within the campaign 6 main themes will be approached, that are: cultural circuits, rural tourism, nature tourism, city breaks, adventure tourism and balneary and wellness tourism (paginademededia. ro).

At the moment there are no more available information about this campaign, not even with Romania. Travel, the country's official tourism webpage.

So, starting from what was so far exposed, the thesis's aim is to find out what exactly do Romanians identity as national identity and at the same time if they consider that the attributes pertaining to this identity are portrayed in the new "Discover the place where you feel reborn"

⁷ <http://www.mihaelaivan.ro/grafice-studiu-de-cercetare-perceptia-romanilor-despre-brandul-de-tara/>

campaign. Moreover, it tries to see whether or not this campaign had an impact and if Romanians of different generations view it as a step forward towards the construction of a solid national brand, that can actually capture Romania's essence.

Analysis and Discussion

This section aims at analyzing the gathered data through the two previous described methods: questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Since the entire project is based on the TV commercials from the 'Discover the place where you feel reborn campaign' a short description of these commercials is in order.

Short description of the commercials

Just as it was expounded in the theoretical section, since 2010 Romania has a new nation brand, "Explore the Carpathian Garden". If in the beginning the campaigns launched to help build this brand were addressed internationally, in 2014 branding strategists have decided to make what appears to be a information campaign, one that will focus on Romanians, as a target audience.

Therefore, in June 2014 a first promotional TV spot was launched on national TV stations, followed by two more in December. The campaign consists also of print advertising, but this paper will focus only on the commercials that have been aired on television.

In accordance, the first commercial⁸ lasts for 30 seconds and it begins by showing a rural scenery with a man riding a cart filled with hay. The images that follow present a herd of sheep and the cattle that pull the cart. Then the register is moved to the Danube Delta, where the same character is a boat fishing. What follows are images of the Voronet Monastery in Moldavia and spiritual traditions that are practiced there. Afterwards, the scenery is moved to the Infinite Column by Constantin Brancusi. The commercial ends with a group of people having fun and playing music on the beach and with a younger man riding the bike on Transfagarasan (a road in the mountains).

Throughout the 30 seconds, you can hear the following message: *"Here, in these places is where I wish I was born. Every time I come, everywhere in these places I feel alive, I feel reborn. Romania, Explore the Carpathian Garden"* (translation from: Aici, chiar in locurile acestea mi-as fi dorit sa ma nasc. De ficare data cand vin, peste tot in aceste locuri simt ca traiesc, simt ca renasc. Romania, Explorati Gradina Carpatilor).

The second commercial⁹ (29 seconds), also begins in the countryside. The same character from the first commercial finds himself at a sheephold, surrounded by sheep. Then he is invited to eat traditional food, polenta (mamaliga) with onions. Two ancient eating customs are presented, first

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bAk9ry0BK8>

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1V5yKzzV5f0>

cutting the polenta with a thread and the second smashing the onion with your hands. Then a shepherd and the main character taste traditional products. Once again the register is moved to the Delta where he fishes. What follows in the same image of him riding his bike on Transfagarasan and a more broader picture of the mountains. In the end a group of people is presented riding horses in a hilly regions.

This time, the message is: *“Here, in these places is where I wish I was born. Every time I come in this places ruled by nature, I feel alive, I feel reborn. Romania, Explore the Carpathian Garden”* (translation from: Aici, chiar in locurile acestea mi-as fi dorit sa ma nasc. De fiecare data cand vin in locurile acestea stapanite de natura, simt ca traiesc, simt ca renasc. . Romania, Explorati Gradina Carpatilor).

Last, but not least, the third commercial¹⁰ (29 seconds) likewise the other two begins in the countryside. The main character is offered something to drink from a traditional clay cup by a young girl. Once again the images with the monastery are presented. Then, the character tries out pottery, a traditional activity, making an old women, from the countryside to laugh at how inexperienced he is. The register shifts to the Infinite Column and then to Sighisoara (a city) and castle Bran. Both have medieval architecture. It ends with him being swiped away to a medieval carnival by a beautiful girl.

The message is: *“Here, in these places is where I wish I was born. Every time I discover the traditions and the culture from these places I feel alive, I feel reborn. Romania, Explore the Carpathian Garden”* (translation from: Aici, chiar in locurile acestea mi-as fi dorit sa ma nasc. De fiecare data cand descopar traditiile si cultura acestor locuri , simt ca traiesc, simt ca renasc. . Romania, Explorati Gradina Carpatilor).

All these three are comprised in a large video¹¹ (2:43), which can be found on YouTube. If looked at carefully the video starts with an older man, who through his journey around Romania rejuvenates. That is why the video has two main character, one older and one younger.

At a first glance this video seems to be targeting foreigner, because when it begins the following message appears: Discover Romania, look with your soul and listen with your heart. However, this video is available only online and the message that is being narrated in the first three is gone.

Now that the commercials have been described, what follows is the questionnaire analysis.

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBV1gJ4jYul>

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLAF6TQHka8>

Questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire as well as the interviews aims at answering the following questions.

1. What is the common perception about national identity amongst Romanians from different generations? What do they identify as primary elements of their national identity?
2. How do Romanians feel about the new "Discover the place where you feel reborn" campaign, part of the "Explore the Carpathian garden" branding actions, in relation with their national identity? Do they feel that the campaign displays the "essence of Romania"? And is there any possibility for this campaign to change the negative opinion that Romanians have about their country?

Data generation

The first part of the survey focuses around the concept of national identity.

The diversity of the respondents was highlighted, by administering questions regarding age, educational level and gender. These are important considering that age might generate a major difference in perceptions and implicitly in answers.

Consequently, in order to avoid a long and perplexing list of elements that form the national identity, in accordance with the theoretical framework, it was decided that national identity consists of the following elements: the orthodox religion, the Romanian language, the country's history, the Romanian popular culture, the country's territory and geographical particularities. In this way respondents had the possibility to choose at least one or all of these elements. By doing so, it can be seen whether a general perception can be identified, or whether major differences determined by age appear.

Furthermore, because some of those terms, like the Romanian popular culture, geographic and territorial particularities, and history might have generated confusion, the possibility to define them through a list of pre-defined elements, was given.

The second part of the questionnaire directs its attention towards the nation brand and the commercial that was attached to the questionnaire. This is the first TV spot launched in summer.

Because the research wanted to see if this new commercial succeeds at transmitting elements pertaining to national identity, respondents were asked which one of the above mentioned national elements are communicated through this video, according to their perception. Also, they were asked what the message "Discover the place where you feel reborn" might mean and if they believe that the

commercial conveys Romanian national identity. Along with these an inquiry regarding the commercial's target group was included.

Since Romania has had several attempts at building a nation brand, I wanted to see which campaigns have stuck to the minds of Romanians, and what are their feelings in regards to the latest national branding campaign. Are they satisfied with the 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' brand, bearing in mind that when the Ministry of Tourism launched it, scandal and hearsay surrounded it. Do they still think Romania needs branding strategies, and most importantly do they think Romania needs a campaign that addresses its inhabitants.

More than that, I wanted to see if the country is characterized more through positive or negative attributes, thinking that a bad opinion can affect national identity. Along these lines, I've asked people in two open questions to state three positive and three negative aspects. Conjointly, I wanted to examine if their perception about Romania can be improved, worsened or if it remains the same after viewing the commercial.

Lastly, taking into account the possibility that travelling might affect people's opinion, I've inquired if their perception about their country was influenced in a bad or good way after touring or living in other countries.

The questionnaire ended by asking people if they would be willing to take part in an interview, which could elaborate more on these issues.

Coding

According to Parasuraman et. Al (2007), coding *“broadly refers to the set of all tasks associated with transforming edited responses into a form that is ready for analysis”* (p. 372). This means that the income data is transformed so that they can be used in the analysis. This step can be difficult and perplex depending on how the questionnaire is structured. Still, if structured questions are used, the data can be easily categorized and thereby, facilitating the analysis.

For this research the questionnaire was created with the help of an online survey generator, SurveyCrest, the website helping also in structuring and automatically analyzing the data.

Since the majority of questions was structured and closed, only two open-ended, the coding process was limited. It was only necessary to review the data for incomplete answers (Parasuraman et al, 2007; Saunders et al, 2009; SurveyCrest, 2013) and to try and put the answers from the two open questions into general categories.

The initial response rate was 304 answers, but after reviewing and eliminating the incomplete ones, a total amount of 216 answers remained.

As previously mentioned, to avoid confusion, the given elements for national identity were: the orthodox religion, the Romanian language, the country's history, the Romanian popular culture, the country's territory and geographical particularities.

The popular culture concept was appointed with the following elements: traditions, folklore, traditional cuisine, spirituality and church, while history in relation with national identity was researched with the help of the four major periods, described in the theory section.

Because Romanian society is an agrarian one, aspect also debated within the theoretical framework, by the country's territory and geographical particularities, this research understands types of landscapes that are more predominant, namely: natural and wild landscapes, urban landscapes, rural landscapes.

For the question with reference to the message from the TV spot, the slogan was associated with three possible meanings which are in connection with the concept of national identity:

Return to nature → Geographical particularities

Return to Romanian culture → History, language

Return to traditions and customs → Romanian popular culture, orthodox religion

In order to interpret the questionnaire results, the following scale will be implemented.

For question where there are multiple choices to opt for, the first three most chosen options will be taken into consideration. In case a question has several choices to pick from, including the all the above mentioned elements option, and if this appears to have the highest percentage, then the next three most decided upon answers will be taken into account, in a decreasing order. Furthermore, in the situation when the question states to pick at least two options, all the answers will be analyzed and ordered from the highest to the lowest values. Since the respondents had the possibility to grade each option from 1 to 5, the same applies to the question concerning the ranking of historical events and the impact the commercial has generated on people's perception. In these cases where a scale could not be explicated, the answers were chosen in an ascending order, the ones with the highest and lowest values, being considered.

Finally, the last question provided respondents with the possibility to agree or disagree with the fact that their perception about Romania could have been altered after seeing other cultures. All the answers will be ranked in a descending manner.

Analysis

As presented in the methodology part, the survey section will have a deductive approach. In consequence, based on what is known (theory) a series of hypotheses will be formulated which will be subjected to empirical scrutiny. In other words, based on the numbers extracted from the results, these will either be confirmed or infirmed.

At the same time, considering that the sample is biased, meaning that it cannot represent the entire population Mangione's (1995) point of view will bore to mind. The author proposes the following classification for response rates, that can construe if they are acceptable or not. Hence, with an initial response rate of 304 answers out of which only 216 were complete, this means that 88 responses were eliminated, due to incompleteness, leading to a 71% response rate, classified as very good (70-85 %) by the same author (Mangione, 1995).

$$216: 304 = 0.71 * 100 = 71 \%$$

Thereupon, with the research question in mind, the hypotheses are as follows:

H1: All the elements displayed as pertaining to national identity will be identified in a majority.

H2: The commercial conveys Romanian national identity

H3: The 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' brand is the most known brand that Romania has had so far

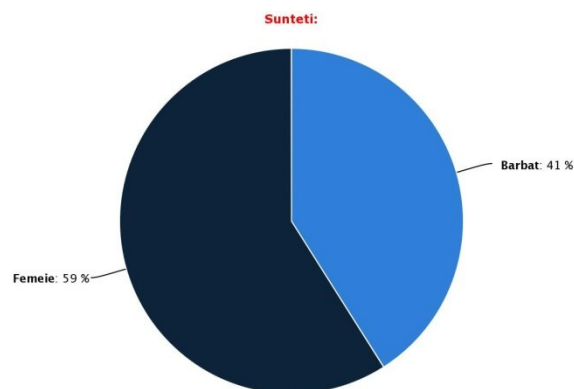
H4: Romanians are satisfied with their national brand

H5: Romania is described mostly by negative attributes

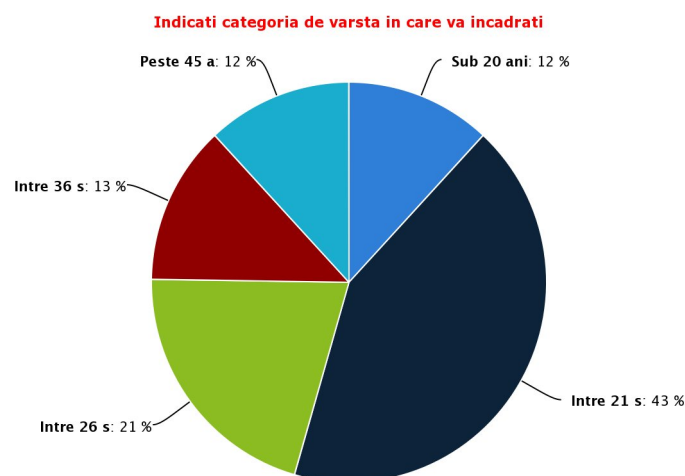
H6: Considering that Romania is a former communist country, people will identify that the communist period is the most impacting for national identity

Results

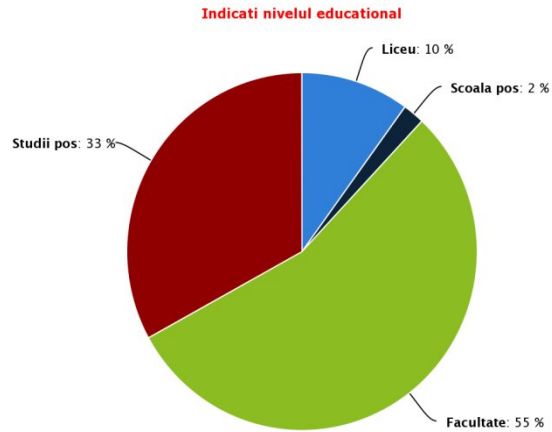
The survey results (Appendix 1) show that 59% of the respondents are women, while 41 % men.



Age was divided into 5 sections, and the results are as follows: 12% under the age of 20; 43% between 21-25 years old; 21% between 26-35 years old; 13% between 36-45 years old; and 12% over 45 years old. Seeing that the majority of answers belong to the 21-25 age category, fits with the selected sample method.

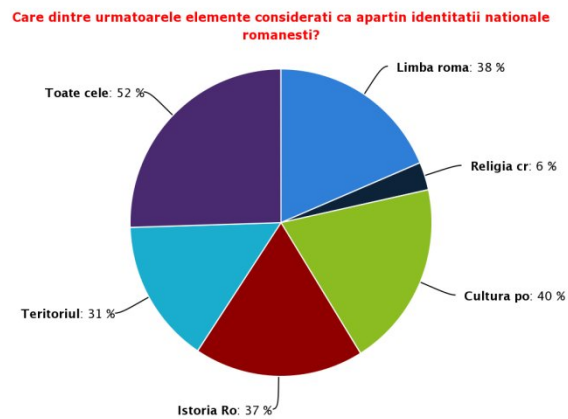


As for the educational level: 55% had graduated or were still in college, 33% had postgraduate studies, 10% high school and only 2% did not have any studies after high school, or have attended professional courses.



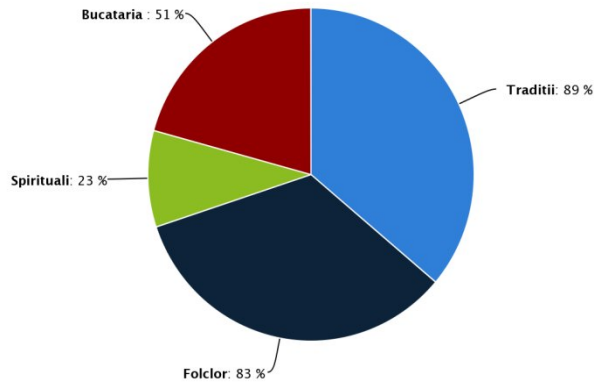
When asked which elements they believe that form Romanian national identity, results were:

- Romanian language: 38 %
- Religion: 6%
- Popular Romanian culture: 40%
- History: 37%
- Geography and territory: 31%
- All the above: 51%



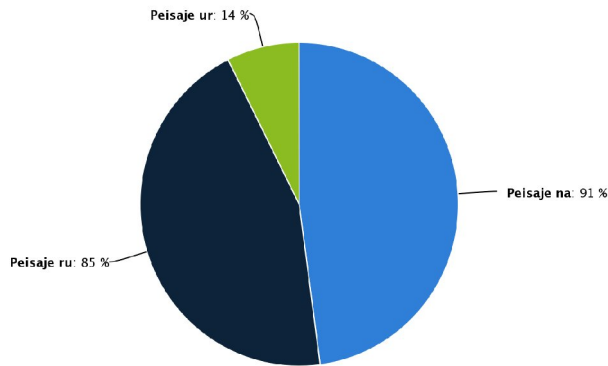
Elements defining for the Romanian popular culture were: 89% traditions, 83% folklore, 23% church and spirituality, 51% traditional cuisine.

Care dintre elementele de mai jos le considerati a fi definitorii pentru cultura populara? Selectati, cel putin doua.



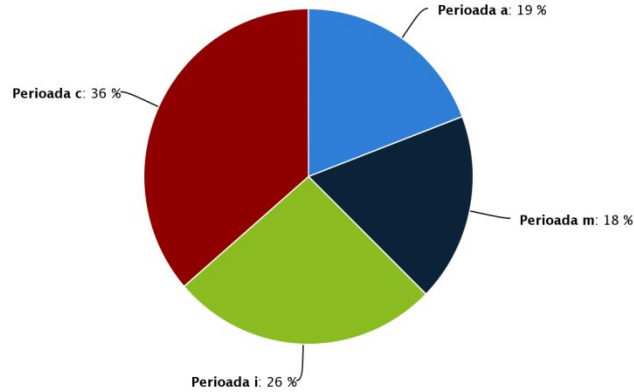
According to the responses, when referring to Romania's territory and geographical particularities, people think of them as being composed of the following types of landscapes: 91% natural and wild landscapes, 85% rural landscapes and 14% urban landscapes.

Cand se face referire la geografia si particularitatile teritoriale ale Romaniei, care dintre urmatoarele elemente vi se par a fi caracteristice? Selectati cel putin doua.



When thinking of which history periods have had an impact on national identity, the responses are: 19% Ancient Daco-Roman period; 18% Medieval period, 26% Interwar period, 36% Communist period.

Cand va ganditi la istoria Romaniei, care perioada considerati ca a avut cel mai mare impact asupra identitatii nationale romanesti?



When asked to rate with a number from 1 to 5 the following historical events in relation to national identity the results are as follows:

NUMBER 1: 41% the fall of the monarchy; 19% the fall of communism; 68% the adherence to the EU.

NUMBER 2: 38% the fall of the monarchy; 18% the fall of communism; 60% the adherence to the EU.

NUMBER 3: 57% the fall of the monarchy; 27% the fall of communism; 39% the adherence to the EU.

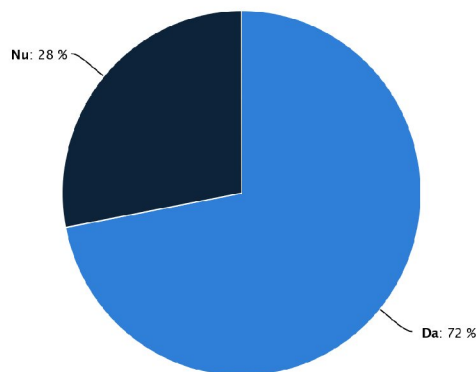
NUMBER 4: 37% the fall of the monarchy; 55% the fall of communism; 22% the adherence to the EU.

NUMBER 5: 32% the fall of the monarchy; 77% the fall of communism; 23% the adherence to the EU.

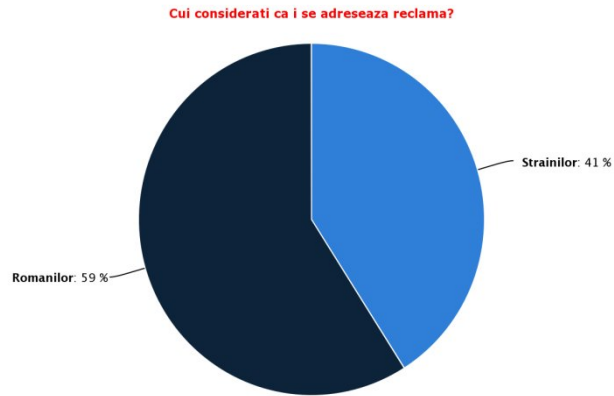
For this research only the results from number 1 and 5 will be taken into account.

Out of all the respondents, 72 % have seen the commercial before answering to the survey and 28% have not.

Ati mai vazut spotul publicitar, inainte ca acesta sa va fie prezentat prin intermediul acestui chestionar?



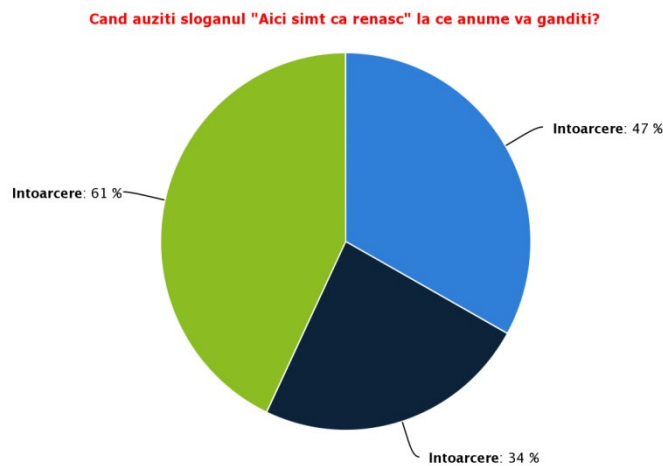
59% of them said that the commercial is addressed to Romanians, while 41% to foreigners.



From the list of given elements, they said that the commercial conveys them as follows:

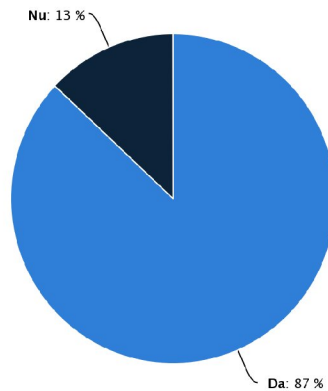
- Romanian language: 16 %
- Religion: 31%
- Popular Romanian culture: 50%
- History: 15%
- Geography and territory: 70%
- All the above: 25%

When hearing the Slogan 'Discover the place where you feel reborn', 47% said that it meant returning to nature; 34% returning to Romanian culture and 61% returning to traditions and customs.



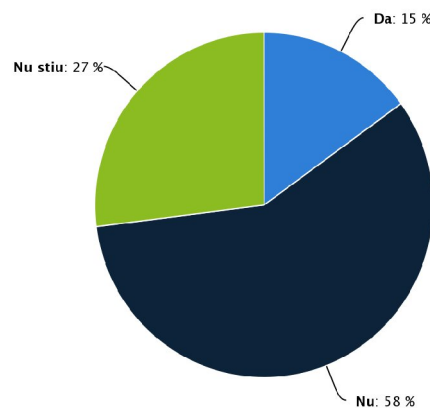
Also, 87% of them feel that the commercial conveys elements pertaining to national identity, while 13% do not.

Considerati ca spotul din chestionar transmite elemente ce tin de identitatea nationala?



Asked if the commercial would change their opinion about their country, if they knew that Romanians are the target group: 58% said No, 15% Yes and 27% don't know.

Daca ati sti ca reclama din chestionar se adreseaza romanilor, v-ar putea aceasta schimba opinia pe care o aveti despre strategiile de branding ale Romaniei?



To research the impact that the commercial has generated on their perception about Romania, respondents were asked to rate with numbers from 1 to 5 the following answers. The options exclude one another and respondents were informed about this aspect.

NUMBER 1: 67% my perception about Romania improved; 33% my perception remained the same; 0% my perception got worse

NUMBER 2: 100% my perception about Romania improved; 0% my perception remained the same; 0% my perception got worse .

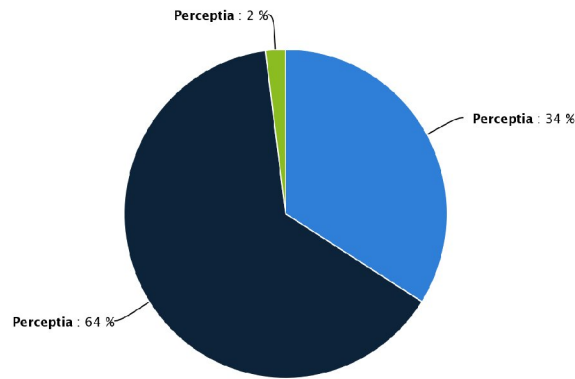
NUMBER 3: 61% my perception about Romania improved; 39% my perception remained the same; 0% my perception got worse .

NUMBER 4: 53% my perception about Romania improved; 45% my perception remained the same; 2% my perception got worse .

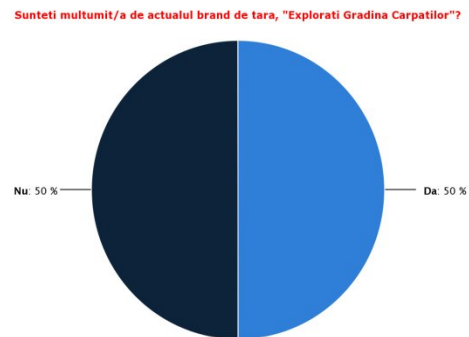
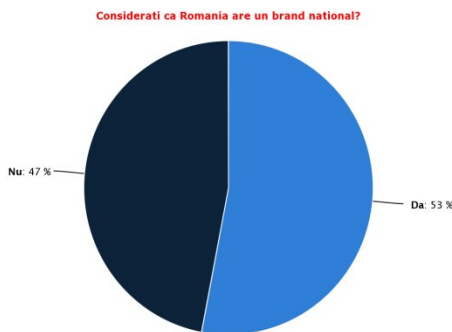
NUMBER 5: 20% my perception about Romania improved; 78% my perception remained the same; 2% my perception got worse .

In this case 64% of the answers rated the second option, the one that stated that their perception remained the same, 34% the one that stated an improvement in perception and 2% the remaining one.

Pe o scara de la 1 la 5, 1 fiind cel mai mic si 5 cel mai mare, notati impactul pe care reclama l-a produs asupra perceptiei dumneavoastra in ceea ce priveste Romania.



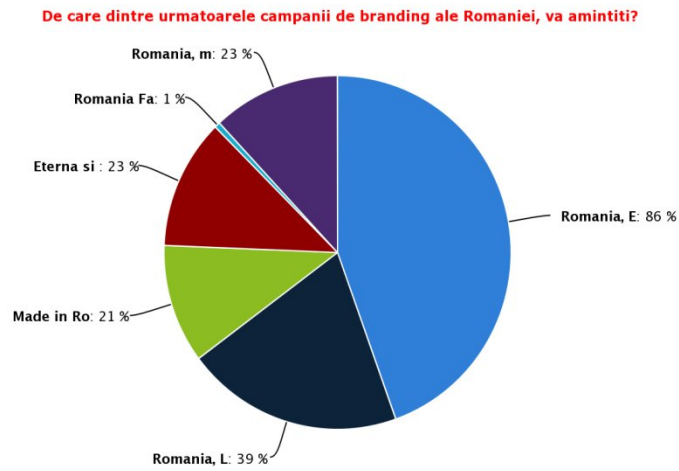
53% of the respondents consider that Romania has a national brand, while 47% said that it does not. Also, when asked if satisfied with their current nation brand 'Explore the Carpathian garden' 50% said yes and 50% said no.



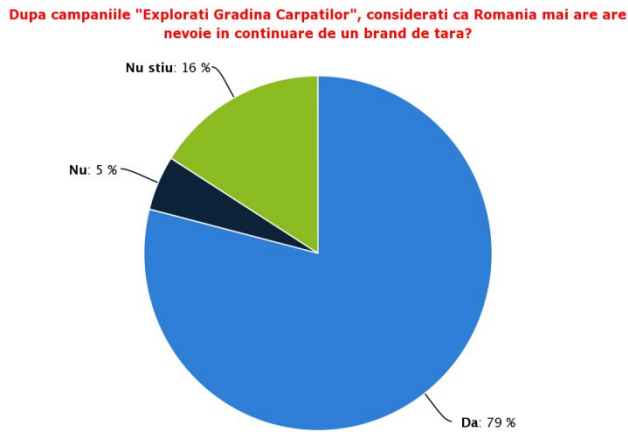
All previous branding campaigns were listed and respondents were asked to choose the ones they remember, generating the following results:

1. Explore the Carpathian Garden: 86%
2. Romania, Land of choice: 39%

3. Made in Romania: 21%
4. The Eternal and Fascinating Romania: 23%
5. Romania Fabulospirit: 1%
6. Romania, always surprising: 23%

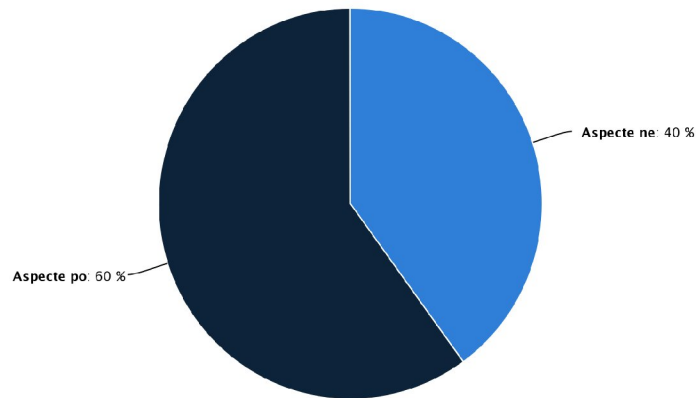


Furthermore, after the ‘Explore the Carpathian Garden’ campaigns, 79% of the respondents still feel that Romania needs a nation brand, 16% don’t know and 5% believe that Romania does not need a brand.



In consonance with the answers, in 60% of the cases Romania can be described through positive attributes and 40% through negative ones.

Considerati ca Romania poate fi caracterizata mai mult prin:



The two open –ended questions asked people to name three positive and three negative aspects about Romania. All the answers have been placed into general categories designed by the researcher, in order to identify a pattern.

Hence, the positive attributes (Appendix 2) were divided into 4 main categories: Traditions/Customs/Culture; Nature/Natural elements/Geography; People features/ Attributes that describe Romanians; Other.

The negative ones (Appendix 3) were partitioned in the 4 main categories as well: Bad government/Corruption; Social/ society problems; People features/ Attributes that describe Romanians; Other.

Finally, when asked if they have lived or travelled abroad, 76% said they have, while 24% said they have not. Out of the ones who have travelled:

19% agreed that their perception about Romania was influenced in a positive way, 20% approved in a negative way.

32% partially approved that their perception about Romania was influenced in a positive way, while 28% partially approved in a negative way.

19% disagreed that their perception about Romania was influenced in a positive way, 19% disagreed in a negative way.

6% did not know if their perception about Romania was influenced in a positive way, while 10% partially did not know if in a negative way.

The last question, asked people if they would want to take part in a Skype interview, generating an initial agreement of 27% (27 responses).

Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned analysis of the data, the hypotheses will be tested to see if they will be confirmed or unconfirmed according to the general answers of the questionnaire.

H1: All the elements displayed as pertaining to national identity will be identified in a majority.-CONFIRMED

51% of the respondents identified national identity as being composed of: the orthodox religion, the Romanian language, the country's history, the Romanian popular culture, the country's territory and geographical particularities. In this way respondents had the possibility to choose at least one or all of these elements, which confirms the hypothesis. Despite all the transition periods Romania has been through, national identity has not change, more than half of the respondents perceiving it in the same way.

The next three responses in a descending order are: Romanian popular culture (40%), language (38%) and history (37%), which can infer the fact that Romania is still an agrarian society, who places value on traditions and customs and that history did play an important role in how national identity was shaped.

H2: The commercial conveys Romanian national identity.-CONFIRMED

87% of the respondents agreed that the commercial succeeds in transmitting elements that pertain to the country's national identity. At the same time, the three most identified elements in the commercial were: territory and geographical particularities (70%), Romanian popular culture (50%) and the Orthodox religion (31%). Moreover, considering that by Romanian popular culture, people understand: traditions (89%), folklore (83%) and traditional cuisine and that Romania consists mainly of natural and wild (91%) and rural (85%) landscapes, from the previous description of the commercials, it seems that they have managed to emphasize these elements.

H3: The 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' brand is the most known brand that Romania has had so far.-CONFIRMED

More than half of the respondents (86%) said that they remember about this campaign. However, considering that when it was released the national brand did not encounter a positive reaction, this might be a positive thing, which leads to the next hypothesis.

H4: Romanians are satisfied with their national brand-UNCONFIRMED

As it can be seen from the above graphics, 50% are satisfied with the actual national brand, while 50% are not. The tie is broke by the fact that 79% still feel that Romania needs a branding

strategy. Additionally, in spite of the fact that 59% said that the commercial addresses Romanians, a big percentage (86%) feel that Romania still needs a campaign for nationals, the present one failing in creating an impact. By rating with 5, the highest number available, 78% of the respondents stated that their perception about Romania remained unchanged after seeing the commercial. Plus, after revealing the fact that this campaign has a Romanian target group, 58% restated that their perception about the country remains unaltered by it.

So it means that Romania still has some unresolved issues that need to be looked into. All these will be discussed in the interview section of the analysis.

H5: Romania is described mostly by negative attribute-UNCONFIRMED

In several other researches, mentioned in the theoretical part of this paper, Romanians felt that their country can be described mostly in a negative way, a fact that it appears to have changed over time, considering that 60% of the respondents think that Romania has more positive attributes than negative ones.

All the same, as the researcher, I wanted to see what positive and negative issues the respondents name in regards to this country, therefore I've asked them to state 3 elements in each categories. After analyzing all the answers in trying to divide them into section, I have identified the following patterns.

It appears that traditions and customs, still very well preserved in the countryside, are two major positive aspects about Romania, as well as the landscapes and the geography. The fact that the country has a strategic geographical positioning and all types of landforms, can only be beneficial. Likewise, people are another positive feature. Romanians describe themselves as hospitable, warm and friendly people, who know how to have fun and who are very intelligent and easily adaptable to harsh living conditions. It seems that all these, plus history together with a rich culture can transform this country in one of the most beautiful in Europe.

On the downside, most of the negative elements are connected to a bad government and with corruption acts. Corruption and theft along with bad infrastructure have been the most named bad aspect about Romania. It appears that because of a capable government the country and its citizens have to go through hard living conditions. The country lacks in a good educational, medical and law system. The economy is undeveloped and together with it the infrastructure is a mess. All in all the country is undeveloped and some people, like the illiterate ones or the roma citizens add to this bad image. Additionally, Romanians do not know how to promote their own country, which in turn causes a bad image at an international level.

H6: Considering that Romania is a former communist country, people will identify that the communist period is the most impacting for national identity-CONFIRMED

In 36% of the cases, communism was identified as the period with the most impact on the Romanian national identity, followed by the interwar period (26%). To support this option, 77% of the respondents graded the fall of the communist regime, with the highest mark, 5, when asked which event has shaped the most the country's identity. The fact that communism still has reminiscent, 25 years later since the Revolution, might also suggest that Romania hasn't passed the transition phase towards the West and towards modernity, causing confusion in how the country should be promoted.

Out of the 6 hypotheses that were formulated, only two were unconfirmed, indicating that the country might have started to steer in a different direction, a direction which in time might generate to so much desired change.

For a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena occurring within the country, the answers from the interviews will be debated in the next section.

Interview analysis

Previously, it was mentioned that an initial number of 27 people agreed to participate to the interviews, but after they were contacted again, only 11 were still willing to take part and to answer my questions.

The average interview lasts about 20-25 minutes, the shortest being 16 minutes long and the lengthiest almost 47. Out of all the 11 participants, 2 were men and 9 were women, and they have been grouped with the help of the age category used in the survey. Their names and ages are displayed in the below table.

NAME	21-24 yo	25-34 yo	35-45 yo	+45 yo
Ionut	24			
Andra	24			
Oana	24			
Manuela		25		
Sorin		27		
Mihaela		33		
Alina				46
Victoria				63

Liliana				53
Dana			42	
Irina			37	

The translated transcripts are in the Appendix section, and the following pages will elaborate more on the responses, adopting an inductive approach. In other words, new hypotheses will be formulated after drawing a general picture.

National identity and history

Because I was interested in obtaining a definition of national identity from the respondents, not just the one I have provided in the survey, I have started the interviews by asking people to tell what they understand by national identity.

Apparently, for the majority it represents something that can distinguish nations between them, the majority of the elements I have based my question on, being also mentioned by them: *“national identity is something that can define a nation: language, customs, traditions, and traditional costumes, everything that is related to folklore”* (Mihaela, Appx, 7); *“I think it’s a unitary concept made out of our history, our language and traditions, out of our territory and our culture”* (Liliana, Appx, 9); *“I think national identity is the image of a country, a whole that encompasses tradition, customs, culture, language, history and politics”* (Oana, Appx, 12).

I did not want to advance the discussion, without clarifying what exactly this concept means to them and how it has developed throughout history. Reason for which I have taken each interviewee’s answered questionnaire and inquired during the interviews why they have chosen a certain historical period as representative for the Romanian national identity.

As it happens, the interviewees’ options reflect the questionnaire’s results. None of them have chosen the ancient Daco-Roman period, their attention being directed towards the remaining three: Medieval, Interwar and Communism period.

The interesting fact is that only two of them have chosen communism, the others opting either for the Medieval, either for the Interwar, two ages that are interconnected. This is interesting because unlike the questionnaire where it was difficult to obtain an age balance, for the interviews each category had the same amount of respondents (exception the 36-45 group, where instead of 3, there were only 2 persons interviewed). So, from the interviews’ point of view it can be inferred that age does not

determine the perception upon national identity. Then again, this is a qualitative methods, there are only 11 participants and the results cannot be extended at a larger scale.

When asked how the medieval period has contributed in shaping the national identity, an agreement on the fact that during that time Romania's unification process has began, was observable: *"That is when the foundation of our people was laid, that is when the principalities were united. From my perspective, that is when we started to truly call ourselves Romanians"* (Liliana, Appx, 9); *"I think this period influences the way I would describe Romanians today."* (Andra, Appx, 10); *"as far as I'm concerned, this is the period in which our national identity was formed. When I state this, I think about the fact that during that time the three main Romanian principalities were united. This union was a desideratum which these three principalities had for a very long time. It is an event which materialized our ancestors' efforts. A first attempt at this union was first made during Mihai the Greta's reign and it finally succeeded in 1848, giving birth to the Romanian state, to Romanian language and to all the traditions known even today"* (Irina, Appx, 11).

Regarding the Intewar period, I was able to notice that in most of the cases it got confused with the so called 'La belle epoque', those 30 years before World War I, which also continued to bring a development in Romania after the war was over. However, the peak of this 'Golden age' can be traced prior to the war. Thus, it appeared that when they were describing the Interwar period, the interviewees had the tendency to refer to something that had happened in earlier years: *"from my perspective, in that period Romania had reached its highest development point in various domains. People who lived back then were more educated, other countries had a better perception about Romania, and I find it Romania's best period [...]Romanians were famous abroad for their education and intellect and the country was also famous for its politicians. In other words, Romania was well known and appreciated [...]I think the Interwar period is sort of a boom from all points of view. All these elements from medieval and ancient times gathered in time and reached their apogee in the interwar years"* (Victoria, Appx, 13); *that's the period in which we defined ourselves from all points of view. We took over a lot of stuff from abroad, and I believe that was Romania's glorious period. That's when we improved our language, our gastronomy, our fashion. That's my opinion. We've borrowed new mentalities and we've improved the Romanian one"* (Mihaela, Appx, 7).

If in the medieval period the contribution to national identity came from a political perspective, this time, for the Interwar years, in came from a cultural and economical point of view. The Romanian culture developed greatly with the help of foreign influences: *"I think we took it over (referring to a borrowed mentality from abroad) in a beautiful way. I am not sure we can truly call these mentalities*

and values as truly Romanian, but they sure took ground here and nowadays they define us” (Mihaela, Appx 7).

The communist period on the other hand, was perceived as still influencing national identity, if the concept is regarded as something that differentiates: *“from what I’ve spoken with foreigners, because they are the ones not knowing Romania very well, the first thing they say is something related to communism. It might also be a probability for all of Eastern Europe to be associated with communism and with Russia, and a lot of them remember about Ceausescu, some about Nadia Comaneci, but most of them about the communist age” (Sorin, Appx, 27); “ it left some traces and some erroneous mentalities still present today and regrets about the past, because a lot of people are still saying that during that time it was better, since everybody had a job and the regime helped them, so on and so forth” (Ionut, Appx. 5).*

Despite these points of view, others believed that against all the oppression endured from the regime, Romanian national identity managed to stay strong and was not destroyed by communist conceptions:

“I do however think that our national identity preserved itself during that time, in spite of all the oppressions. Basically, Romanians did not have the freedom of speech, they were not allowed to travel abroad, they did not have access to information, but I think these interdictions did not succeed in destroying our national identity. On the contrary, as I’ve already said, it managed to survive. Furthermore, these interdictions generated a strong, unified feeling amongst Romanians” (Irina, Appx 11); “somewhat I still tend to believe that the communist period had the most impact [...]because traditions and culture were repressed. And when repression takes place, people tend to overcome these barriers and I think this sort of helped in achieving and creating our current national identity” (Oana, Appx, 12).

Romania still transitioning?

Because just as one of the interviewees stated *“communism is the most recent moment, the closest to the present” (Oana, Appx,24)*, I shifted the discussion towards this period and towards the impact that its fall might have produced. The main reason for doing so, was so to observe if people feel like the transition period towards democracy and modernization has ended.

From the responses I have gathered what appears to describe Romanian society after the Ceausescu regime is a contradiction.

On one hand there are the positive aspects that communism fall brought: *“the communism fall means winning freedom: freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of organization, freedom of having an economic initiative”* (Alina, Appx, 1); *“this fall had a huge impact or at least a decisive impact for each and every one of us, because with it we were able to know another world, a world we weren’t able to get to know during that period, because we didn’t have sources of inspiration or other types of sources that would have enabled us to know something else apart from that enclosure offered by the communist regime”* (Dana, Appx, 8).

And on the other hand there is the downside of this freedom: *“Romania passed from one extreme to the other. Right now the country is at a total opposite in comparison with the communist period. This is not necessarily a good thing. All this libertinage that best describes what happens in Romania nowadays is sort of a consequence of this fall. I think that we have a lot excesses, due to the shortcomings from the communist period”* (Andra, Appx. 10); *“it’s just that this fall has widely opened some gates towards the West, towards the exterior, and instead of adopting positive things from that part of the world; we’ve taken over everything that is bad”* (Victoria, Appx. 13).

Despite the fact that communism was *“of a dark and poisonously age for Romania”* (Liliana, Appx. 9), it seems that the perception towards this hardly achieved freedom, is not entirely positive, since *“Romanians did not understand democracy, they way they should have had[.].a new generation came, a generation that isn’t that concerned with traditions and culture. Sometimes, they don’t even know the history of our country. I for instance belong to an older generation. I lived through communism and through its fall and the transition period and I can say that perhaps what is important for my generation, what meant something for us, it might not have the same meaning and value for youngsters. The younger generation does not attribute the same importance to traditions, sometimes they even think they are rubble”* (Liliana, Appx. 9).

Not to mention that the fall of communism did generate a positive image for Romania at an international level: *“If I were to have an external approach, from what I’ve seen abroad, the general opinion is that we have murdered our ruler. From this perspective, foreigners are confused. They don’t know whether to joke about this or to say wow you have had the courage to do this, or they simply ask what is wrong with our kind, why did you do this, wasn’t there any other solutions?. There are a lot of stories about the revolution and communism. In the end, a lot of countries have gone through communism, not just Romania”* (Manuela, Appx. 14); *“I feel that the fall of the communist regime had a negative contribution to our national identity because the majority of western countries consider that what happened in Romania is not quite normal, and I agree. We are the only country that spilled a lot of*

blood in removing the communist regime, in comparison with other countries from the former communist bloc, that managed this without uproar” (Ionut, Appx. 5).

The contradiction is present even in assumption on how Romania progressed in democracy. When asked if the country was able to pick up its development from the point where it was left when the regime established itself, some feel that: *“from my perspective, even after the communism fall our national identity remained the same, it did not get lost. It’s true that the period that followed was a confusing and chaotic one, making people feel baffled, but slowly this feeling of confusion vanished. Also, if we are referring strictly to national identity, definitely this was preserved and after things calmed down it started to further develop, thanks to all that newly gained freedom. Thanks to access to literature and culture, to art forms which during the Ceausescu years were diminished, Romania started once again to develop, culturally speaking, and to regain its rightful place in Europe” (Irina, Appx. 11); “we were able to return to the values and traditions easier than we could have done it during communism and more efficiently and with sincerity in conditions of freedom, and how each and every one wanted to” (Alina, Appx. 1). While others believe that: “in my opinion, I think we are still in a transitory phase. The transition period is still going on. We weren’t able to move on; we still don’t know what we want and how we want it. Or at least, if a few of us know what we want, we cannot achieve it [...] it’s like the majority is living in a nebula. There’s also the concern for the day, that’s about to come and the hard living conditions. Maybe this concern makes them feel like this. One thing is for sure, I think that we are still in a transition period and this affects us greatly [...] we haven’t found a road that’s ours. A lot of years have passed since the fall of the communist regime and we should have passed this transition period, to have an economic growth, like other countries, even though we will never reach their level, but at least to have a visible starting point, which in Romania’s case can’t be seen. Also, I don’t know how much longer this transition will take” (Liliana, Appx. 9).*

Moreover, since 2007, when it became a member of the EU, Romania embarked on a new journey, on adapting to EU regulations and laws, which might affect its national identity and put her through a new transition stage.

With this possibility in mind, I’ve asked respondents how they feel about this membership and whether or not Romanian traditions and values will be altered, or will disappear because of this.

This time there was a major consensus that: *“our traditions and customs, our holidays will remain as they are, because in the end, we are Romanians and these traditions are part of who we are [...]. There is a possibility for Romanian gastronomy to suffer some changes, in the sense that some traditional products may not correspond to EU regulations. The EU imposes certain quality standards;*

therefore some traditional products may disappear because they are not in accordance with these standards” (Irina, Appx. 11); “I don’t think that our traditions will suffer changes because now we are a member of the EU. I think this change is more related to people and from my point of view; our traditions should be kept and made known abroad as well. I don’t know how much influence the EU might have. On one side, we did adopt a lot of holidays from the West, but on the other side, I see that our holidays, our traditions are still being kept” (Oana, Appx. 12); “Normally speaking, our traditions and our folklore should resist. Furthermore, I don’t think this modernization will catch on that quickly. For most parts of its history Romania was an agrarian society and I think it will remain so in the future” (Victoria, Appx. 13).

The above illustrated, can suggest that Romania has not found a stable path and that it is still trying to exist transition.

Do Romanians feel reborn?

If Romania is truly trying to rebrand itself, to shift towards a stable communication and implicitly towards a stable nation brand, then maybe it has to prove that the communist era has ended for good, just like one of the interviewees said: *“ East European countries are gray. The overall perception about these countries is that everything in gray, that people are poor, that there isn’t anything to see there Romania is not just a former communist country and people need to get over the whole misconception that we are all poor, that we are all around Europe begging on the streets or that we are only good at picking up strawberries and oranges. We have moved passed that phase” (Manuela, Appx. 14).*

But how can Romania promote itself internationally, when its own citizens are dissatisfied with the national brand and feel that there are not enough efforts put into branding and promotion strategies.

Maybe it is a good idea to start building the brand internally, by targeting the locals, a strategy that Romania is currently employing with the “Discover the place where you feel reborn”.

This time I wanted to see how Romanians judge all three commercials, not just the one from the questionnaire. Apart from whether or not they contain elements about national identity, which according to the questionnaire they do, I wanted to find out if they liked the commercials, if the message was able to transmit the feeling of rebirth or not.

Firstly, I’ve why Romania needed a campaign with this type of message, a message that would symbolize the return to traditions, to nature, to culture.

The main reason seems to be the younger generation, who is according to the received answers doesn't know, or has forgotten about Romanians values, about traditions, who is more concerned with the present and has forgotten about the past: "our traditions and customs have survived for a long time and it would be a pity for them to disappear in the future. Therefore, they need to be promoted and restored in the people's mind" (Victoria, Appx.13); *"Romanians don't know anymore what national identity means. We need to go back to our roots, to see where we started from and at the same time encourage others to discover us, to visit our country, and by others I mean people outside Romania "* (Oana, Appx. 12); *"perhaps from time to time, it would be necessary for some to remember where they come from, to remember about their roots, because sometimes this capitalist fever we are experiencing today makes us forget where our roots and it makes us forget about our heritage"* (Dana, Appx. 8). So such a campaign was needed and welcomed.

Furthermore, when asked how they find these new TV spots, compared to what they remembered in regards to former branding campaigns, in turned out that the feedback was positive: *"they transmit elements of national identity. In these commercials I have seen landscapes, works of art, traditions and Romanian foods and from this point of view I find them very good. In less than a minute each commercial succeeds in transmitting everything that's important. Even the music in the background is specific Romanian; it makes you think about Romanian traditions "*(Oana, Appx. 12); *"they are really good. I mean they really instill that urge to get out and visit one of these beautiful regions"* (Sorin, Appx. 6); *"these commercials seem very elaborated and representative, they catch what's really essential"* (Mihaela, Appx. 7).

But if the commercials are better, they transmit everything that needs to be transmitted about Romania, if the message has a purpose, that to remember of the country's traditions and culture, then why did the questionnaire say something different? Why did the commercials fails in producing an impact, because the majority of respondents stated that the commercial from the survey did not succeed in changing their opinion about their country. What went wrong?

Taking into account the answers from the interviews, the target audience is not the right one. Most of the interviewees initially thought that these commercials were made for foreigners and not for Romanians. They do not bring any element of surprise to them, they know everything the commercials present, so therefore their attitude cannot be changed. However, with this new campaign an improvement for the national brand is seen: *"it's not that it's a bad message; it's just that it's more applicable to foreigners. It's a good way for them to get to know our country. I think that for me and for the older generation it's sort of redundant. I know everything I have seen in the TV spot"* (Liliana, Appx.

9); *“if we are talking about a campaign addressed to foreigners, then it’s because Romania is a country worth seeing and visiting, and because at the time being Romania is badly perceived by other nations”* (Irina, Appx. 11); *“to get tourists from abroad to come and visit Romania, you need to show them some wow aspects and these commercials do this. They show Transfagaras and nature and they show how beautiful Romania is [...] it seems that they are trying to fix the damage that was done”*; (Manuela, Appx. 14); *“I think it’s a good idea to promote it to Romanians as well, but I think the emphasis should be placed on foreigners, because we need to attract tourists from other countries”* (Liliana, Appx. 9)

What is missing- The good and the bad about Romania

“The landscapes are very beautiful, everybody knows this, at least I, as a Romanian citizen, know that my country is very beautiful. But, those landscapes can be found on the internet as well, if somebody searches, so they are not enough. The idea was to bring something authentic, apart from some images and a short narration in the back” (Ionut, Appx. 5); *“Let’s say we would have had a great national brand and great strategies in promoting Romania, it would all have been in vain. What use of all these, if when they come and visit our country they encounter a bad infrastructure, they break their cars on our roads. I believe that a good infrastructure counts a lot, because if you ask a foreigner who has been to Romania about his or her experience here, a complaint about infrastructure will be the first thing you will hear from them”* (Liliana, Appx. 9).

So if the campaigns were to be launched internationally, it might generate an impact. But is that enough? From the answers it can be inferred that it is not. You cannot just invest in advertising and neglect other aspects, like infrastructure or cleanliness. In this case, the negative and positive aspects that were requested in the questionnaire come to support this affirmation.

Just like it was inferred from the questionnaire, Romania has its beautiful parts like the food, traditions, natural landscapes, the people are welcoming and hospitable:

“Romanian food is famous and I think it is very tasty. Because our traditional costumes are distinguished and you can still find these costumes in certain regions preserved over time” (Mihaela, Appx. 7); *“I deem hospitality as a characteristic of the Romanian people, just as well as altruism. As for the natural beauty, this aspect cannot be contested, only the ones who haven’t visited Romania can doubt the fact our country is truly beautiful”* (Dana, Appx. 8); *“As I’ve said, Romanians are very welcoming and hospitable; they are that type of people who try and help you when you have a problem, who welcome you to their table even if they don’t know you. The landscapes are extremely beautiful in the mountains, in the Danube Delta etc. No one can contest their beauty. And traditions, because they are a part of our culture*

[...]our dances are part of our tradition, they come from ancient times, for example the Calus dance. This dance is specific to certain regions, it is danced only by men, it has a certain significance and it's still being practiced, both in rural and urban environments" (Irina, Appx. 11); "landscape itself. When you go in the mountains, there are breathtaking landscapes, or at the seaside. Others have a seaside as well, but we have them all in the same place. It's true, when you travel abroad, you find this modern and civilized world, everything is arranged and clean things we lack, especially in the rural regions. But, looking at Romania as an ensemble, I think it is way more beautiful. As for traditions, I think our traditions are one of a kind, and they should be kept and preserved. Our traditional customs and traditional dances, they have a certain charm. In regards to hospitality, this aspect cannot be contested. I have never seen people so hospitable as Romanians no matter where I've traveled" (Liliana, Appx. 9).

But, at the same time, it has to deal with severe issues like corruption, bad infrastructure, unemployment and misery, all caused by a bad government: *"Sadly, it seems that we have struggled in overcoming them, taking into account that they have been critical issues for over 20 years. In all this time corruption has been amplified and the political class is to be blamed. Politicians are the ones who instead of destroying this phenomenon let it take scale. Hopefully, someday we will get rid of it" (Irina, Appx.11).*

Moreover, recurrently Romanians are confused with gypsies, and all these can add to the already poor image Romania has, not just internationally but amongst national as well, making branding campaigns to pass unnoticed and to be considered a waste of money.

"the reason why Romanians are sometimes against their own country is because of the politicians. They disagree with how they run things, taking into account that if properly exploited, our country can offer a lot of possibilities to our people. But, things are not like this. A lot of Romanians are either forced to leave their country to find work someplace else, either they have to stay in Romania and deal with all the struggles. Maybe this is why some bad mouth their country. Still, I don't agree with their attitude, it's not ok to generalize and to say that everything about Romania is bad [...]We are basically put together with Romanians that do really bad stuff when going abroad. Sometimes they even equal us with roma citizens. Politicians because corruption is blooming right now and this also leads to stereotypes. We are being labeled in a certain way because of the government and the people who are leading this country, despite the fact that we are different. Not all Romanians are corrupt." (Oana, Appendix, 12);

What should be done?

First of all, the general feeling I got while talking with the respondents is that Romania should continue in this direction with promoting the country. This campaign should absolutely be launched internationally. Not just on the internet, but on actual foreign TV stations, to have the message translated, for people of outside Romania to understand what stands behind all those images with mountains and villages, to understand that traditions and customs constitute the foundation of the Romanian people along with all the other elements that form the national identity:

“To continue with these campaigns, because they are better than the old ones, you can see an improvement, you can see an emphasis on things that really matter, but they need to continue with the campaign, there is still work to be done in this area” (Liliana, Appx. 9).

As for the negative aspects, people still hope that one day they will disappear, until then Romania is still their home:

“I feel at ease here where my home is, where I can speak my own language, where I can recognize everything around me, where my friends are, where I like the food, in one word where I have stability. I think stability makes me feel better” (Mihaela, Appx. 7); “Travelling abroad, you get a huge impact from humans, and Romanians have a warm and welcoming nature. Last but not least, coming back to Romania means coming back home, which gives us a good feeling” (Irina, Appx 11); *“no matter what, I love my country and when I came back this is my home”* (Liliana, Appx. 9).

Since the first of the analysis started with an deductive approach, formulating and testing hypotheses, the interview part started inductively by asking general questions in order to obtain specific answers.

Discussion

A country’s population is vitally important to the nation branding process, and in order for a nation brand to be successful, it has to be in accordance with the national identity. Thusly, people need to identify themselves with the brand and its core values. If a nation brand cannot communicate with the citizens of the country it is supposed to brand, then how can it be capable of addressing international audiences. In other words, the inhabitants need to live the brand first, so that it can be communicated to the rest of the world.

Romania is a former communist country which not until recently did not have a national brand. Right after the fall of the communist regime, branding strategies were seen as useless. Afterwards, the

government realized that by attracting tourist, they can also attract investments, so they decided to start working on different strategies, that might make people want to visit this country.

Unfortunately, due to a faulty political system, each Minister came with a different idea and left unresolved issues. Therefore, Romania went through several failed and unremember branding campaigns up until 2010. Since then, 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' has been the national brand.

Unaccepted at first, mostly because suspicions of fraud and corruption surrounded it, the national brand 'Explore the Carpathian Garden, is the lenghtiest one so far, and it appears that people are accepting the latest campaign and commercials. Furthermore, they actually find them well-done, compared with other TV spots.

Based both on the survey and on the interviews, the commercials catch what is essential about Romania, reminding people that there is more to this country, than meets the eye.

The fact that the campaigns do not prevail in changing people's attitude towards Romania is mostly generated by the fact, that they somehow state the obvious, showing something that its known to the inhabitants. Also, Romania's incapacity to move forward, to develop and to provide a normal living standard for its citizens, darkens the beauty of the country.

It is not like Romanians do not love their country and do not wish to promote it, it is just that in their day by day struggle, they might forget about the core values of their national identity. The difficult struggle with a lacking society, might also be a reason, for why sometimes they might perceive the amounts of money invested in branding the nation as huge. This, combined with the lack of trust in the government can produce discontent towards all the promotion strategies that are being tried out.

Other issues that stood out from the above analysis are the stereotypes that foreigners have in regards to Romanians. As long as you are from Romania and you find yourself in a foreign country, there is a big chance to be placed in the same category with the rroma ethnicity. This is not a real criteria, since Romanians have been described as welcoming, friendly, warm and hospitable people.

All in all it seems that the best direction to follow with these commercials is an international one and that the national brand is starting to head in a good direction, having captured what truly describes Romania.

Limitations

Besides the limitations mentioned, as this paper advanced, especially in the methodology section, there are additional remarks that need to be made regarding the research methods and paradigm.

First of all, I feel like a more qualitative approach would have fit better the problem formulation, especially since the sample is biased and cannot be generalized. In accordance, a survey only with open questions would have helped me get more points of view, not just the ones from the interviews.

Moreover, some of the obtained data from the interviews may have passed unexploited, as the volume was considerably big. My subjectivity in selecting the relevant information from the data might also be considered a limitation. However, subjectivity is characteristic for qualitative research, and by properly identifying and monitoring it, it did not affect the results of the study.

Conclusions

This current paper has been concerned with exploring Romanian national identity and the attitude Romanians have towards their national brand and more specifically towards the newest commercials that were released in the summer and winter of 2014.

As stated in the theory section national identity constitutes a defining concept, without which the creation of a national brand cannot take place. Therefore, these two were researched in connection to one another, so that an answer for the problem formulation to be identified.

Subsequently, the research questions were answered.

4. What is the common perception about national identity amongst Romanians? What do they identify as primary elements of their national identity, considering that the country has been through several transitional phases throughout history?

It was established that all the elements given as belonging to national identity were chosen by the majority of cases. Also, when asked to provide a definition of their own, respondents have reiterated the ones from the survey, an age or historical barrier not being predominantly visible. National identity remained more or less the same throughout history and there are similarities in how Romanians perceive it, no matter the age category they fit into.

5. How do Romanians feel about the new "Discover the place where you feel reborn" campaign, part of the "Explore the Carpathian garden" branding actions, in relation to their national

identity? Do they feel that the campaign displays the "essence of Romania"? And is there any possibility for this campaign to change the negative opinion that Romanians have about their country, or at least to generate an impact on how they perceive their country?

6. Do Romanians perceive and improvement in their national brand with this new campaign or are they still against it, like they were when it was first launched?

It was displayed that Romanians consider that the campaign transmits elements of national identity, and that 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' is starting to improve itself. However, their perception about Romania remained unaltered mostly because as inhabitants of this country, they know all the bad and the good facets.

Further research

This current study can represent the object of future research in regards to Romania's national brand. In accordance with the obtained results, the research could be guided into two different directions.

Taking into consideration that at the end of both the questionnaire and the interview I have asked people how their perception has changed after travelling or living abroad, a research on how they were influenced positive or negative by other cultures can be implemented. In other words, to ask how they perceive Romania in comparison with other European countries.

The second direction that could be followed is the one in which foreigners' perceptions and attitudes towards Romania and implicitly towards this new campaign are researched. The same methods and the same problem formulation could be applied to people with different nationalities.

Bibliography:

1. Anderson, B. (1983), *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso. London
2. Aaker, D. A. (1996), *Building Strong Brands*, New York: FreePress.
3. Aaker, D.A. (2010), *Building Strong Brands*, Pocket Books
4. Anholt, S.(2007), *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*, Basingstoke, UK: PalgraveMacmillan
5. Anholt, S. (2004), *Branding Places and Nations* In Clifton, R., Simmons, J. & Ahmad S.(eds), *Brands and Branding*, Princeton, NJ: Bloomberg Press, London, 213-226
6. Anholt, S. (2005a), Anholt Nation Brand Index: How Does the World see America?, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 45(3), pp. 296-304.
7. Anholt, S. (2007), *Competitive Identity. The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*, Palgrave Macmillan
8. Anholt, S. (2005), *Editorial - Some Important Distinctions in Place Branding*, *Place Branding*, 1(2), pp. 116-121
9. Anholt, S.(2013), <http://www.exchangediplomacy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/1.-Simon-Anholt-Beyond-the-Nation-Brand-The-Role-of-Image-and-Identity-in-International-Relations.pdf>
10. Aronczyk, M. (2008), Living the Brand: Nationality, Globality, and the Identity Strategies of Nation Branding Consultants, *International Journal of Communication* 2, pp. 41-65
11. Baicoianu, A. (2008), Markers and Shifters of Romanian Identity
Annals of Ovidius University Constanta Philology (Analele Universității Ovidius din Constanța), 19, pp. 9-12
12. Barthes, R. (1957), *Mythologies*, translated in 1972, Hill and Wang
13. Bechhofer , F., McCrone, D., Kiely, R. and Stewart, R. (1999), Constructing National Identity: Arts and Landed Elites inScotland, *The Journal of the British Sociological Association*, Vol. 33 , pp. 515– 534
14. Berg, B., Lune, H. (2012), *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, New Jersey: Pearson
15. Billig, M. (1995), *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage

16. Bronstein, R. L., Kovacs, P. J.(2013), Writing a Mixed Methods Report in Social Work Research, *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(3), pp. 354-360
17. Bryman, A., (2012), *Social Research Methods*, 4th edition, Oxford University Press
18. Budnitskiy, S. (2012), Lost tribes of nation branding? Representation of Russian minority in Estonia's nation branding efforts, *CEU eTD Collection*, Budapest
19. Cai, L. A. (2002), Cooperative Branding for Rural Destinations, *Annals of Tourism Research* , 29(3), pp 720-42
20. Carter, Stacy M. & Little Miles, (2007) Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10), pp. 1316-1328
21. Caciuleanu, D. (2014), *Nation branding through mega-events: How living the brand influences nation branding, A case study of Brazil and its citizens*, Aalborg University
22. Cobuild, Collins (2006) *Advanced Learners English Dictionary*, 5th edition HarperCollins Publishers
23. Cotirlea D. A. (2013), (Re)Building a national brand: General Issues about promoting Romania's image and identity, *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși” University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series*, Issue 1
24. Creswell, J. W. (2009), *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
25. Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011), *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*, Washington DC: Sage.
26. Cretu, I. (2011), Destination Image and Destination Branding in transition countries: The Romanian Tourism branding Campaign 'Explore the Carpathian Garden', *University of York. The York Management School*
27. Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (2011), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications
28. Diggins, J. (1994), *The promise of pragmatism: Modernism and the crisis of knowledge and authority*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
29. Dinnie, K. (2008), *Nation branding: concepts, issues, practice*, Oxford: ButterworthHeinemann
30. Dolea A., Tarus A. (2009), *Branding Romania, Cum (ne) promovam imaginea de tara*, Curtea Veche, Bucuresti

31. Dumbraveanu, D., Place Branding : A Challenging process for Romania,
http://humangeographies.org.ro/articles/32/324_Dumbraveanu.pdf
32. Eskilden, L., (2014) *A bite of Denmark in Japan- Making sense of Country-of Origin in Daily Food evaluations*, 2014, Aalborg University
33. Fan, Y., (2006), Branding the nation: What is being branded?, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 12(5), pp. 5-14
34. Fan, Y. (2010), Branding the nation: Towards a better understanding, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 6(2), pp. 97 – 103
35. Flick, U. (2004), *Constructivism* In Flick, U., von Kardorff, E., and Steinke, I. (eds.), *A companion to qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks California: Sage Publications
36. Flick, U. von Kardorff, E. and Steinke, I. (2004), *A companion to qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks California: Sage Publications
37. Foddy, W. (1993), *Constructing questions for interviews and questionnaires- Theory and Practice in Social Research*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
38. Fontana, A., Frey, J. (2008), *The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement* In Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (eds), *Collecting and Interpreting Quality Materials*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
39. Giannopoulos, A., Piha, L., Avlonitis G., *Desti-nation branding. What for? From the notions of tourism and nation branding to an integrated framework*,
http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2011/april/biec-roa-nua/desti-nation_branding- antonios_giannopoulos.pdf
40. Gellner , E. (1983), *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY
41. Gellner, E. (1994), *Nationalism and Modernisation*, in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (eds) *Nationalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 55–63.
42. Georgescu, A., Botescu, A. (2004), *Branding National Identity*, Lund University, Department of Sociology
43. Guba,E.,(1990), *The Paradim dialog*, Sage Publications
44. Guba, E. (1996), *What happened to me on the road to Damascus*, in Heschusius and Ballards (eds.), *From positivism to interpretivism and beyond: Tales of transformation in educational and social research*, New York: Teachers College Press
45. Gudjonsson , H. (2005), Nation branding, *Place Branding* 1(3), pp. 283 – 298

46. Gummerson, E. (2005), Qualitative research in marketing: road-map for a wilderness of complexity and unpredictability, *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(1/2), pp. 58-70
47. Gunn, C. (1972), *Vacationscape*, Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas, Austin, TX
48. Hall, D., (1999), Destination branding, niche marketing and national image projection in Central and Eastern Europe, *Journal of Vacation Marketin*, 5: 227
49. Hesse-Biber, Sharlene (2010), Qualitative Approaches to Mixed Methods Practice, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), pp. 455-468
50. Hitchens, K., (2014), *A concise history of Romania*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press
51. Hobsbawm, Eric (1983), *Introduction: Inventing Tradition*, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds) *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–14.
52. Jaffe, E. D. and Nebenzahl , I. D. (2001) *National Image and Competitive Advantage: The Theory and Practice of Country-of-Origin Effect*, Frederiksberg, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press
53. Jansen, S. C., (2008), Designer nations: Neo-liberal nation branding -Brand Estonia, *Social Identities*, 14(1), pp. 121_142
54. Jaworski, S. P., Fosher, D., (2003), National Brand Identity and Its Effect on Corporate Brands (The Nation Brand Effect), *Multinational Business Review*, 11(2), pp. 99-113
55. Johnson Burke, R., Onwuegbuzi Anthony, J., Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come, *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), pp. 14–26
56. Johnson Burke, R., Onwuegbuzie A., Tuner, L., Towards a definition of mixed methods research, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), pp. 112-133
1. José I. Rojas-Méndez , (2013),The nation brand molecule, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22 (7), pp. 462 – 472
57. Kabn , J. (2006,) A brand-new approach . *Foreign Policy* ,November/December, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3608 , accessed 5th January 20015
58. Kaneva, N., Popescu, D. (2011), National identity lite Nation branding in postCommunist Romania and Bulgaria, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4(2), pp. 191 – 207
59. Kaneva, N. (2011), Nation Branding: Towards an Agenda for Critical Research, *International Journal of Communication*,(5), pp: 117-141.
60. Kaneva, N. (2012), *Nation Branding in Post-Communist Europe: Identities, Markets, and Democracy: Branding Post-Communist Nations: Marketizing National Identities in the "New" Europe*, Edited by Nadia Kaneva. New York: Routledge

61. Kapoulas, A., Mitic, M. (2012), Understanding challenges of qualitative research: rhetorical issues and reality traps, *Qualitative Market Research: An international Journal*, 16(4), p. 354-368.
62. Klenke, Karin (2008) *Qualitative Research in the Study of Leadership*, Emerald Group Publishing
63. Kitcher, P. (2002), *Scientific knowledge*, In Moser, P. (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of epistemology*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press
64. Kvale, S. & Brinkman, S. (2008), *InterView – Introduktion til et Håndværk*, 2nd Edition, Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag
65. Kvale, S. (2007), *Doing Interviews*, Thousand Oaks California: Sage Publications
66. Lambrea, M. (2014), *Nation Branding in Transnational Romania*, Aalborg University, Denmark
67. Lee, K. M. (2009) Nation branding and sustainable competitiveness of nations, PhD thesis, University of Twente, http://doc.utwente.nl/60754/1/thesis_K_M_Lee.pdf, accessed 20 February 2015
68. Light, D., (2001), Facing the future: tourism and identity building in post-socialist Romania, *Political Geography*, 20, pp. 1053–1074
69. Light, D., Dumbraveanu, D. (1999), Romanian Tourism in the post-communist period, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), pp. 898-927
70. Light, D., (2007), Dracula Tourism in Romania: Cultural Identity and the State, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(3), pp. 746–765
71. Light, D., Craig Y. (2001), Place, National Identity and Post Socialist Transformations: An Introduction, *Political Geography*, Pergamon. pp 941-955
72. Light, D., Craig Y. (2010), Reconfiguring Urban Landscapes: The ‘Left-Over’ Spaces of State Socialism in Bucharest, *Human Geographies: Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography*, 4(1), pp 5-16.
73. Light, D., Dumbraveanu-Andone, D. (1997), Heritage and national identity: exploring the relationship in Romania, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 3(1), pp. 28-43
74. Lincoln, Y., Lynham S., Guba, E. (2011), *Paradigmatic controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences Revisited* in Denzin N., Lincoln Y., (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks California, Sage Publications
75. Mangione, T. W., (1995), *Mail Surveys: Improving the Quality*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
76. Mayer, F. C., Palmowski, J. (2004), European identities and the EU — The ties that bind the peoples of Europe, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 42(3), pp. 573 – 598

77. Marcus, C., http://web.adatbank.transindex.ro/pdfdok/web1_10_Marcus.pdf
78. McGuigan, J. (1992), *Cultural Populism*, Routledge, London, UK
79. Merriam, Sharan B., (2009), *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, John Wiley & Sons
80. Morgan, D. L. (1998), Practical strategies for combining qualitative and quantitative methods: Applications to health research, *Qualitative Health Research*, 8, pp.362–376
81. Murray, J. (1998), Qualitative methods, *International Review of Psychiatry*, Vol.10, pp. 312-316
82. Neuman, L., (2011), *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Boston: Pearson
83. Neuman, L. (2006), *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Boston: Pearson
84. Nicolescu, L., Paun, C., Popescu A. I., Draghici, A. (2007), National identity an essential element for country branding- The case of Romania, *Review of Management and Economical Engineering*, 6(6)
85. Olins, W. (2002), Branding the nation – The historical context, *Journal of Brand Management*, 9(4/5), pp. 241 – 248 .
86. Olins, W. (1999), *Corporate Identity: Making Business Strategy Visible Through Design*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press .
87. Pahuus, M. (2003), *Hermeneutik* In Eskilden Lisa, *A bite of Denmark in Japan- Making sense of Country-of Origin in Daily Food evaluations*, 2014, Aalborg University
88. Papadopoulus, H., Heslop L., (2002), Country equity and country branding: Problems and Prospects, *Brand Management*, 9(4-5), pp. 294-314
89. Parasuraman A., Grewal, D. & Krishman R. (2007): *Marketing Research*, 2nd edition, Houghton Mifflin Company.
90. Paul J. (2014) Nation Branding: A Tool for Nationalism?, *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 45(3), pp. 283-303
91. Pike, S. (2007), Consumer-based brand equity for destinations: Practical DMO performance measures. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 22(1):pp. 51-61
92. Ragalia, K., (2014), Dracula and Dictators: Changes in Tourism in Romania after the fall of Communism, *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 66.
93. Rendon, J. (2003), When nations need a little marketing, *New York Times*, 23 November .

94. Saunders M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill A. (2009), *Research methods for business students*, 5th edition, Pearson Education Limited
95. Schifirnet, C., (2009), Identitatea nationala in contextual modernitatii tendentiale, *Revista Română de Sociologie*, nr.5–6, pp. 461–480
96. Schwandt, T. A., (2000), Three *epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry*, In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. (ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
97. Searle, John R., (1995), *The construction of social reality*. Clays Ltd., St. Ives plc
98. Sepi, A., (2013), *Nation Branding the case of Romania. Brief history and possible reasons for failure*.
99. Silverman, D., Marvasti, A.(2008), *Doing qualitative research: A comprehensive guide*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications
100. Skinner, H; Kubacki, K (2007), Unravelling the complex relationship between nationhood, national and cultural identity, and place branding, *Place branding and Public Diplomacy*, 3 (4), pp. 305-316
101. Smith, Anthony D., *National identity*, 1991, Penguin books
102. Stake, R. (1995), *The art of case study research*, Thousand Oaks, CA:Sage
103. Survey.cvent.com (2013), *Sampling Demystified: Probability vs. Nonprobability Sampling*, Retrieved the 28th January 2014 from <http://survey.cvent.com/blog/market-research-design-tips-2/sampling-demystified-probability-vs-nonprobability-sampling>
104. Suszycki, P., Marcin., A. (2011), *Nation and Nationalism in Europe: An introduction*, Edinburgh, GBR: EUP, ProQuest ebrary. Web. 26 February 2015.
105. Szondi , G. (2006) The role and challenges of country branding in transition countries: The Central and Eastern Europe experience . *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 3(1) pp. : 8 – 20
106. Szondi, G. (2007). „The role and challenges of country branding in transition countries: The Central and Eastern European experience”. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 3 (1): 8-20.
107. Tashakkori, A., Teddlie C., (2010), *Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioural Reseach*, Sage Publications
108. Terre Blanche, M., Durrheim, K., Painter, D (2006), *Research in Practice: Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*, University of Cape Down Press

109. Ulla Hakala Arja Lemmetyinen, (2011), "Co-creating a nation brand "bottom up"", *Tourism Review*, 66(3), pp. 14 – 24
110. Varga, S., (2013), The Politics of Nation Branding: Collective Identity and Public Sphere in the neoliberal state, *Philosophy Social Criticism*, 39(8), pp. 825–845
111. Wheeler, A. (2006): *Designing Brand Identity*, John Wiley & Sons inc.
112. <http://www.mihaelaivan.ro/grafice-studiu-de-cercetare-perceptia-romanilor-despre-brandul-de-tara/>
113. <http://kommunikationsmaaling.dk/artikel/why-nation-branding-does-not-exist/>
114. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/romania/history#248277>
115. <http://turism.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/BrosuraRO.pdf>
116. http://stiri.tvr.ro/timpul-in-care-se-traia-frumos-la-belle-poque-in-romania_46925.html
117. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bAk9ry0BK8>
118. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1V5yKzzV5f0>
119. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XBV1gJ4jYul>
120. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLAF6TQHKa8>

Annexes

Appendix 1- Translated version of the Questionnaire:

Before answering the following questionnaire, please take a look at the video in the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bAk9ry0BK8>

1. Please indicate your age category:
 - a. Under 20 years old
 - b. Between 21 and 25 years old
 - c. Between 26 and 35 years old
 - d. Between 36 and 45 years old
 - e. Above 45 years old
2. Please indicate your gender:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
3. Please indicate your education level:
 - a. Highschool
 - b. College
 - c. Post university studies
4. Where you aware of the advertisement in the link, before it was indicated to you in this questionnaire?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Which of the following elements would you consider as belonging to the Romanian national identity:
 - a. The orthodox religion
 - b. The Romanian language
 - c. The Romanian popular culture
 - d. The Romanian history
 - e. The country's territory and geographic particularities

- f. All the above
6. When you think about the Romanian popular culture, what comes to mind?
 - a. Traditions
 - b. Folklore
 - c. Church and spirituality
 - d. Traditional cuisine
 - e. All the above
 7. When you think about the Romanian history, which of the following periods would you say that had the most impact on the Romanian national identity?
 - a. The ancient Dacian Roman period
 - b. The interwar period, also known as the Golden Age
 - c. The communist period
 - d. The capitalist period
 8. On a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest, 5 the highest, when you think about events in history and how they shaped the Romanian national identity, how would you rate the following
 - a. The fall of the monarchy in Romania
 - b. The fall of the communist regime
 - c. The accession to the European Union
 9. When you think about Romania's territory and geographical particularities, what do you think of?
 - a. Wild and natural scenery
 - b. Rural scenery
 - c. Urban scenery
 10. Who do you think the commercial's target group is?
 - a. Romanians
 - b. Foreigners
 11. Which of the following elements do you think that stand out in the commercial:
 - a. The orthodox religion
 - b. The Romanian language
 - c. The Romanian popular culture
 - d. The Romanian history
 - e. The country's territory and geographic particularities

- f. All the above
12. What you hear the slogan “This is where I feel reborn”, you think of:
- a. Return to nature
 - b. Return to culture
 - c. Return to traditions and customs
13. Do you consider that Romania has a national brand?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
14. Which of the following branding campaigns do you remember?
- a. Explore the Carpathian Garden
 - b. Romania Land of choice
 - c. Made in Romania
 - d. Eternal and Fascinating Romania
 - e. Romania Fabulospirit
 - f. Romania Always Surprising
15. Are you satisfied with the current national brand “Explore the Carpathian garden”?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
16. After the “Explore the Carpathian garden” do you still think that Romania needs a branding strategy?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I do not know
17. Do you feel that Romania needs a branding strategy for Romanians?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I do not know
18. Do you feel that the commercial transmits the Romanian national identity?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
19. Name 3 positive attributes about Romania_____
20. Name 3 negative attributes about Romania_____

21. Which aspects do you think are more prone to characterize the Romanian society?
- a. Positive ones
 - b. Negative ones
22. Have you ever traveled or lived abroad? If no, move to question 29.
- a. Yes
 - b. No
23. Do you feel that seeing other countries and other cultures, has influenced the way you perceive Romania and the Romanian national identity
- a. Yes, in a positive way
 - b. No, in a negative way
 - c. No
24. If the commercial were addressed to Romanians, would you say that it had an impact on how you perceive the country's brand strategies?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I do not know
25. If the commercial were addressed to Romanians, please rate from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest, 5 the highest its impact on your perception about the country.
26. Would you be willing to participate in an interview on the subject of Romania's national identity and national branding?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Appendix 2- Positive Elements Table

No.	Traditions/Customs/ Culture	Nature/ Natural elements/ Geography	People features/ Attributes that describe Romanians	Others
1.	Beautiful traditions	Beautiful landscapes	Welcoming people	
2.		Natural beauty	Hospitality, altruism	
3.	Wonderful traditions	Landscapes	Hospitable people	
4.	Romanian cuisine	Natural landscapes	Welcoming people	
5.	Traditions, food	Geography		
6.		Beautiful touristic regions	Welcoming people	History
7.	Geography, food			Sport
8.	Culture, traditions	Landscapes		
9.	Traditions		Hospitality, altruism	
10.	Food	Geography	Hospitality	
11.	Traditions	Nature	People	
12.	Traditions, food	Mountains		
13.	Traditions, folklore		Welcoming people	
14.	Tradition, culture	Nature		
15.	Good food	Fabulous landscapes	Beautiful people	
16.		Landscapes		National heroes, sport champions
17.				My country, my family, the place where I feel at home
18.	Beautiful traditions	Remarkable landscapes	Hospitality	
19.		Natural resources, the mountains		Historical buildings
20.	Traditions, popular costumes	Landscapes		
21.	Traditions	Landscapes	Welcoming and warm people	
22.	Traditions			Uniqueness, beauty
23.	Romanian culture, Romanian language	Geographical positioning		
24.		Nature, geography	Welcoming people	
25.	Traditions	Nature	People	
26.	Unique popular culture- spirituality that send to ancestral	Geographical positioning-diverse relief and climate	Diverse and rich ethnic diversity- multicultural	

27.	Culture	Landscapes	Intelligence	
28.	Diverse traditions and customs	Natural beauty		Touristic richness
29.		Geographical and geological diversity, acceptable climate conditions		Carol I
30.		Rich geographical diversity	Welcoming people	Affordability
31.		Nature	Some people	Family
32.	Traditions	Nature		Desire for knowledge
33.	Traditions, gastronomy	Territory		
34.	Traditions, gastronomy	Landscapes		
35.	Traditions	Nature		History
36.	Traditions, food	Nature		
37.	Traditions, customs			History
38.		Geographical positioning	Smart people	It has its uniqueness
39.	Landscapes,		Hospitality, tolerance	
40.	Landscapes			Tourism, performances in sport
41.	Brancusi, the traditional shirt le	The seaside		
42.	Traditions	Nature	People's hospitality	
43.	Authenticity	Nature	Smart people	
44.	Traditions	Nature	Hospitality	
45.	Traditions, culture	Landscapes		
46.	Culture	Nature	People	
47.	Food	Landscapes		It's my country
48.	Traditions (holidays), traditional cuisine	Territory and its geographical particularities		
49.	Traditions, culture	Landscapes		
50.	Traditions that are still kept, 18-19 century architecture	Geographical diversity		
51.		The territory's touristic potential	The younger generation's intellectual potential	UE membership
52.	Strong national culture	Fabulous landscapes	Warm people	
53.		Nature	Intelligence, creativity	
54.	Traditions, spirituality	Landscapes		
55.	Traditions, religion	Landscapes		

56.	Traditions	Nature (especially the mountains), The rural region (unmet in any other parts of		Europe)
57.		Landscapes, the sea, the mountains		
58.	Traditions, culture, faith			
59.	Traditions	Natural landscapes		History
60.		Beautiful nature, beautiful climate, Beautiful rural region		
61.	Romanian food, traditional music, traditional customs from various regions of the country			
62.	Traditions	Geographical positions	People	
63.	Religion		Hospitality	Diversity
64.	Culture	Geography		History
65.	Religion		Diversity, hospitality	
66.	Culture	Nature that is still alive, Romanian villages		
67.	Traditions	Landscapes	People	
68.	Ancient popular traditions	Natural landscapes	Friendly people	
69.	Traditional cuisine	Diverse and beautiful relief	Romanian humor	
70.	Romanian traditions and customs	Natural landscapes	Hospitality	
71.	Vast culture	Unique landscapes		Strong culture
72.	Traditions and customs	Natural landscapes	Hospitable people	
73.	Vast culture, traditional food			Touristic potential
74.	Traditions and popular costumes	40% rural environment	Hospitality	
75.		Nature, geographical position		Important historical figures
76.	Traditions	Nature	People	
77.	Traditions	Geographic diversity		Cheap services (some)
78.		The delta, the sea, the mountains		
79.	Unforgotten old traditions	Rich relief, touristic landscapes		
80.	Orthodox religion	Natural resources		The fact that people own

				their living places in over 90% of the cases
81.	Traditions	Natural landscapes		Personalities in which Romania takes pride
82.		Nature	People	Diversity
83.		The Danube, the Carpathians, the sea		
84.	Traditions, culture	Landscapes		
85.		Nature, the seaside, the mountains		
86.	Traditions, culture	Relief		
87.	Food, traditions	Landscapes		
88.			Friendly people	Fun, Authentic
89.			Hospitality, originality	Authenticity
90.				The 1918 union, UE membership, NATO
91.	Traditions	Nature	Hospitality	
92.	Gastronomy, cultural patrimony	Nature		
93.	Unique traditions, local gastronomy	Landscapes from rural regions		
94.	Traditions	Landscapes	Hospitality	
95.	The language, the most ancient writing			Ancient Dacia
96.	Rich culture	Unique landscapes provided by the landform		History
97.	Culture, our origins	Nature		
98.	Traditions	Relief	Hospitality	
99.		Wonderful landscapes, wonderful landforms		National gymnastic
100.			Patriotism	Iohannis(current president), DNA(national agency against corruption)
101.	Traditions, food	Landscapes		
102.	Beautiful customs, the food, the language			
103.		Naturalness	Hospitality	Low prices

104.	Culture	Nature		Tourist attractions
105.	Traditions	Nature	Hospitality	
106.	Traditions, folklore	Nature		
107.	Traditions	Nature (landscapes)	Kind people	
108.	The fact that some traditions are still kept	Relief		The wish for development
109.		Geographic diversity	Creativity	Freedom
110.		Nature, Bucharest and the cities from Transylvania	The spirit Romanians have	The
111.	Food, traditions	Landscapes		
112.	Traditions	Landscapes	The people	
113.				Foreign investors, jobs, modernization
114.		Natural beauty	Romanians are great hosts	Diversity
115.		Beautiful landscapes and various types of landforms, favorable political and geographical position		Free educational system
116.	Culture, values	Wonderful landscapes		
117.		Nature	Relations between people	Historical remains
118.	Traditions	Landscapes	Welcoming people	
119.	The infinite column	Beautiful landscapes		Ancient history
120.	Well preserved traditions	Wonderful nature	Generous people	
121.	Culture, traditions	Relief		
122.	Interesting traditions and custom	Wonderful landform		Historical remains
123.	Spirituality		Wisdom	Beauty
124.	Tradition	Landscapes	People	
125.			Romanians are welcoming people	A country with tourism potential, a free country
126.	Folklore	Landscapes		History
127.	Literature, folklore	Geography		
128.	Traditions, food	Nature		
129.	Customs, traditional cuisine	Nature		
130.		Nature, landscapes		History
131.	Culture	Nature	People	

132.	Popular costumes		Romanians' human quality, their respect towards family	
133.	Culture	Landscapes	People	
134.	Traditions	Relief and climate		
135.	Religion, traditions and customs	Nature		
136.	Culture, ethnicity	The landscape		
137.	Specific cuisine, the holidays,			Tourism attractions
138.	Folklore (traditions, music, traditional costumes)	Landscapes and amazing places	Romanians who are jolly and welcoming people	
139.	Romanian traditions, Romanian food			Simona Halep (tennis player)
140.		Beautiful landscapes, rich natural resources, rich and fertile soil		
141.	The food	Beautiful and wild nature	People	
142.	Culture, traditions			History
143.	Food, traditions	Varied natural landscapes		
144.		The Danube Delta, mountain landscapes		A lot of history
145.	Traditions	Nature and landscapes		Varied tourism activities
146.	Food	Nature	Kind people	
147.	Traditions, food	Landscapes		
148.	Customs	Relief and climate		
149.	Rich culture	Geographic diversity	Hard working people	
150.		Dobrogea, the relief, the village houses		
151.	Traditions	Landscapes	People	
152.	Traditions	The landforms, the geographical positioning		
153.		The sea, the mountains		Medieval castles
154.	The food	Nature	The people	
155.	Traditions	Nature	The people	
156.	Traditions	The sea, the rural regions		
157.			Hospitality, joyfulness, the nationalist spirit	
158.	Traditions still kept	Geographical diversity	Romanian hospitality	

159.		The entire nature we possess, the sea	Friendly people	
160.		Gorgeous landscapes	Smart people	Our history
161.		All types of landforms (mountains, hills, plains, sea)	Smart and well educated people	An advanced educational system
162.	Rich culture	The landscapes	Warm people	
163.	Customs	Landscapes		Tourism attractions
164.	Customs	Landscapes	Hospitality	
165.	Beautiful customs		Talented people	A start of social justice
166.		Natural resources, natural landscapes	People's warmth	
167.	Spirituality	Climate, nature		
168.	Traditions	Natural resources	Hospitality	
169.	Spirituality	All types of landforms		History
170.		Nature, Transylvania, medieval cities		
171.	Folklore	All types of landforms	Hospitality	
172.		Nature	Friendship	Comfort
173.	Well preserved traditions	Picturesque rural regions, rich landscapes		
174.	Unaltered elements of popular culture		Romanians are optimistic people who know how to appreciate friendship and beauty	Sports
175.	The cuisine			Tourism and architecture
176.		Diverse landscapes		Success in sport and Romanian artists who are internationally known
177.	Traditions	Nature	Hospitality	
178.	Traditions	Nature		Tourism attractions
179.	Culture, folklore	Nature		
180.	Traditions	Geographic position		Sports
181.		Nature, the sea, the mountains		
182.	Tradition	Relief, landscapes		
183.	Traditions	Nature		Tourism
184.	Romanian traditions	The Carpathians, the Black sea		

185.	Traditions	Geography	The people	
186.	Traditions	Landscapes	People	
187.	Customs, traditions	Rural regions		
188.			Good people	Privatization initiative, openness towards the West
189.	The orthodox religion, the fact that traditions are still being kept	Natural and beautiful place		
190.	Customs	Spectacular geographical regions	Hospitable people	
191.	Traditions from Maramures	Transalpina (a road in the mountains)	Smart people	
192.		All types of landforms	Beautiful people	It's where I was born and raised
193.	Food	Territory	Welcoming people	
194.	Traditions	Unique in the world geographic elements	Hospitality	
195.	Romanian food	Picturesque landscapes	Hospitable people	
196.		Unique territory in Europe	Intelligent people, ability to adapt to harsh living conditions	
197.	Traditions, food		The ability to adapt	
198.	Beautiful traditions	Wonderful landscapes	Welcoming people	
199.	Traditions, food	Geography		
200.	Traditions	Geography	Hospitality	
201.	Romanian traditions	The Black Sea, the Carpathian Mountains		
202.	Traditional food	The Danube Delta, the Carpathians		
203.		Landscapes	Hospitality, intelligent people	
204.		Unique geography in Europe	Hospitality	history
205.	Traditions	Landscapes, the Carpathians		
206.	Romanian cuisine, customs	Landscapes		
207.	Traditions	All types of landforms	Warm people	
208.	Traditional costumes, food	Landscapes		
209.		Landscapes	Smart people	Tourism

				attractions
210.	Traditional food	Strategic geographical location	Romanians know how to have fun	
211.	Traditions	Unique landscapes	Welcoming people	
212.	Traditions	Natural resources, landscapes		
213.		Nature	Hospitality	History
214.	The food	The climate, the relief		
215.	Folklore	Nature	Romanians are welcoming people	
216.	Traditions	Landscapes		Our rich history

Appendix 3- Negative Elements Table

No.	Bad Government/ Corruption	Social/Society problems	People features/Attributes that describe Romanians	Others
1.	Corruption	Financial uncertainty, indiscipline		
2.	Corruption	Unemployment		Abusive deforestation
3.	Corruption	Poverty	Go-by	
4.	Corruption, public institutions	Infrastructure		
5.	Corruption	Indiscipline, financial uncertainty		
6.	Corruption	Unemployment		Deforestation
7.		Poverty, misery		Gypsies
8.	Corruption	Bad roads	Ignorant people	
9.	Politics, laws		People	
10.	Corruption	Poverty, misery		
11.		Infrastructure, dirt		Lack of interest in promoting this country
12.	Theft	Poverty, no highways		
13.	Corruption		Thieves	Stray dogs
14.	Corruption	Poverty, misery		
15.		Weak infrastructure,	Laziness, a low educational level	
16.	Corruption	Uncertainty, poverty		
17.	Bureaucracy	Poverty		Stray dogs
18.	Corruption, theft	Poverty		
19.	Corruption	The roads	Moral values in decay	
20.	Corruption	Misery	People don't care	
21.	Bad government	Poverty, illiteracy		
22.	Corruption, theft	Poverty		
23.	Politics			Nationalism, the nation brand
24.	Theft, corruption	The streets are unclean		
25.	Politics	Unemployment		Religion
26.			People are lack common sense and are very proud	The roma citizens, Poor values promoted by the church
27.	Theft		Go-by (people don't	

			care), lack of decision making abilities	
28.	Corruption, fraud	Low economical level		
29.		Poor monetary situation	Intellectually confused people	Communism inertia
30.	Corruption		People that are trying to take advantage	Unexploited tourism potential
31.			Bad education, illiteracy	Rromas
32.	Corruption		Fatalism	Lack of positive models
33.	Politics	Salaries	People don't acknowledge talents	
34.	Corruption	The economy, poverty		
35.	Corruption, bureaucracy			Unprepared for tourism
36.	Theft	Misery	Mean people	
37.	Bureaucracy		Unorganized people, passive people	
38.	Theft	Misery		Gypsies
39.	Corruption from politics	Bad infrastructure		Imposed orthodoxy
40.	Corruption	Unemployment, the standard of living		
41.	Corruption, theft			Gypsies
42.	The political system			Some ethnicities that are illiterate, we left our national treasure to decay
43.	Corruption	Unemployment, misery		
44.	The way the country is being governed		General discontent, complacency in the current situation	
45.	Politicians	Stereotypes		Patriotism is discouraged
46.	Corruption	Poverty, infrastructure		
47.	Theft	Infrastructure		Rromas
48.	Corruption		People	The communist influence
49.	Faulty political system	The educational system	Uneducated people	
50.		The educational system, an inexistent middle class	People don't appreciate real values	
51.	Flaws in the			Rromas who are

	educational, law and medical system			incapable to integrate into our society
52.		Poverty, infrastructure	Uncivilized people	
53.	Corruption	Poverty		Gypsies
54.	Balkanism		People are easy to influential, betrayal	
55.	The justice system, politics	The economy		
56.		Infrastructure, misery	Some people want to trick tourists	
57.	Corruption, the medical system	Low incomes and salaries		
58.	Corruption, demagogy			We don't promote a positive image of our country
59.	Politics	Infrastructure	People's mentality	
60.		Big and ugly cities, dirt	Young people are uneducated	
61.	A lot of politicians, the authorities don't get involved	Unemployment		
62.	Corruption	Poverty, violence		
63.			Herd spirit, shallowness, distrust	
64.	Bad government, corruption		Uneducated people	
65.	Politicians			Ethnic minorities, the orthodox church
66.	Administration	Pollution	Lack of education	
67.	Bad government	Bad roads, misery		
68.	Public institutions that don't help the citizens	Bad roads	Poor civic spirit	
69.	Corruption		Lack of culture and education, lack of respect for nature and the environment	
70.	Corruption			Little promotion, gypsies
71.	Corruption	Unemployment		Gypsies
72.	The public administration	Bad roads, high prices		
73.		The educational system,		

		little job opportunities, small salaries		
74.	Lack of facilities from the state provided for those who want to promote Romania		Lack of interest	Lack of vision and coherence in promoting Romania
75.	The government steals constantly		General lack of interest, uneducated population	
76.	Corruption	Misery		Gypsies
77.		Bad infrastructure, misery, bad services		
78.		Bad services	Lack of courtesy	Romania is not promoted enough
79.	Corruption, fraud	Poor development		
80.	Bad economic policy		Defeatism, lack of solidarity	
81.	Theft		Small minded people, they don't want to evolve	
82.		Low investments in infrastructure, life conditions		Culture
83.	The government	Infrastructure	The mentality	
84.	Corruption		Stupidity	Gypsies
85.	Theft	Misery, high prices		
86.	Theft		Shallowness, ignorance	
87.			People who want to take advantage of tourists	Gypsies, stray dogs
88.		Infrastructure	Distrust	Bad promotion
89.	Corruption	Lack of infrastructure	Lack of education	
90.	Corruption			The monarchy, communism
91.			Snobbism, passivity	Lack of innovation
92.		Sanitary assistance, the roads, bad service		
93.	Government, lack of investments, especially in tourism	Infrastructure		
94.		Poverty, no infrastructure	Lack of civilization	
95.	Corruption, bad government that is			The church

	the disadvantage of the people			
96.	Bad economic policy, that doesn't offer any possibilities to young people	Low standards of living		Romania has little international recognition
97.	The state budget	The living standard		Tourism
98.	Corruption, bureaucracy	Infrastructure		
99.	Corruption	Poverty	Illiteracy	
100.	Corruption		Lack of solidarity	Religious fanaticism
101.	The political class	Misery		Tourism
102.			Lazy people, arriviste people, uneducated	
103.		Bad services, infrastructure that is not up to date	Lack of civilization	
104.		Garbage		Romas, deforestation
105.	Corruption	Lack of jobs		Mistrust in the younger generation
106.		Infrastructure, misery	Stupidity	
107.	Corruption	Dirty streets	Indifference	
108.	Corrupt political class	Unfair competition between businesses	Lack of solidarity	
109.	Corruption		Lack of civil sense, individualism	
110.	Politicians don't care	infrastructure		Lack of prosperity
111.	Corruption	Misery, poverty		
112.		Touristic infrastructure, tax evasion		Bad promotion
113.	The parliament	The streets		Gypsies
114.	Corruption, bureaucracy			Personal interests
115.	Corruption, bureaucracy, awful medical and educational systems	Poor life quality		
116.			Lack of civilization, lack of information	Lack of interest in securing the national patrimony
117.	Corruption	Pollution		Our historical, cultural and natural

				patrimony is not valued
118.	Politics, corruption	Infrastructure		
119.	Corruption, arrogant politicians	Poverty		
120.	Corruption	Bad infrastructure, misery		
121.	Corruption		Lack of civilization	Forgetting our traditional values
122.	Corruption	Lack of opportunities		The values scales is upside down
123.	Theft	Salaries		Bad publicity
124.	Corruption	Misery		Destruction of nature and traditions
125.		Salaries, unemployment		Bad publicity
126.	The leaders	Misery	Lack of education	
127.	Bureaucracy, corruption	Misery		
128.	Corruption, the authorities don't care, the educational system			
129.		Beggars	Thieves	Gypsies
130.	Theft		We don't appreciate our country	Unexploited tourism
131.	Corruption		Mistrust, alienation	
132.			Shallowness, individualism, passivity	
133.	European funds that have been stolen	Lack of infrastructure, lack of jobs		
134.	Bureaucracy		The mentality	The roma citizens
135.	Corruption			We don't know how to promote tourism, the gypsies
136.			Illiteracy, mediocrity, lack of interest	
137.	Corruption, bad government, the educational system has flaws			
138.	The leaders	Undeveloped infrastructure		We don't exploit enough out tourism

139.	Corruption, tax evasion with the public money	Infrastructure		
140.	Massive corruption	Disastrous roads	callousness	
141.		Garbage, pollution, low incomes in comparison with other European countries		
142.	Corruption, injustice			Some ethnicities
143.	Politics, corruption	High unemployment rate		
144.	Corruption	Undeveloped society, misery		
145.	The lack of interest from the country's leaders	Economy		Reminiscence of communism
146.	Corruption	Poverty, unemployment		
147.	Corruption		The fact that Romanians are not proud of their country	The lack of investments in creating a national identity and promoting this country
148.	Corruption	Poverty, we don't have highways		
149.	Corruption	Poverty, a total mess		
150.			Liars, thieves, unserious people	
151.		Poverty	Indifference, the majority's attitude	
152.	Theft, corruption			Rasism
153.		Garbage, poverty		Stray dogs
154.		Infrastructure (means of transportation)	people	Television
155.		The streets, the mess, the education		
156.	Corruption	The prices	Some people	
157.			Uninformed people, greed, mistrust	
158.	Unstable economy	The urban environment, Romania is not a safe country		
159.		Poverty	Sadness, indifference	
160.	Corruption		Thieves	Gypsies
161.		Lack of infrastructure, small salaries, lack of jobs		

162.	The laws are not applied as they should be, the economy			Romania is not promoted enough
163.	Theft	Mafia	Indifference	
164.			Small minded people, indifference	gypsies
165.	The economy			Romania's bad image abroad, lack of promotion
166.	Bad management, bad investments		Lack of interest for this country	
167.	Corruption, fraud	Bad organization		
168.	Corruption	Unemployment, misery		
169.	Propaganda, excessive politics			Only the bad parts of our country are seen
170.		Lack of infrastructure, improper living conditions in rural regions	Lack of vision	
171.		How dirty the cities are	Lack of culture	The communist architecture
172.	Bureaucracy	Favoritism, agglomeration		
173.		The infrastructure	Pessimist people who don't realize how beautiful their country is, uneducated people who don't want to educate themselves	
174.			Sometimes people don't care enough	The false image that Romania has abroad, Romania doesn't have a country brand
175.	Corruption, bad management	Infrastructure		
176.	A bad educational system, corruption	Low standard of living		
177.	Execrable educational system	Misery	Lack of civilization	
178.		Bribery, misery		Deforestation
179.		Bad quality infrastructure	Romanian's bad attitude	The communist period
180.	The medical system,			Tourism

	the educational system			
181.		Garbage everywhere, pollution		Deforestation
182.	Politicians	Poverty	The mentality that some people have	
183.	Corruption	Misery	People don't care	
184.		Lack of highways		Deforestation, poor international promotion
185.	The government, the economy			The way we are seen internationally
186.	The laws		The people, the ignorance	
187.			Envy, lack of culture	Gypsies
188.	Corruption	The civil society does not get involved in how the state works		The lack of a clear scope
189.	the government	Poverty		The roma citizens
190.		Misery		Bad reputation, unpreserved monuments
191.		Lack of development, poverty		Gypsies
192.	Bad educational system	Lack of jobs, high prices		
193.	Corruption	Poverty, bad infrastructure		
194.	Corruption, the fact that politicians don't care	High unemployment rate		
195.	Corruption	Low living standards	General carelessness	
196.	High inflation	High unemployment, low incomes		
197.	Bad government, corruption, lack of support provided for the citizens from the authorities			
198.	Corruption	Financial uncertainty, misery		
199.	Corruption	Poverty	Indifference	
200.	Corruption, public institutions	The infrastructure		

201.		We're not developed enough		Gypsies, our country is not promoted enough
202.	Corruption, theft	Bad infrastructure		
203.			Lack of solidarity	We are destroying our national values, we are not promoting our country
204.		Undeveloped urban environments, bad infrastructure		Gypsies
205.		Major class differences, undeveloped society		The bad image caused by gypsies
206.	Corruption, indifference from behalf of the government	Infrastructure		
207.	Corruption	Poverty		Bad promotion
208.	Corruption		People are indifferent	The roma citizens
209.		Bad roads, bad living condition, low standard of living		
210.	Corruption	Pensions and salaries		Gypsies
211.	Bad government	High unemployment rate		Bad branding strategies for Romania
212.	Corruption	Unemployment, poverty		
213.	Corruption	Bad roads	Lack of education	
214.	The economy	Low salaries		The bad image that Romania has in Europe
215.	Corruption	Poverty		Some ethnic minorities
216.		Bad infrastructure, misery, poverty		

Appendix 4- Interview no. 1

Name: Alina, lives in Romania

Age: 46 years old, female

Duration: 16:00 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra, and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing your questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 46 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: A definition? I think that it is something that distinguishes me from other people (countries)

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the medieval period.

A: Yes, because that is when the first Romanian state was formed.

I: Could you, please, justify why this particular one, and not others like communism, Interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: That is when a first political representation of the Romanian people appeared, or a first political conviction.

I: I understand, and how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: The communism fall means winning freedom: freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of organization, freedom of having an economic initiative.

I: So, in other words, what you are trying to say is that the fall of this regime had a positive outcome and a positive contribution to the national identity.

A: Yes, yes and freedom allows you to grow a series of values.

I: And do you think that once this regime was removed, we were able to return to the values and traditions that were present in the Romanian culture prior?

A: We were able to return to the values and traditions easier than we could have done it during communism and more efficiently and with sincerity in conditions of freedom, and how each and every one wanted to.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes?

A: There is a risk in this sense because the European Union's leadership is diverse. There are several ideologies and orientations and some of them have a totalitarian character, some parties that are present in the European Parliament have a totalitarian character.

I: But in regard to traditions, do you think that Romanians will forget about them and implement new ones that are more westernize or Americanized?

A: Romanians have already adopted some new traditions either without knowing that there are also Romanian ones, either they were attracted to new ideas, either because they wanted to adopt a new mentality. It's not mandatory to keep a strict mentality, you can adopt others.

I: And do you think that the younger generation has forgotten about the old traditions and customs?

A: I cannot say this. The younger generation has teenagers which inform themselves about the authentic Romanian traditions and which wish to continue practicing and following them. I think that these traditions are not very well promoted in the public space.

I: Statement that brings me to my next question: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs?

A: Yes, we needed such a campaign, we needed landmarks. Sadly, after 1990, after the revolution, we weren't able to return or better said we weren't able to properly inform ourselves about the fact that we also have landmarks in our history, models of behavior, values that are worthy of promotion. Therefore, not everybody knew about them, they were present only in small types of media and press, but once with the internet and with the internet boom we are now able to read about them, especially since in Romania we have total freedom on-line, everybody can write what he/she wants and making it easier to spread information.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released?

A: I don't remember

I: Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes, please

A: Yes, I remember them. I have seen them before

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: The first video I have seen today, yes, the second one not so much and the third one from the survey, I have already said that it has national identity elements.

I: And after seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: I don't think I would add something else to these commercials.

I: So you consider them as being complete?

A: Yes

I: And if I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million euros, how would you feel about this?

A: The price is too high, there must have been a fraud or something of the sort, there is no reason that can justify this amount. The price is too high; it means that some money laundering was involved.

I: Ok, and are you aware of other branding campaigns that Romania had? For example, Romania, Land of choice, that had several commercials with Romanian public figures, like Hagi, Comaneci and Ilie Nastase endorsement?

A: I remember something, but I don't recall the name of the campaign.

I: But do you find that these new commercials have a higher quality in comparison with older ones? I mean, do you see an evolution or an involution in regards to Romania's branding strategies?

A: I see stagnation

I: You see stagnation, so basically your perception about Romania remained the same after watching these commercials?

A: Yes. These commercials were too expensive. They might have positive effects, but they were too expensive.

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: I think it's a part of our features as Romanians. We think poorly about ourselves, we do not appreciate ourselves. I think this is a trait of ours. Of course, the people might be educated to see otherwise

I: And do you believe that through these commercials this education might take place?

A: Yes, the people might be awoken by them, they might help a little.

I: So you do believe that these commercials might cause a small impact?

A: Yes, I do

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: natural resources, the orthodox religion and the fact that people own a living place in 90% of the cases. As for the negative ones, you said: the poor economic policy, defeatism and the lack of solidarity. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: Defeatism because as I said earlier, we do not know how to appreciate ourselves and in this sense, we lack the ability to use entrepreneurship, especially since now we have the freedom to undertake activities. The lack of solidarity is another trait of the Romanian people and this is most visible in the case of the Romanians that live abroad, who fail in associating themselves with other Romanians, fail to help one another, fail in bonding. As for the poor economic policy, I believe this is related to the government combined with the people's defeatism and with their absence to vote. They were following the principle: If I don't have anybody to vote with, I won't go. Therefore, the political class remained the same for years.

I: So, in other words, you are saying that from your point of view, the political class has a huge impact on the negative attitude that Romanians have about their country and eventually on the negative perception that foreigners might have about Romania?

A: Both the political class and the people are to blame. It's a vicious circle. When I say political class, I refer to the parties that ruled for almost 20 years, they are very similar and the people that voted were the same, thus their political choice being the same. There is blame from both sides: the voters and the elected that implemented this economic policy.

I: I understand, in the questionnaire, you stated that you are pretty satisfied with the current nation brand 'Explore the Carpathian GARDEN'

A: Yes

I: Despite this, you stated that these three commercials, part of this brand are too expensive. Do you feel that corruption might have had an influence for this amount of money?

A: Yes, I believe so. We can only promote our natural resources and some traditions still kept in a couple of regions less affected by cooperatives. I did not take into account the financial aspect of the commercial; I didn't know the price, thus my answer in the questionnaire.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: From what I've seen in other countries, they know to better manage their resources and their poverty; they are more hard-working and more efficient. We could also be like that; we could manage our resources better. And what I did not like in other European countries, because I've only traveled to Europe, was a certain social stratification and a certain alienation of people, which in Romania's case is not that developed yet.

I: Ok, thank you very much for your time and your answers.

A: Thank you, Goodbye.

Appendix 5- Interview no. 2

Name: Ionut

Age: 24, lives in UK

Duration: 19:55 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 24 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: I think that national identity is best expressed through national values and I feel that we should promote as much as we can the positive things that we succeed in doing both nationally and internationally.

I: So you are saying that national identity is based on national values.

A: Yes, and traditions basically.

I: Ok, in the survey there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the medieval period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one, and not others like the communist, Interwar or the daco-roman period?

A: Because from my point of view that was the period in which the principles of national identity were outlined, especially since in the beginning Romania was divided into different regions. What I am trying

to say is that all those identities coming from different regions were kind of merged into one during the Medieval period. Before this period, referring to the ancient period, I think we cannot know that much about the contribution to national identity, because first of all the language was different back then. And more recent, advancing towards communist, I consider that this is not representative for Romania.

I: And why not the Interwar period, before communism?

A: Because in the Interwar period we were ruled by a king, whom we did not choose. Others chose him for us.

I: Ok, I understand. So let me get this straight. In other words what you are trying to say is that in the medieval period the foundation of the Romanian society was laid down, also the Romanian language was better contoured as well as traditions and values.

A: Yes, from my perspective that might be considered the main wellhead for our national identity.

I: Regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: First of all I feel that the fall of the communist regime had a negative contribution to our national identity because the majority of western countries consider that what happened in Romania is not quite normal, and I agree. We are the only country that spilled a lot of blood in removing the communist regime, in comparison with other countries from the former communist bloc, that managed this without uproar.

I: And do you feel like the communist regime had a say in how our national identity was build?

A: Probably, it left some traces and some erroneous mentalities still present today and regrets about the past, because a lot of people are still saying that during that time it was better, since everybody had a job and the regime helped them, so on and so forth.

I: But in regards to the oppressions upon the Romanian popular culture and upon traditions?

A: I think they harmed the national identity, they sort of tried to suppress a lot of traditions, starting with religion. I'm not a religious person, but religion is encrypted in our origins and in our traditions and a lot of religious people were suppressed, and not only from this point of view, but from a cultural point

of view as well, because everything against the system, or wasn't approved by them, was automatically removed from an eventual publication or it was stopped from getting awareness.

I: So, in other words, what you are trying to say is that after the communism fell, we weren't able to return to prior traditions and culture?

A: Yes, because this period left some pretty big traces, at least that is what I think

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes? Do you think that Romanians will forget about them and implement new tradition instead, ones that are more Westernized or Americanized?

A: Yes, it seems that this adherence has both positive and negative aspects, because its scope might be a generalization of a European culture, and in time this might lead to a loss in originality and cultural identity. But, I cannot be 100% sure about this.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: Because our country and our national identity is best expressed through nature and traditions, so a commercial like this is useful for displaying a different image outside of Romania, in Europe, an image that might remove some of the impressions that foreigners have about our country, so that they can find out that we are not some savages, who haven't discovered civilization, and that we are not a nation filled with roma citizens.

I: And you think that we could eliminate some of these prejudices by promoting our traditions and our natural landscapes?

A: Yes, because this is what is representative for us. We have probably one of the most beautiful countries in Europe, if not in the world, and our traditions are worthy of display. Because by displaying your traditions and the place you are from, then other can build a different opinion, can get a different perspective about what Romania truly is.

I: And in regards to the tv commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more tv promos were released? Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Yes, I agree. The commercials are very similar to one another. Each and every one presents different parts of the country, landforms and traditions, so and so forth. And I think they can do more than 3 official spots.

I: Your last statement, brings me to my next question: after seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: Yes. From my perspective, I would have added some short lines belonging to citizens from all around the country, lines that can convey different traditions kept over time in different regions.

I: So you think that the commercials don't emphasize traditions and customs that much?

A: Yes, on traditions, customs and relief. I think these three can be placed in the same category. I think a line or two coming from behalf of the Romanian citizens would have been great, not just a series of images and someone narrating in the back.

I: Ok, and are you aware of other branding campaigns that Romania had? For example, Romania, Land of choice, that had several commercials with Romanian public figures, like Hagi, Comaneci and Ilie Nastase endorsement?

A: Yes, I know about them.

I: And do you find that these new commercials have a higher quality in comparison with older ones? I mean do you see an evolution or an involution in regards to Romania's branding strategies?

A: No, in principle, they are similar. At least, from what I can remember.

I: And if I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million euros, how would you feel about this?

A: There are several things I should analyze before expressing an opinion about this information. First of all, I do not know how much they've invested in shooting these commercials.

I: I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: I think it's a small amount. I think you need to invest more, if you want to promote your country.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: As I said earlier, I think it was unsuccessful in portraying the authentic Romanian taste, the commercials did not provide those lines I was talking about, lines that could have presented some traditions. For example, Maramures, I would have liked to see someone from that part of the country, talking for a couple of seconds. I think more could have been achieved, by taking each region individually and trying to promote a couple of people from there, by allowing them to say some lines, describing what happens there.

I: Basically, the fact that the commercials displayed landscapes wasn't enough?

A: The landscapes are very beautiful, everybody knows this, at least I, as a Romanian citizen, know that my country is very beautiful. But, those landscapes can be found on the internet as well, if somebody searches, so they are not enough. The idea was to bring something authentic, apart from some images and a short narration in the back.

I: In other words, you consider that authentic Romanian means more than just relief, geography?

A: Authentic Romanian means to hear someone, coming from different regions of the country, speaking Romanian.

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: There are several reasons. One might be the longing for communism, coming from some who have lived in the age and had a decent life, from their perspective, because they did not lack a job or a fixed income, but they did not have the freedom to express themselves. Another reason might be standard of living, still very low. Another one might be the perception that other countries have about Romania, especially about the roma citizens.

I: And do you think that other countries' opinion about Romania can generate a bad perception about their country amongst Romanians? Is that a reason for them to denigrate or badmouth their own country?

A: Yes, because if several people say something about a certain person, in time that person will start questioning whether or not those things are true or not. That's the same case with our country, if everybody will start saying that we are gypsies, at a certain moment in time we will identify gypsies as one of our major problems, and we should try and fix this problem.

I: Yes, we try to fix the problem. But, what are trying to say that if other label us as gypsies, that means that we are gypsies?

A: No, but that is how foreigners perceive us, I can feel that on my own skin.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: geography, traditions and the food. As for the negatives ones, you said: corruption, infrastructure and public institutions. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: First the Romania's relief is part of the traditions.

I: Yes, but as you said before, traditions are not sufficient

A: Yes, because they are not represented by the people, who still keep and follow them. They are depicted only as simple evanescent images. They need to be presented through the people that actual respect them and keep them from generation to generation. As for the culinary aspect, I think I chose this one, because sometimes I miss the food from back home.

I: As for the negative aspects?

A: The negative aspects, are mainly the ones that everybody is aware of: corruption, infrastructure, because we have problems with our roads and highways all the time, and not only roads, other things as well. And the third negative aspect, public institutions, I picked this one out, because they have the tendency to prolong simple processes on and on and on.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way. In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: The negative aspects are related to population's attitude, the people who are still living in Romania and the positive ones are the landscapes and traditions, because usually, people who live abroad, come back for the holidays, and these holidays represent a majority of our oldest traditions, that we still keep today.

I: Are you saying that you cannot find these traditions somewhere else?

A: Yes, obviously. They are present only in Romania and they are transmitted by our landscapes, literature and culture.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: Thank you as well.

Appendix 6- Interview 3

Name: Sorin

Age: 27, lives in Romania

Duration: 21:09 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 27 years old.

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: Let's say that is the first thing, that comes to mind, when you hear a country's name, or when you are offered the possibility to visit a country.

I: In other words, you think it is something that differentiates the countries from one another?

A: Yes, precisely.

I: In the survey there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the communist period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one and not others like the medieval, Interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: Well, from what I've spoken with foreigners, because they are the ones not knowing Romania very well, the first thing they say is something related to communism. It might also be a probability for all of Eastern Europe to be associated with communism and with Russia, and a lot of them remember about Ceausescu, some about Nadia Comaneci, but most of them about the communist age.

I: But, from your point of view, do you think that Romania can only be associated with communist landmarks; only with Nadia Comaneci or with Ceausescu, with nothing else, apart from this?

A: Lately, I would say that this association has decreased in size, lately from my perspective Romania is associated with something else: corruption and other similar things.

I: Regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity? Do you think it had a positive outcome, meaning that we were able to return to prior traditions and values, once the oppression was over, or do you find it had a negative impact, generating confusion?

A: I don't know. Clearly, it wasn't something good, so it had to end and I supposed that we had a lot to win from the fall of the regime. We could have won even more if this would have happened earlier. We had to do a lot of catching up and probably, we still have.

I: Still, it was a positive thing, that's what you are trying to say?

A: The fall of the regime, yes.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes? Do you think that Romanians will forget about them and implement new tradition instead, ones that are more westernized or Americanized?

A: Not necessarily because of the EU, I don't think that has anything to do with these changes. I think the media, with all its means of communication, has a say in this matter, rather than the EU.

I: I don't think my question was very clear, let me explain: once Romania became a part of the EU, the globalization process was increased in Romania's case as well, that is why I made a reference to the European Union.

A: Yes, I understand, but I don't think so, I don't know how much influence this can generate. I still think that the media, the internet and the TV had the greatest influence by spreading all these holidays, the majority of them American. There aren't a lot of holidays coming from the European space. A lot of these new trends come from America, from Hollywood stars, from movies, from music, because people have easier access to them.

I: And do you think this media access you are describing will influence Romanian traditions?

A: Most likely, yes. In time, they will be lost, at least in the urban area; slowly they will be lost, yes.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message “Discover the place where you fell reborn”, a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: Well, from I’ve seen, a lot of tourists from abroad come to Romania for its landscapes, for a type of nature, that is, let’s say, unaltered, I think it was a good idea to put an emphasis on this aspect. Especially since, in the cities, there isn’t much to be done in Romania. The big cities are not touristic cities. My opinion is that not even our capital Bucharest, can offer that much, despite all those efforts to create all kinds of city tours and to rebuild the old city center. I don’t find Bucharest that attractive. So, in these conditions, it might be best to focus on the nature part with Transylvania, the Danube Delta, and Bucovina.

I: But, why do you feel that such a message needed to be addressed to Romanians?

A: Well, there are a lot of Romanians that choose to spend their holidays abroad and maybe sometimes you can find peace and really nice things here in Romania as well. You can also find good services and nice hotels here, and you can have a really good time.

I: So are you trying to say that this message is sort of a reminder that Romania has things to offer?

A: Yes, you can also have fun or a beautiful vacation in Romania.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released? Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes, ok

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: From what I’ve seen, yes. There are some well-known touristic regions from Romania.

I: So you find that there is an emphasis only on those regions and that is all?

A: Let me watch them again. I see they also convey people that are hospitable, they offer some sort of food, so I assume that they also want to transmit the hospitable nature that Romanians have. I can also see a girl dressed in a traditional costume. Yes, mostly traditions.

I: Do you think these commercials lack in something? Is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: Honestly, no. I cannot think of anything right now.

I: And in comparison with older branding campaigns that Romania had, if you can remember some, how do you find these commercials? Do you think they are suited for promoting Romania?

A: I think the commercials are pretty good. Probably they have an English version as well.

I: No, for the moment there is no English version.

A: Oh, I think it would be good to have them abroad as well. In the end, it is very important to attract tourists from outside of Romania

I: So you perceive them as suitable for an international audience?

A: Yes, yes. They are really good. I mean they really instill that urge to get out and visit one of these beautiful regions.

I: And if I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: Honestly, I think it's a lot. I don't know the exact prices, but I think it's a lot, especially since they are aired only nationally. I don't know, maybe in this case they could have done something cheaper.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania improved after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean what exactly made you feel better about your country after watching the first TV spot?

A: It wasn't improved that much, obviously. I mean I have lived here my whole life, I know what's really going on, I know what to expect and I know what this country is capable of, but there are some images that placed into a collage, become impressive. Of course, it depends from what angle you look at them,

but in the commercial they are placed really nice, the sequence is great and from a nice perspective and it makes you realize that your country is quite beautiful, with great potential in attracting tourists. It makes you realize that you have a place to escape to or a place where you can spend a longer vacation.

I: Are you saying that when you realize how beautiful Romania is, it make you forget a little about its negative aspects?

A: Probably yes. I mean, of course, especially when you think that you are going on vacation. I think then it's best to forget about some of them, instead of getting upset because of them

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: Yes, they do. Honestly, I don't know, but I think politicians are to be blamed in most of the cases, the upper class. Probably a change must come from above. And they probably feel this way because of corruption, indigence. Come to think about it, the people are also to blame, because a lot of them are mean. Of course, some of them are stressed and poor. I would also include the lack of education, because from this lack a lot of things can follow.

I: In what sense the lack of education? Are they educated not to appreciate their country?

A: Not necessarily, I think the educational system has flaws. I mean there are a lot of people without an education, some barely have 5 grades, and sometimes even those 5 grades aren't properly done. For example, even though some of them go to university, they get accepted without even knowing how to write correctly. I don't know, they don't even have civic culture. Nothing good gets promoted in our educational system

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: cheap services, traditions and geographical diversity. As for the negative ones, you said: poor services, bad infrastructure, and misery. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: Well, the negative ones affect me the most when I have to leave for a vacation. You always encounter bad and crowded roads, our infrastructure is the worst. Also, if you want to stop somewhere on the road to grab a bite to eat, or to have a picnic in a place designed for this type of activities, almost every time you can find a mess beyond description. Sometimes, I even had the misfortune to check in some

hotels that were categorized as 3*-4* and to have the unpleasant surprise of being badly treated, or to find a room completely different from one could expect, in a bad sense. But, at the same time, I stayed in cheaper hotels and B&B's where the services were great, and this was a positive aspect. Also, on the positive side, I find it really great that you can go to the seaside or in the mountains, both here in Romania. I find this diversity advantageous, especially since there isn't a great distance between the mountains and the sea. And it seems that a good infrastructure would only make things easier.

I: And do you think that traditions are being promoted? On your trips in Romania have you encountered places where traditions were still kept and emphasized?

A: Honestly, I've only passed through some of these regions, where traditions are still valued and I didn't get to see much. Maybe just some fairs with traditional food and traditional items like clothes or pots. But, I can't say that I've had a big interaction with traditions in my vacations.

I: But the fact that you've included traditions in the positive category means that you still think they are kept?

A: Yes, yes, especially for foreigners. I think that for them our traditions have a bigger impact than for us Romanians.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: Honestly, I think there are more negative ones and they are related to infrastructure and how grimy and dirty everything is. Also the urban and rural scenery is very gloomy. There's a total chaos in our architecture and in everything else. Abroad everything else is tidier, there are rules, and not everybody starts building what he or she wants. You don't see new glass buildings mixed with old ones, or buildings painted in pink, blue and a lot of other colors, less and less green spaces, so on and so forth.

As for the positive, I don't know. For example, when I've traveled to Canada what bothered me the most, is that their prices did not include VAT. Also, you were forced to tip the restaurant personnel. I did not like this, in the end you didn't know the real prices and ended up having surprises when you received the bill. At least here in Romania, you know what to expect. And probably here is where you feel safer, this is where your friends are, where your family is, even though this is not related to the country per se, you were born here and you cannot change this. Last but not least, our services are

cheaper in comparison with services provided by other countries. And some of these services have fair prices. Abroad some seem a little exaggerated, but then again their salaries are higher, so that might be a reason.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix 7- Interview no. 4

Name: Mihaela, female

Age: 33 years old, lives in Romania

Duration: 24:19 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 33 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: From my perspective, national identity is something that can define a nation: language, customs, traditions, and traditional costumes, everything that is related to folklore.

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the interwar period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one and not others like the communist, medieval or the Daco-roman period?

A: Because that's the period in which we defined ourselves from all points of view. We took over a lot of stuff from abroad, and I believe that was Romania's glorious period. That's when we improved our language, our gastronomy, our fashion. That's my opinion. We've borrowed new mentalities and we've improved the Romanian one.

I: Do you consider this borrowed mentality as part of our national identity? What you categorize something copied from others as Romanian?

A: I don't think we've copied, I think we took it over in a beautiful way. I am not sure we can truly call these mentalities and values as truly Romanian, but they sure took ground here and nowadays they define us.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: I don't know, I can't formulate an opinion because I was only a child back then. But, according to people who lived this event, I might say that the fall of communism had an impact, but at the same time didn't on our national identity. As a child, I didn't quite understand what it meant.

I: But do you think Romania was able to pick up that cultural boom from the Interwar period from where it was left when the communist regime took over?

A: No, sadly, no. A lot of the culture and traditions that we had in the interwar period were left behind. Nowadays we are extremely oriented towards the West, towards customs and traditions coming from there. Maybe a part of this culture is still present in the countryside, but that's all.

I: Do you perceive the post-communism national identity as a non-unitary one?

A: Definitely, but not just after communism. I think it has always been like this. It depends from region to region, from generation to generation.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes?

A: In the countryside no, people there are really rooted in traditions and customs, but in the cities I don't think there any values left.

I: What about customs? Do you think we will keep our own, or we will start borrowing some from the West?

A: I'm sure we will borrow some. We are a very-open minded nation in this sense. We like to take over new traditions and customs that have nothing in common with our nationalism.

I: And by doing so, do you think we will forget about our own?

A: In large part we have already forgotten about ours and I'm sure if our generation actually knew about all the traditions and customs and actually followed them.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: I don't know, maybe to remind us of our past, of customs and values of the past. But you have to think how much impact such a message can have. Personally, I'm not moved by this kind of messages.

I: Do you think the younger generation, born after 1989 has forgotten about traditions and Romanian values or simply they don't know about them? Do you think this message tries to generate some sort of awareness?

A: No, such a campaign cannot create awareness because a lot of these traditions and values were destroyed. As for the younger generation, I think they are interested in other things not in Romanian cultural values.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released? Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Mostly, yes, they are related to national identity.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with older campaigns, if you remember any, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find them higher in quality?

A: I don't remember other campaigns, but these commercials seem very elaborated and representative, they catch what's really essential.

I: So you think they transmit the Romanian essence?

A: From my perspective, yes.

I: After seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: I didn't ask myself this until now, but I think they are great just the way they are.

I: And if I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: Surely a lot of people were involved in this project, so I don't think it's a high amount. At first you might think they were too expensive, but after trying to have a more in-depth picture, I don't think it's a lot of money. It's probably a reasonable amount of money. Once again, from my perspective, they catch what's essential; they make references to beautiful places from our country and to things that define Romania.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: It did not succeed to do so, because I knew everything that was presented in the commercial. I'm a person who has seen all those places from the commercial, who knows a little about our gastronomy, because in the end this is what all the commercials enclose: some beautiful places, some culinary habits, and a couple of beautiful churches. And I have seen and experienced all these aspects. There is nothing new; therefore there cannot be an impact, or a change. Indeed, it reminds me of those beautiful places, but it's just a reminder, nothing more.

I: Do you think maybe there is a need for such a reminder? Or maybe as you said before the younger generation needs to find out all these things, because they are unaware of them?

A: Absolutely, it is a good way for them to find out about how beautiful our country is or what customs we have and it's also a good reminder for us, the ones who already know this stuff.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: Romanian gastronomy, traditional costumes and traditional music. As for the negative ones, you said: unemployment, numerous politicians and the lack of implication from the behalf of our authorities. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: These were the ones that I was able to think of on the spot. Surely there are plenty more both negative and positive. Why those three positive? Because Romanian food is famous and I think it is very tasty. Because our traditional costumes are distinguished and you can still find these costumes in certain regions preserved over time. As for the negative ones, I thought of them because I see a lot of people around me who are affected by unemployment and by the lack of implication from behalf of the authorities. For me, they seem the worst problems that Romania is facing.

I: And this lack of implication you are describing, why do you think it occurs?

A: Because of bureaucracy and poorly paid without working desire employees.

I: Would you associate it with corruption?

A: Surely at a much higher level, it can be associated and generated by corruption.

I: Do you find our traditional costumes and our traditional music unique, one of a kind?

A: I don't know if they are one of a kind, because as we know the folklore travels and we can hear in the news how music is copied, but from my perspective, we do have a traditional music and traditional costumes and foods that are worldwide known and appreciated.

I: If you think about history do you consider that Romania was able to preserve its historical buildings and historical monuments? Do we harness them enough?

A: Sadly, no. Our historical buildings are neglected. You can find some that are still preserved, but the majority is left to decay. I can't image why. The authorities usually blame this on the lack of funds, but I think it's about incompetence. For example, the Kiss Gate. This work of art from Brancusi has been preserved for so many years, until a year ago when some 'specialists' thought of applying some sort of

substance on it, thus destroying its exterior layer. Unfortunately, we don't know how to keep these valuables.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: First of all, the climate. Everywhere I've travelled I've had a problem with the weather. Thus, I've come to the conclusion that the climate back home makes me feel good, makes me feel at ease. The food, everywhere I've been, I wasn't satisfied with the food.

I: And culturally speaking?

A: Culturally speaking, I haven't lived that long somewhere else. I have seen a lot of beautiful places, but I cannot say they've influenced me culturally.

I: Do you think other nations were able to better preserve their historical monuments in comparison with Romania?

A: Well, usually when you are a visitor you get to see only those places that are preserved and promoted, so yes, maybe they've managed to do so, but it doesn't mean they don't have decaying buildings as well, or negative aspects. I'm sure this principle applies to Romania as well. I'm sure tourists are taken to beautiful places. They don't usually get to find out about Romania's ugly side.

I: But after visiting these places, did you appreciate Romania more?

A: To be honest, yes, but I wouldn't know to answer why. Maybe it's because I feel at ease here where my home is, where I can speak my own language, where I can recognize everything around me, where my friends are, where I like the food, in one word where I have stability. I think stability makes me feel better.

I: As for the negative aspects?

A: Surely there are a lot of them, which we've arrived to overlook. I think the main ones are the ones everybody identifies: poverty, misery, and infrastructure.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You'

Appendix 8- Interview no. 5

Name: Dana, female

Age: 42 years old, lives in Romania

Duration: 25:40 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 42 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: I think that national identity is something that defines us and something that has the following elements: culture, traditions and religion.

I: So, you would resume national identity to these three components?

A: Yes.

I: And what do you understand by culture as an element of national identity, what type of culture?

A: Folklore, more or less the rural type of culture, in which and every one of us rediscovers himself or herself.

I: Are you referring to popular culture?

A: Yes

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the medieval period.

Could you, please, justify why this particular one, and not others like the communist, interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: Because I believe that was the period in which our culture and traditions were modeled. That is when everything was built enabling us to become what we are today.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: This fall had a huge impact or at least a decisive impact for each and every one of us, because with it we were able to know another world, a world we weren't able to get to know during that period, because we didn't have sources of inspiration or other types of sources that would have enabled us to know something else apart from that enclosure offered by the communist regime.

I: And do you think Romania was able to pick up that cultural boom from the Interwar period from where it was left when the communist regime took over?

A: Yes, I think that our identity was latent and once the regime was over, once all that bereavement was over, we retrieved that identity and we continued to be as we were before and not how communism enforced us to be.

I: So, you don't perceive this fall as negative? I mean negative in the sense that maybe today our identity is not unitary at a national level or in the sense that this transition period generated confusion for Romania, until the country found its voice and established what truly means to be Romanian?

A: Surely the transition period was a confusing one for every Romanian, but this doesn't mean that ending the communist period was a negative decision. On the contrary, it was something positive, because as I was saying we found our freedom of speech, or freedom to have an opinion, or freedom to have faith and to have a religion.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes?

A: No, I don't think the European Union could influence our values or our traditions.

I: Not even the fact that we've started implementing new tradition instead, ones that are more Westernized or Americanized, like Halloween or Valentine's Day? Do you think the Romanian ones will lose their values?

A: No, certainly not, surely the Romanian ones will keep their value. The fact that we are implementing new holidays from the West cannot influence in a negative way our own traditions and holidays.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: I'm not sure Romania actually needed this message, perhaps from time to time, it would be necessary for some to remember where they come from, to remember about their roots, because sometimes this capitalist fever we are experiencing today makes us forget where our roots and it makes us forget about our heritage.

I: Do you think the younger generation, born after 1989 has forgotten about traditions and Romanian values or simply they don't know about them?

A: I'm sure they know about them, at least from stories told by their parents or grandparents. The fact for today's teenagers that they might not be as important as they were for the older generation, that's totally different. I believe that it is a good thing for younger generations to know about what was happening in Romania before communism, even if it's from a story told by the elders.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released? Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Yes, the communicate elements pertaining to our national identity, as much as they can transmit in the 30 seconds or so, the length of a commercial.

I: After seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: Generally speaking, they encompass what defines us as a nation, but I find that our values are greater in number, not just what these commercials comprise.

I: Could you provide an example? What values do you have in mind?

A: For example, these videos don't highlight Romania's history nor do they highlight leading figures from our literature, like Eminescu.

I: If we were to present these commercials to an international audience, do you think it would also be important to showcase important literature figures like Mihai Eminescu?

A: Of course. As long as these commercials promote Brancusi's works of art, and we all know Brancusi, who is an international notably Romanian figure, Eminescu's poetry could represent us abroad, just like Shakespeare's work represent the Brits. I'm sure Eminescu could be enclosed in a category of remarkable figures just like any other markedly historical Romanian figure, like Mihai the Great, Alexandru Ioan Cuza and many others, who have changed our history from the ground.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with previous campaigns, if you remember any, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find them high in quality?

A: They are ok, taking into consideration their lengths and their purpose: to promote Romania. They are alright in the sense that they outline what we describe as characteristic for the Romanian people: hospitality, religion, traditions.

I: Do you think that the orthodox religion characterizes us as a nation?

A: Yes. Invariably the majority of the Romanian people were orthodox.

I: In what sense do you think it characterizes Romanians? Just because historically speaking, this religion was present in our country? Why should foreigners explore this aspect when they visit Romania?

A: Yes. For example, let's take the Arab world. Everybody knows that Muslims believe in Allah. I think it would be equally important to be known that God is the divine figure in whom we believe.

I: I'm referring to the fact that when it comes to promoting our country, a great emphasis is placed on religion. Why should we keep doing this when other countries might not concentrate that much on the religious aspect?

A: I'm sure that's not the case. I'm sure that when you visit other countries you know the deity they believe in. For example, as I've said in the Arab world you know they believe in Allah, in India you know they worship several Gods.

I: OK, coming back to the commercials. If I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: I'm not able to tell whether or not it is a small or big amount, but I'm sure that when you want to promote something, when you want to make something known, there are several costs, and we need to be aware of them.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: It failed to do so because all those things it presents were already part of my personality as a Romanian; they were rooted inside me before me seeing this promo. They weren't able to generate a change because I find myself in everything that it contains.

I: Are you trying to say that it failed to generate a change, because it's not bringing anything new?

A: Yes, it's not showing something new, something I did not know before, something to surprise me with.

I: And what could have been something new and surprising?

A: I wouldn't know the answer to this question. All I know is that everything they show is already a part of my identity as a Romanian.

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: The ones that have an objective perspective think about corruption, think about the fact that unlike other countries we are not able to eradicate it. And from my opinion the ones who bad mouth their country lack of education, are ignorant, they are the ones who haven't seen other countries, so they don't have a term of comparison.

I: What about the Romanians who have travelled or lived abroad?

A: Then, I think that is normal for a country who has crossed the communist bridge only 25 years ago to be less advanced than other countries from the West, in which case they see only the positive aspects there, positive aspects that make Romania's negative ones to stand out.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: hospitality, natural beauty and altruism. As for the negative ones, you said: corruption, unemployment and abusive deforestation. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: Regarding the positive aspects, these three are the ones that for me have value. I deem hospitality as a characteristic of the Romanian people, just as well as altruism. As for the natural beauty, this aspect cannot be contested, only the ones who haven't visited Romania can doubt the fact our country is truly beautiful.

I: Why do you think hospitality is a characteristic of the Romanian people in comparison with others?

A: It's probably part of our traditions just as well as the lack of hospitality might be part of other countries' tradition. I think that when you travel around our country, whether you are a Romanian or a foreigner, when you arrive in an unknown territory, surely someone will open their doors for you and you will be provided with what you ask for.

I: And what do you understand by altruism when thinking about Romania?

A: I think that the majority of Romanians thinks about others first and then about themselves.

I: And now could you expand on the negative aspects?

A: Well, corruption is a negative aspect and the Romanian authorities still have work to do in regards to this. It persists and I think that instead of diminishing, it's taking a larger scale. The unemployment is also a real problem amongst Romanians, and it's determined by the privatization of a lot of former state institutions and objectives. After this privatization, they've generated a large number of unemployed people. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying privatization is a bad thing, but it was made to fit the undertaker's interests.

I: So, in a way you find that the unemployment has a connection to corruption?

A: Surely, yes.

I: And the abusive deforestation?

A: I've perceived this aspect by visiting certain parts of Romania and I think it's a huge mistake to cut down an entire forest just to get rich

I: About this deforestation, the commercials are based on natural and mountain landscapes. Do you think that if we continue cutting down trees at this rate, we won't have anything else to promote?

A: Surely, an entire disforest forest makes a desolating image in comparison with a fir tree forest that can be found in the mountain region and that can give you a good feeling of revival.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: If I were to start with the negative ones, I would strictly refer to infrastructure, in the sense that in other countries you don't encounter this problem, you don't encounter unpaved roads, and other countries have highways. As for the positive aspects, I don't know, I always feel good when I come back to Romania, because this is where my home is.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix 9- Interview no. 6

Name: Liliana, female

Age: 53 years old, lives in Germany

Duration: 34:03 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 53 years old

I: Thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: I think it's a unitary concept made out of our history, our language and traditions, out of our territory and our culture.

I: Why would you include territory here?

A: Because it's the land where our ancestor lived and where we are currently living. This is where we were born and grew up, we our ancestors and the ones that will follow after us.

I: And do you think the concept of national identity extends only to the ones who are living on our territory, or would you include the Romanians that are living abroad as well?

A: The ones that live abroad as well. It matters not, where you are, if you were born and raised in Romania, you are Romanian.

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought

that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the medieval period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one, and not others like the communist, interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: Because that is when the foundation of our people was laid, that is when the principalities were united. From my perspective, that is when we started to truly call ourselves Romanians.

I: And why not the interwar period, known for a cultural boom?

A: In the interwar period our country knew a beautiful development and progress, but the foundation of our people can be traced back to medieval ages.

I: Why do you say that in the interwar period Romania knew a beautiful progress?

A: Well, in that period Romania was well-known abroad, our capital, Bucharest was called The Little Paris, and everything developed beautifully. Romanians had a beautiful life.

I: Are you referring to a cultural development?

A: Both cultural and economical.

I: Why economical?

A: Because if I were to compare that time to the present, Romanians back then lived better and their lives were more beautiful.

I: Why were their lives beautiful?

A: I think because they did not lack anything, they did not have worries about whether or not they would have food the next day. They did not have to leave their country to work abroad in order to sustain their families. Back then young people left to study abroad, maybe not all of them, maybe only the rich ones, but everybody knew about their stories in France and in Paris, and how well they represented Romania. Back then people had different customs and there was a different type of civilization. Now, I've come to the conclusion that even though the Romanians travel a lot abroad, they fail in bringing civilization back with them.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: Well, when I think about the communist period, I think of a dark and poisonously age for Romania.

I: Could you elaborate why?

A: Well, starting from how Romanians were limited and restricted. They weren't allowed to travel abroad, to see different thing, basically they were sort of imprisoned. Traditions were on the brink of extinction. We weren't allowed to keep them and follow our traditions and customs. We were supposed to follow and respect only what communists deemed as appropriate. As for the fall of this regime, it was meant to be positive, by escaping this yoke, we should have had a positive outcome. It's just that maybe Romanians did not fully understand what they've escaped from and what they've could have had and done with all this freedom. They did not use their freedom wisely.

I: Are you trying to say that the communism fall did not have positive effects?

A: Yes, not exactly positive. Romanians did not understand democracy, they way they should have.

I: Why do you think so?

A: Because they did not understand it. They don't know how to behave, for them democracy resumes to freedom of speech, but they took advantage of it badly. They did not understand it then, I believe they still don't understand it.

I: You said earlier that during communism our traditions were restricted. Do you fell than with the fall of this regime they were able to pick them up where they've left them? This question goes for the prior culture as well.

A: No, no

I: Could you explain why?

A: Well, a new generation came, a generation that isn't that concerned with traditions and culture. Sometimes, they don't even know the history of our country. I for instance belong to an older generation. I lived through communism and through its fall and the transition period and I can say that perhaps what is important for my generation, what meant something for us, it might not have the same meaning and value for youngsters. The younger generation does not attribute the same importance to traditions, sometimes they even think they are rubble.

I: Could you provide an example of what has meaning for you and for the younger generation doesn't? For example, a tradition, a custom, anything that they younger generation might label as rubble?

A: For instance, traditions present in the countryside, in villages. Let's take the winter holidays, we used to have different traditions like caroling, where children would go from house to house and wish all sorts of good things to the people living there. We had carols like Plugusorul or Sorcova. Nowadays, you see kids doing this seldom. Even though in the communist ages, they were banned from doing so, at least we the older ones got to see this tradition, we knew its significance and I believe this gave a certain charm to the whole holiday season. It felt different back then, Christmas felt different.

I: After the fall, Romania went through a transition period. Do you think this transitory phase influenced our national identity, in the sense that Romania and Romanians were confused and the country struggled in finding its voice, in defining what means to be Romanian?

A: In my opinion, I think we are still in a transitory phase. The transition period is still going on. We weren't able to move on; we still don't know what we want and how we want it. Or at least, if a few of us know what we want, we cannot achieve it.

I: Could you tell me why?

A: Because it's like the majority is living in a nebula. There's also the concern for the day, that's about to come and the hard living conditions. Maybe this concern makes them feel like this. One thing is for sure, I think that we are still in a transition period and this affects us greatly.

I: In what sense it affects us?

A: I think from all points of view, because we haven't found a road that's ours. A lot of years have passed since the fall of the communist regime and we should have passed this transition period, to have an economic growth, like other countries, even though we will never reach their level, but at least to have a visible starting point, which in Romania's case can't be seen. Also, I don't know how much longer this transition will take.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes? ? Do you think the Romanian ones will lose their values and traditions and implement others from the West?

A: There is a possibility. There is a possibility for the younger generation to forget about our own traditions and to adopt new ones, to copy them. But, I consider that our traditions are much more beautiful in comparison with what we can copy from others.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: I don't see this campaign as suitable for Romanians. I think this campaign would be great for foreigners, to promote our country abroad.

I: Why do you think the message is not suitable for Romanians? Do you think it's a bad message?

A: No, it's not that it's a bad message; it's just that it's more applicable to foreigners. It's a good way for them to get to know our country. I think that for me and for the older generation it's sort of redundant. I know everything I have seen in the TV spot. I don't know what effects, what impact it might produce on younger Romanians.

I: But how about the message: "Discover the place where you feel reborn". You don't think this message could address Romanians as well, only foreigners?

A: I wouldn't know the answer to this question. The best I can do is to compare what I've seen abroad with what I've seen back home. Romanians are sorrow, they have a lot of problems, thus I don't know what impact this message might have, and I don't know how much this message can actually transmit this feeling of rebirth, when Romanians don't have a certainty about what the future might bring.

I: Do you think this campaign addresses or is more suitable for the younger generation, a generation who might have forgotten about our values and traditions, about how beautiful our country is, or they who simply doesn't know these aspects? Do you see it as a remembrance?

A: Possibly. I find it more adequate for youngsters than for us the elder ones.

I: Or do you think it's addressed to people from the urban areas, which are too busy with their day to day lives, thus forgetting about Romanian traditions and values?

A: No, as I said before, I think is more adequate for the younger generations. Maybe they don't know their country that well and maybe it would be a great idea for them to actually discover Romania.

Maybe this will make them think twice before even considering leaving the country. Maybe by discovering how beautiful their country is they would unite and contribute in doing something good for this country, to help develop it and to love it.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, I don't know whether you are aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released or not, but, can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Yes, I do

I: So, according to what you've stated in the beginning of the interview, that for you national identity consists of: our history, our language and traditions, our territory and our culture. Do you find all these elements in the commercials?

A: Yes, I think that with these commercials they've approached all these elements.

I: After seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: I think I would have merged all these three commercials in one single video, so that it would contain as many elements of national identity as possible. To have them all in the same place. To have a smoother transition between images.

I: Yes, such a video exists, but it takes approximately 2 minutes. You have to take into account that these commercials were aired on national TV stations and they had to be cropped in 30 seconds or so.

A: Ok, I understand, but I would still prefer a lengthier video, so that foreigners can see how our country looks like.

I: Why foreigners?

A: Because I believe Romania needs a stronger promotion abroad.

I: And why not have it promoted to Romanians?

A: I think it's a good idea to promote it to Romanians as well, but I think the emphasis should be placed on foreigners, because we need to attract tourists from other countries.

I: Do you think Romanians might be the target audience because a lot of them are choosing to spend their vacation abroad? And the message is to remind them that Romania is also very beautiful and they could opt for it as a vacation destination?

A: Well, Romanians choose other countries as vacation destinations, because sometimes they can find cheaper services there. We don't have a good infrastructure yet. So far we didn't know how to successfully promote our country for ourselves, let alone to promote Romania to foreigners. Apart from this everything is too expensive in Romania compared with other countries that offer similar or even better services, for example, the seaside in Bulgaria is cheaper than in Romania.

I: In what sense we failed in promoting Romania?

A: Because I don't know how many other countries know about Romania, how it look, how we Romanians truly are. What I've seen and what I know is that abroad Romanians have a poor image; they are not seen in a positive light.

I: And you believe this negative attitude that foreigners have towards Romanians is generated by our lack in a good branding strategy?

A: Not just by this lack but I also think is generated by some Romanians that have left the country and have done really bad things abroad. Let's say we would have had a great national brand and great strategies in promoting Romania, it would all have been in vain. What use of all these, if when they come and visit our country they encounter a bad infrastructure, they break their cars on our roads. I believe that a good infrastructure counts a lot, because if you ask a foreigner who has been to Romania about his or her experience here, a complaint about infrastructure will be the first thing you will hear from them.

I: If you say that we failed in promoting Romania, how do you feel about the latest nation brand 'Explore the Carpathian Garden'? Do you think it succeeds in promoting our country the way it should be promoted? Before answering, take into consideration that these three commercials you have just seen, are part of the 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' nation brand.

A: It promotes Romania better in comparison with other campaigns and other branding efforts.

I: Speaking of other campaigns, Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with them, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find the commercials higher in quality? Do you think Romania has started heading towards a better direction with these commercials and with this new nation brand?

A: Yes, I think it's a good direction, but I still feel that more efforts need to be put into this nation brand.

I: What efforts are you referring to?

A: To continue with these campaigns, because they are better than the old ones, you can see an improvement, you can see an emphasis on things that really matter, but they need to continue with the campaign, there is still work to be done in this area.

I: So you feel they should extend this campaign internationally?

A: If we want to promote and to have a nation brand, yes

I: Do you think these commercials could generate an impact on how foreigners perceive Romania?

A: Maybe in time, yes, but for this impact to occur I think is equally important to have a contribution from the behalf of Romanians, especially from the ones that live abroad.

I: In what sense should they contribute?

A: They should create a beautiful image of Romania, a thing that seldom happens. Generally speaking, when abroad, Romanians tend to create a bad image about themselves and about their country.

I: OK, coming back to the commercials. If I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: I think the amount is way too high.

I: Could you justify why?

A: I believe every Romanian looking at the country's shortcomings will find this amount high.

I: Don't you think Romania deserves to have this amount of money invested in building its image, an image that could help us be recognized abroad and inland?

A: No, don't get me wrong. I consider that Romania deserves a well-built image, but I don't know if we can afford this, that's the problem. I agree with the fact that we need a nation branding and that we need to attract tourist, but for them to come and visit Romania, we need to create certain conditions for them and not just for them, for us as well. It's not enough to have pretty images in a commercial. Foreigners need to come to Romania to get to know us, even though a part of Romanians are better left unknown.

I: To what part of Romanians are you referring to?

A: To the ones that have distorted our country's image, even the ones that are living abroad.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: Because I already knew all those things. It was nothing new for me; therefore it couldn't produce a change in my perception. I think we have a beautiful country and that it is a pity we don't know how to take advantage of its beauty, and it's also a pity that others can't or won't come and visit Romania.

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: Probably they don't love their country enough. I don't know. Maybe they adapt quickly to other cultures and they settle with whatever amount of money they earn there, they get accustomed with the development that other countries have.

I: And do you think that the fact they can easily adapt to other environments, justifies bad mouthing their own country?

A: No, I don't think that's a reason. The only justification I can find in this, is that they don't love their own country enough. I myself, for instance, believe that I am Romanian no matter the place I travel to

and I have to love my country, I have to brag about how beautiful it is, no matter the good the bad aspects, no matter the place abroad or in Romania. I never thought it's better to speak well about others and to besmirch my own country, even though others find this ok and actually do this, and by doing so, they make others feel ashamed they are Romanians.

I: Have you ever experienced this kind of shame?

A: Yes, but I've always tried to defend my country and to speak well about Romania, especially when I've heard what other Romanians have done and said. But, there are a lot of Romanians who feel so ashamed, that they don't want to hear about their country anymore, and they probably want to think they belong to other cultures now. I for one can't understand their attitude and I can't figure an explanation for this.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: hospitality, beautiful traditions and remarkable landscapes. As for the negative ones, you said: corruption, poverty and theft. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: Well, positive first. We have a really beautiful country; few others are as beautiful as Romania. I have seen other countries, and I don't find them as beautiful as my own.

I: From what perspective do you find Romania beautiful?

A: From all points of view. We have diverse landforms, it's like a godsend gift for us, but we don't know how to take advantage of it. Others don't have what we have and we are not fully aware of this.

I: Could you provide an example?

A: I don't know, the landscape itself. When you go in the mountains, there are breathtaking landscapes, or at the seaside. Others have a seaside as well, but we have them all in the same place. It's true, when you travel abroad, you find this modern and civilized world, everything is arranged and clean things we lack, especially in the rural regions. But, looking at Romania as an ensemble, I think it is way more beautiful. As for traditions, I think our traditions are one of a kind, and they should be kept and preserved. Our traditional customs and traditional dances, they have a certain charm. In regards to hospitality, this aspect cannot be contested. I have never seen people so hospitable as Romanians no matter where I've travelled.

I: You said that rural regions are not modernized?

A: Not at all, unfortunately

I: Do you think Romania was able to preserve the architecture from medieval and interwar ages?

A: In the rural region, yes, because this region is still undeveloped, but in the urban areas, no.

I: Are you saying that in urban areas we weren't able to harness our architecture?

A: Yes, they tried to modernize everything, and created a chaos. The architecture is not combined; you find a new building next to old and historical ones, so no.

I: Compared with other countries, do you think they were able to preserve their old buildings?

A: Yes, they knew how to combine modernity with history. Or, at least they've kept a constant line. In Romania this wasn't the case, maybe because we went through that communist period and when we switched to democracy, we started going wild, sort of speaking. As I said before, it's chaos.

I: In these conditions, do you think we should only focus on nature, still kept in its wild state, in order to brand our country?

A: Not only on nature, on peoples' hospitality as well, even though I don't know how they could brand this. The only way to find out how hospitable Romanians are is to come and visit Romania

I: What about the negative aspects?

A: Well, corruption and theft these are present in Romania at the time speaking. This is what the government has done, that's also why we lack that development I was speaking about. And if the ones that are supposed to be leaders are corrupt and steal, then the example they've provided has spread to commoners.

I: Would you connect the negative aspects: corruption, theft and poverty to the government?

A: Yes, that is the starting point. Who's to blame for our poverty? We have to admit that we are poor, we try to make it day by day, a phenomenon you don't encounter in the West, where they have a financial stability.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: Negatives are the ones I have been talking about: infrastructure, corruption, poverty, things that leave you with a bad taste when you enter Romania. As for positive, no matter what, I love my country and when I came back this is my home.

I: Ok, all the above being said, thank you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix 10-Interview no. 7

Name: Andra, female

Age: 24 years old, lives in Romania

Duration: 33:25

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour or so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 24 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: I think is a concept consisting of a country's history and culture and of defining elements.

I: Would you say these defining elements are the ones that differentiate us from others?

A: No necessarily, I think these elements might be encountered in other nations as well.

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the medieval period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one, and not others like the communist, interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: Because I believe it best describes the Romanian people and its features. I think this period influences the way I would describe Romanians today. Taking each of them by exclusion, communism had an impact on our national identity, but I don't deem it as the main historical period, nor the interwar period.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: From my point of view Romania passed from one extreme to the other. Right now the country is at a total opposite in comparison with the communist period. This is not necessarily a good thing. All this libertinage that best describes what happens in Romania nowadays is sort of a consequence of this fall. I think that we have a lot of excesses, due to the shortcomings from the communist period.

I: And do you think Romania was able to pick up that cultural boom, all those traditions and values from the Interwar period from where it was left when the communist regime took over?

A: Regarding traditions and customs, I don't think so. On the contrary, I don't see Romanian traditions very present. There are less and less places in Romania, where traditions are still being kept. For example, Christmas and Easter are being celebrated in accordance with traditions only in a couple of regions. I would say that religion is an element that has survived, but it just survived.

I: Do you feel that religion has lost its value, its significance? Do you perceive it as a business?

A: No, not necessarily. There are simply people who have faith in God and want to express their religion and there are people who aren't interested in this subject.

I: Do you perceive this fall as negative? I mean negative in the sense that maybe today our identity is not unitary at a national level or in the sense that this transition period generated confusion for Romania, until the country found its voice and established what truly means to be Romanian?

A: Yes. Actually, I think we are still in this transition process. Romania is still searching for its identity.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes? Or do you think the EU imposed rules will alter them?

A: Yes

I: For example, we've started implementing new traditions, ones that are more Westernized or Americanized, like Halloween or Valentine's Day and we have the equivalent of Valentine's Day, it's Dragobete. Still, we chose to celebrate Valentine's? Do you think the Romanian ones, like Christmas or Easter, will lose their values and significance?

A: I'm not sure it's about implementing new traditions. I think that nowadays everything is very commercial and this is due to globalization and due to the technology in evolution, and that's a reason why they might lose their significance.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: Well, a thing I've noticed about Romanians is their tendency to consider everything that is traditional and made in Romania as negative and inferior in quality, while everything that comes from abroad is better. This might be a reason why this campaign might be considered a good idea. Still, I find it pretty weak and I don't know what results it might have.

I: Do you think the younger generation, born after 1989 has forgotten about traditions and Romanian values or simply they don't know about them? Because, these commercials try to present a couple of Romanian traditions and customs, for example, they depict transhumance, some culinary habits, and different aspects of life in the countryside like pottery.

A: Yes, I believe the younger generation doesn't know about these traditions and customs.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released? Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Yes.

I: After seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: It's not like I would add something, it's just that I don't find this campaign promoted enough.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with former campaigns, if you remember any, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find them high in quality?

A: I think these three commercials contain almost everything that I would associate with national identity. For me the purpose of this campaign is unclear, maybe this campaign tries to present something and that's all.

I: Do you think this campaign would address foreigners better?

A: Yes, definitely. Actually, when I first saw the commercial from the survey, my first thought was that this campaign was made for an international audience.

I: If I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: When I first saw one of these commercials, I remembered about a presentation video for Malaysia. It was a video that really impressed me. Our commercial gave me a similar feeling to that. I think these commercials are really well done, but still 4 million Euros are a lot. Especially if it's just a campaign for Romanians, aiming at informing or reminding them about Romania.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: Because I knew pretty well all the elements presented by the campaign. I'm a nationalist person, so I was aware of the traditions as well

I: Are you trying to say that it failed to generate a change, because it's not bringing anything new?

A: Yes, this too. But I also think it failed to generate a change because it's not enough. I don't think that with three commercials you can bring people closer to the traditions and change their minds. And as you said it did not bring anything new. I can't say I've visited all those places showed in the commercials, but

I can't say either say that the commercials make me want to go and visit them. Also, I think the reasons why I would choose to visit a different country should be analyzed.

I: From your perspective, how could you bring people closer to traditions?

A: Well, first of all, I don't know if Romanians really want to be brought closer to the traditions.

I: Do you think they wish to forget about everything related to folklore and traditions because they feel it's not representative for them anymore?

A: Not necessarily. It's difficult to generalize.

I: Do you think Romanians might be the target audience because a lot of them are choosing to spend their vacation abroad? And the message is to remind them that Romania is also very beautiful and they could opt for it as a vacation destination?

A: Not necessarily

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: I don't know, maybe because the negative aspects affect their lives more than the positive ones. For example, if I were to describe Romania to a foreigner, I would probably tell him about our landscapes, traditions and about Romanian hospitality and that's pretty much it. But, all these things fail in influencing my day to day life, while the negative ones affect me.

I: And are you trying to say that this harsh living generated by negative aspects makes people forget about how beautiful their country is and to bad mouth it? To focus only on the bad and to overlook the good?

A: Yes, that's what I think

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: landscapes, traditions and hospitality. As for the negative ones, you said: poverty, the lack of infrastructure and the lack of civilization. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: Well, the positive ones are the only three good things I could say about Romania.

I: You said earlier, that a part of our tradition was lost or destroyed. In these conditions, would you still include traditions in the positive category?

A: Yes, it's true, but when I've completed the questionnaire, I thought that this campaign was aimed at foreigners, to attract tourists in Romania. So, I was thinking that we have some circuits around the country, where they can get to see some traditions and customs. This is something that foreigners find interesting and something that makes them come and visit Romania. So, some traditions are being revived for them, for example, they can go to Maramures and see and an ensemble of traditional dances.

I: Do you think these traditions are being revived only for foreign tourists?

A: No, for Romanians as well, but I don't think Romanians are interested in this return to traditions.

I: Do you think that the negative aspects you have mentioned have a say in this? I mean, do Romanians become less and less interested in traditions because of their harsh living?

A: I don't think poverty has anything to do with this. I think their lack of interest is more related to the lack of civilization, because somehow Romanians want to get rid of this label of 'peasants'. They somehow associate this concept, this term with traditions, and I think this is one of the reasons they choose to distance themselves.

I: So, you are trying to say that Romanians provide a negative connotation to rural regions?

A: Yes, and implicitly to traditions, because they are part of the rural environment. They want to distance themselves from the countryside.

I: You've also stated poverty and bad infrastructure as negative aspects. Do you think they are connected to the political system?

A: Mostly, yes.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: Well, mostly when I returned to Romania from different places, I returned with a bitter taste. Almost every time I've travelled abroad, I've noticed how civilized other Europeans are. I don't know I would include as negative the lack of civilization and education, the cleanliness that you find in other countries and the beggary you find in Romania.

I: From what perspective would you consider Romanians uneducated or uncivilized? Are you referring to the educational system?

A: Not only the educational system. For example, I can compare Romania with Austria, where you can find clean streets. And the people there have common sense; for instance, when you cross over a street the drivers don't honk and rush you. On the other side, last summer I've visited Greece and I was pretty disappointed in the conditions I've encountered there. And apart from this, I went to a Greek evening there and I was surprised to see how other tourists, mostly English, were to see those traditional dances. And in that moment I thought that our traditional dances are way more beautiful and way more interesting. That was the first time, I've actually missed Romania and I've realized that what we have is so much more beautiful and if we would have a good branding strategy we could attract more tourists. Still, don't get me wrong a great nation brand is not sufficient, we also need to improve other aspects, like the ones I was talking about: infrastructure, civilization, misery.

I: Is there any positive aspect you have noticed?

A: I think the people. Regardless of their lack of civilization and common sense, Romanians are very open people. And I think it's also about that feeling of being home.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix 11- Interview 8

Name: Irina, female

Age: 37 years old, lives in Romania

Duration: 46:57

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 37 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: When I think about national identity, I think about the elements that can characterize it, respectively: the Romanian language, Romanian traditions, Romanian gastronomy, and folklore.

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the medieval period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one, and not others like the communist, interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: I chose the medieval period, because as far as I'm concerned, this is the period in which our national identity was formed. When I state this, I think about the fact that during that time the three main Romanian principalities were united. This union was a desideratum which these three principalities had for a very long time. It is an event which materialized our ancestors' efforts. A first attempt at this union was first made during Mihai the Greta's reign and it finally succeeded in 1848, giving birth to the Romanian state, to Romanian language and to all the traditions known even today.

I: Are you saying the Romanian language did not exist prior to this union?

A: No, it did exist, but what I'm trying to say is that in this period all these elements merged together, creating our nation. I think that this Romanian unit was formed then, but it continued to grow and to develop later on, especially in the Interwar period. Basically, the Interwar period was a development period. Everybody knows the Interwar years were the Romania's Golden Age. It was a time when Romania became worldwide known and extremely appreciated in Europe.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: I wouldn't know how it actually affected our national identity. I do however think that our national identity preserved itself during that time, in spite of all the oppressions. Basically, Romanians did not have the freedom of speech, they were not allowed to travel abroad, they did not have access to information, but I think these interdictions did not succeed in destroying our national identity. On the contrary, as I've already said, it managed to survive. Furthermore, these interdictions generated a strong, unified feeling amongst Romanians.

I: And do you think Romania was able to pick up that cultural boom from the Interwar period from where it was left when the communist regime took over? Also, do you think the transition phase influenced our national identity, in the sense that Romania and Romanians were confused and the country struggled in finding its voice, in defining what means to be Romanian?

A: From my perspective, even after the communism fall our national identity remained the same, it did not get lost. It's true that the period that followed was a confusing and chaotic one, making people feel baffled, but slowly this feeling of confusion vanished. Also, if we are referring strictly to national identity, definitely this was preserved and after things calmed down it started to further develop, thanks to all that newly gained freedom. Thanks to access to literature and culture, to art forms which during the Ceausescu years were diminished, Romania started once again to develop, culturally speaking, and to regain its rightful place in Europe.

I: What is Romania's rightful place in Europe?

A: Well, before adhering to the European Union, it was like Romania did not even exist, like it wasn't a part of the continent. It's a wrong mentality, I know. We've always been part of Europe, it's just that because certain countries of Eastern Europe were part of the communist bloc, while the West

developed in democracy and capitalism, a rupture between East and West took place. Basically, this rupture did not exist before communism, in the interwar period. Back then all countries were democratic, strongly enlightened, as I've said. A lot of Romanians did their studies in France, graduating from prestigious universities.

I: And do you think this rupture between East and West has disappeared nowadays?

A: It exists from a financial point of view. Western European countries had a democratic political system, enabling them to have a more developed economy, so this difference between East and West will still exist for an extended period of time. But artistically and culturally speaking, I don't think there are any more differences.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes?

A: In principle, not. There is a possibility for Romanian gastronomy to suffer some changes, in the sense that some traditional products may not correspond to EU regulations. The EU imposes certain quality standards; therefore some traditional products may disappear because they are not in accordance with these standards.

I: But what about holidays? We've already started adopting new holidays, they are not so much European as they are American, like Valentine's Day or Halloween, therefore, do you think that gradually our own holidays will lose their value and meaning?

A: I think that our traditions and customs, our holidays will remain as they are, because in the end, we are Romanians and these traditions are part of who we are. There is a risk for future generations though. I think youngster will lose their contact with these traditions. Some won't find out about them, while some will just lose interest in them. Maybe they will find other holidays from abroad more attractive, although those aren't defining us as Romanians; they have nothing to do with us. But, as long as we will provide an education in this sense for our young people, I think our traditions will pass on from generation to generation.

I: Do you think these traditions are more common in the countryside?

A: Yes, obviously. They were better kept in the rural regions.

I: And if they were to disappear from the urban regions, how do you think youngsters will be able to learn about them?

A: I don't think they will disappear from urban regions. They are traditions and customs that are being passed on from generation to generation. A lot of them are very beautiful, so the young ones still keep and follow them.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: To answer this question, I think we could discuss on two levels: a campaign for Romanians and a campaign for foreigners. If we consider this campaign addressed to Romanians, then I think they have forgotten a little to rejoice in Romania's beauties, maybe because of all the worries they have, because of all the struggles to make it by day by day. And if we are talking about a campaign addressed to foreigners, then it's because Romania is a country worth seeing and visiting, and because at the time being Romania is badly perceived by other nations.

I: In what sense badly perceived?

A: At a certain moment in time, Romania had several issues with the roma citizens, and now all Romanians are kind of seen as rromas. An equal between us and them was placed, despite the fact that they are a minority here in Romania. In reality, we have nothing in common with rromas. Also, because a lot of foreigners think that Romania is a country which lacks in culture and civilization, a poor country often compared to the poorest countries in Africa. A false perception and I think I would be a great idea for foreigners to visit Romania and to discover that Romania has beautiful landscapes and people, that Romanians are hospitable and that all those things they've heard are not true.

I: Do you think this campaign addresses or is more suitable for the younger generation born after 1989, a generation who might have forgotten about our values and traditions, about how beautiful our country is, or they who simply doesn't know these aspects? Do you see it as a remembrance?

A: I don't think this campaign is addressed exclusively to the younger generation. I think it addresses everybody.

I: But do you think the younger generation has forgotten about traditions and Romanian values?

A: Yes. Probably there is younger ones have a tendency to take over a lot of things from other nations, to take over their lifestyle, a lifestyle that isn't that characteristic for us Romanians, due to the fact that we have different tempers.

I: So don't you think that tendency will change in time our national identity?

A: There is a risk, but I think that as long as we realize that we are Romanians, and that we will remain so until we die, this risk is minimized.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, I don't know whether you are aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released or not, but, can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Yes, absolutely. As I've said at the beginning of this interview, the elements which I think compile our national identity are: traditions, gastronomy, landscapes and our language, and I have found all these elements captured in all three commercials.

I: Why are landscapes a component of national identity? Why are landscapes defining for Romania?

A: I'm sure each and every country has its beautiful side, but Romania benefits from everything. I don't how many other countries have all types of landforms. We have mountains, we have the sea, we have hills and plains, and we have the Danube Delta.

I: What about gastronomy? Do you think it's a distinctive aspect of our national identity?

A: Yes, Romanian gastronomy is part of our culture and of our traditions. Surely, in other countries, it's the same. They have specific elements and traditional foods, and I think gastronomy is part of each country's identity and culture.

I: What do you think about religion?

A: Now that you've mentioned it, I think religion is also an element pertaining to national identity and I've omitted it.

I: Why do you think religion is part of our national identity?

A: Because Romanians are very faithful. Basically, religion is an important element that can be found in our everyday life. Religion's importance was best revealed during the communist age, when it was forbidden to go to church, when a lot of churches were demolished. But, despite all these, religion was kept alive, people remained united and continued to have faith even with the risk of having problems with the regime, and not only for religion, for their ideals they were willing to bear the consequences.

I: Do you think this feeling of unity you are describing was due to oppression? People were more willing to go to church because it was something forbidden? Or do you think this faith is still present today?

A: Faith is still present today, because just like I was telling you religion is a part of us. Religion is still kept alive today by going to church by praying.

I: So you don't think religion has turned into a business?

A: Not for the ordinary people. For the common man, religion is something they can sort of rely on. When everything else fails to work, it can sometimes become the only support a person can find. Maybe it has turned into a business for the church rulers, but I couldn't make a statement in this sense.

I: After seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: In principle, they are pretty well structured and encompass a lot of elements. Maybe a couple of Romanian personalities could be presented, personalities who have shaped our history and national identity, and also a couple of personalities that have contributed artistically and culturally to our national identity.

I: One of these commercials actually showcases Romanian art forms, for example the Infinite Column by Constantin Brancusi. Would you say that that is not enough?

A: I know we have more works of arts that can be presented, not just this one. At the same time, I think that whoever came with the creative concept behind these commercials chose Brancusi because he is a worldwide known artist. Globally speaking, I think everybody knows who Constantin Brancusi was.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with previous campaigns, if you remember any, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find them high in quality?

A: I believe these commercials are designed better. They do communicate the message they are meant to communicate. I think that they sort of succeed in arousing the viewer's curiosity and the wish to come and visit Romania.

I: And what the situation in which Romanian's are the target audience?

A: Well, in this case, I think commercials would only remind Romanians how beautiful their country is and they would remind them of the fact that it's a country worth seeing or revisiting, for those who haven't done this by now.

I: how do you feel about the latest nation brand 'Explore the Carpathian Garden', a brand that in the beginning was surrounded by a huge scandal involving the Ministry of Tourism? Do you think it succeeds in promoting our country the way it should be promoted? Are we heading in a good direction with this brand? Before answering, take into consideration that these three commercials you have just seen, are part of the 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' nation brand.

A: I think that despite all the scandals, our nation brand is finally starting to head towards a normal and good direction. Still, I consider it would have been very important to have this latest campaign aired outside Romania as well. Sadly, I think at an international level Romania is very little promoted.

I: So you feel they should extend this campaign internationally?

A: Absolutely. We, Romanians know all these things about our country and it is important for foreigners to come and see all these things. Once again, I believe that our nation branding has taken a good direction and we should extend this internationally. Also, from what I've seen from the news apart from these branding campaigns we started receiving some help from outside the country as well.

I: Could you give an example?

A: I'm talking about Prince Charles, who has come and visited Romania. Furthermore, he even bought a house in one of our villages from Ardeal and almost every summer he spends there.

I: Do you think these commercials will make people forget about all the scandals involving the logo and our national brand?

A: I think so. In the end all that matters is how we promote Romania.

I: If I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: It's hard to appreciate this. I could give you a concrete answer if I'd know the impact that they've generated and their results. That is why I believe that it would have been better to air this campaign internationally, at least in Europe. Then, we could have seen some results, an increased number of foreign tourists or something like that.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: Because there wasn't something to be changed in my attitude towards Romania. I live here and I know all the bad and the good things. That's why I'm saying the target group is wrong. They could have changed something in a foreigner's perception for example.

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: I think they have a negative attitude towards certain things. I don't think they could generalize and say that everything about Romania is bad. It's wrong to say and to think this. Surely, there are extremely bad things that need to be changed in Romania, things we have struggled with for a long time, things the political class doesn't want to change, but to say that Romania and Romanians are bad it's completely

wrong and exaggerated. It is true Romania has problems like corruption, unemployment, but it's still a beautiful country with hospitable and warm people.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: welcoming people, gorgeous landscapes and beautiful traditions. As for the negative ones, you said: corruption, indiscipline and financial uncertainty. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: I chose them because these were the first three that came to mind when I thought about Romania. As I've said, Romanians are very welcoming and hospitable; they are that type of people who try and help you when you have a problem, who welcome you to their table even if they don't know you. The landscapes are extremely beautiful in the mountains, in the Danube Delta etc. No one can contest their beauty. And traditions, because they are a part of our culture.

I: Could you give me an example of such traditions?

A: For example, traditional dances.

I: Don't you think traditional dances are more related to folklore?

A: Yes, they are but, at the same time our dances are part of our tradition, they come from ancient times, for example the Calus dance. This dance is specific to certain regions, it is danced only by men, it has a certain significance and it's still being practiced, both in rural and urban environments. In the cities we have dance ensembles and young people have learned these traditional dances, so that they can be kept alive.

I: Could you give other examples?

A: Well, Christmas and Easter traditions, transhumance, a custom that has been practiced from ancient times and that is present in our literature. Every Romanian knows about Miorita, a ballad with a great artistic value, which describes this phenomenon, this activity of raising sheep, an activity that Romanians have been practicing for ages.

I: What about the negative aspects you have listed?

A: I've listed those, because they are the major issues Romania has to deal with right now. Sadly, it seems that we have struggled in overcoming them, taking into account that they have been critical

issues for over 20 years. In all this time corruption has been amplified and the political class is to be blamed. Politicians are the ones who instead of destroying this phenomenon let it take scale. Hopefully, someday we will get rid of it.

I: When you say indiscipline is a negative aspect, what do you understand by this term?

A: Well, everybody has to follow some rules and laws. Despite this, some Romanians think laws don't apply to them as well. What I mean by indiscipline is that some Romanians try to cheat the system.

I: As for financial insecurity?

A: This is the second biggest problem Romania has, in the sense that we have a lot of unemployed people, in the sense that after the age of 40 is very difficult to find a job in Romania. And in the end, it's related to our political class.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way. In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: First of all, the infrastructure, as a negative aspect. Our infrastructure is disastrous and I can't understand why we can't build highways and good roads. You won't see such bad infrastructure in any other European country, not even in Bulgaria, who is our neighbor. And it's very important to have a good infrastructure, because it's the first thing you interact with when you arrive or leave the country. Also, the fact that we weren't able to preserve our historical buildings and artifacts. As for positive aspects, I would say the people. Travelling abroad, you get a huge impact from humans, and Romanians have a warm and welcoming nature. Last but not least, coming back to Romania means coming back home, which gives us a good feeling.

I: Ok, all the above being said, thank you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix 12- Interview 9

Name: Oana, female

Age: 24 years old, lives in Romania

Duration: 26:23

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 24 years old

I: thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: I think national identity is the image of a country, a whole that encompasses tradition, customs, culture, language, history and politics.

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the communist period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one and not others like the medieval, interwar or the Daco-roman period?

A: I consider that communism is the most recent moment, the closest to the present and I believe that its fall has influenced younger generations a lot. People regained their liberty and this thing is visible. Basically, we now have freedom of speech, of thinking, we can travel anywhere we want to, and I think all this freedom has influenced our development of recent years. A lot of youngsters have started expressing their passions and that is why I've chosen this period. Plus, a lot of people started knowing about Romania after communism.

I: I don't think you've understood my question. It seems that you are describing more the effects that the fall of the communist period had. What I meant was: how exactly has communism shaped our culture and our national identity. I thought that you chose communism because you felt like our national identity had its biggest development during those years.

A: Ok, now I understand. Somewhat I still tend to believe that the communist period had the most impact.

I: Could you explain why?

A: Because traditions and culture were repressed. And when repression takes place, people tend to overcome these barriers and I think this sort of helped in achieving and creating our current national identity.

I: So, what you are trying to say is that because of all the oppressions, people were more attached to our culture, traditions and values?

A: Yes, exactly.

I: And coming back to the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity. You've already said it had a positive outcome, but do you think it's also possible for this fall to have generated a negative impact? I mean negative in the sense that maybe today our identity is not unitary at a national level or in the sense that this transition period generated confusion for Romania, until the country found its voice and established what truly means to be Romanian?

A: Not necessarily. It seems to me that people actually started to give greater value to our national identity after the fall. In recent years, efforts have been placed in developing our national identity, into imprinting Romania's contribution to history. Generally speaking, we are trying to stand out through culture and maybe through tourism in front of other nations and in Europe.

I: Speaking of this standing out, Romania has had several attempts at creating a nation brand, but most of them have failed so far. Do you think this is because we didn't know what to communicate, on what to place an emphasis?

A: Honestly, yes. I think a bigger emphasis should be placed on culture, on people, on new ideas, not just on places. Of course, presenting regions from Romania is important because we need to develop our

tourism. But, I think that more actions combined are necessary, a simple commercial will not suffice. They should sustain small B&B's that still keep traditions alive, they should encourage people to visit their own country and they should try and convince foreigners to come and see Romania as well. I think it's very important to convince Romanians to visit Romania, because if we are not able to do so with our own kind, how are we supposed to convince people from outside Romania that's a good idea to come and visit it?

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes?

A: I don't think that our traditions will suffer changes because now we are a member of the EU. I think this change is more related to people and from my point of view; our traditions should be kept and made known abroad as well. I don't know how much influence the EU might have. On one side, we did adopt a lot of holidays from the West, but on the other side, I see that our holidays, our traditions are still being kept.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: Probably because some Romanians don't know anymore what national identity means. We need to go back to our roots, to see where we started from and at the same time encourage others to discover us, to visit our country, and by others I mean people outside Romania.

I: Do you think the younger generation, born after 1989 has forgotten about traditions and Romanian values or simply they don't know about them?

A: I consider that the majority of young people born after the 1989 don't know about them and I think they should. As for the ones who have forgotten, they should be remembered.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, are you aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released? Can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Sure, yes. They transmit elements of national identity. In these commercials I have seen landscapes, works of art, traditions and Romanian foods and from this point of view I find them very good. In less than a minute each commercial succeeds in transmitting everything that's important. Even the music in the background is specific Romanian; it makes you think about Romanian traditions.

I: Is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: Honestly, I wouldn't add anything else. I don't think it's ok to place that much information in a TV spot. I think they are well-balanced, they convey what they are supposed to and they are able to awaken a person's interest. They make you want to find out more about Romania.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with previous campaigns, if you remember any, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find them high in quality?

A: Basically, yes. As I've said earlier, visually and aural they seem to transmit in 30 seconds everything that's important. Compared with older campaigns I wouldn't know what to say. I can't remember any other campaigns right now, but the TV spots are ok.

I: But from all other campaigns do you think this recent branding campaign 'Explore the Carpathian Garden' has the biggest awareness so far?

A: Yes, I think so.

I: And are you satisfied with the brand and its logo, its message?

A: Yes, I think it's a simple and ok logo and an ok brand.

I: OK, coming back to the commercials. If I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these

commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: Honestly, I think it's a lot of money. It's true that I don't know the advertising prices and how much such a campaign would cost, but I think it's a lot. I think we should invest more in other things like people and ideas. The commercials are alright, but the amount spent for them seems high.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania improved after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial succeed in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

I: Well, I can say the impact was positive because it awoke my curiosity and it made me wish I could travel more in Romania. I've also seen places I've already been to, but which I would like to visit again. All in all it made me feel proud about my country.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: traditions, landscapes and culture. As for the negative ones, you said: politicians, stereotypes and the fact that patriotism is discouraged. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: Well, first of all stereotypes. I believe we often encounter stereotypes and it's a problem.

I: What stereotypes do you have in mind?

A: For example, the ones foreigners have about Romanians. We are basically put together with Romanians that do really bad stuff when going abroad. Sometimes they even equal us with Roma citizens. Politicians because corruption is blooming right now and this also leads to stereotypes. We are being labeled in a certain way because of the government and the people who are leading this country, despite the fact that we are different. Not all Romanians are corrupt. As for the discouragement in patriotism, well people in Romania are ambitious, they are willing to do something that can change how things work, it's just that they are not allowed to do so. Also, the younger generation isn't educated in this sense anymore, to be patriotic and to love their country.

I: About these stereotypes you were talking about, do you think that's how others perceive us can be a negative aspect about Romania?

A: Yes, because at the moment we are trying to fit into this European community and if others think ill about us, then this will affect our national identity. We won't be able to express it anymore.

I: Are you saying it's pointless to have a branding campaign as long as foreigners have a bad image about Romania in their minds?

A: No, on the contrary, hopefully this campaign will make them change their attitude about our country.

I: Do you think this latest campaign should be extended internationally as well?

A: Yes, absolutely.

I: What about the positive aspects you have listed?

A: Well, first of all I believe that we have an important culture that is expanding. Also, our traditions and customs are very beautiful no matter the region. And the landscapes are worth seeing; we have wonderful landforms, landforms that other countries might not have.

I: How do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way? In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: I think the reason why Romanians are sometimes against their own country is because of the politicians. They disagree with how they run things, taking into account that if properly exploited, our country can offer a lot of possibilities to our people. But, things are not like this. A lot of Romanians are either forced to leave their country to find work someplace else, either they have to stay in Romania and deal with all the struggles. Maybe this is why some bad mouth their country. Still, I don't agree with their attitude, it's not ok to generalize and to say that everything about Romania is bad. I think Romanians should describe their country in a positive way, especially the ones that are living abroad, they should try improving their national identity, not destroying it.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: Well, the negative aspects are the ones connected to infrastructure, to civilization and to cleanliness. As for the positive aspects, I don't know it's that feeling you get that there's no place like home; this is where you feel safe.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix no 13- Interview 10

Name: Victoria, female

Age: 63 years old, lives in Romania

Duration: 28:58 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 63 years old

I: Thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: National identity is something that contains a nation's culture, traditions, folklore, geography and landscapes.

I: Do you think national identity tells a country apart from others?

A: Yes

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the Interwar period. Could you, please, justify why this particular one and not others like the communist, medieval or the Daco-roman period?

A: Because, from my perspective, in that period Romania had reached its highest development point in various domains. People who lived back then were more educated, other countries had a better perception about Romania, and I find it Romania's best period.

I: You say Romania reached its highest development point, from what points of view did it develop?

A: Economically and socially. Romanians were famous abroad for their education and intellect and the country was also famous for its politicians. In other words, Romania was well known and appreciated.

I: And do you think appreciation and recognition are more important for our national identity in comparison with other grounding elements, like the language or Romania's union?

A: It's not more important, but each of us has a different point of view, and mine is that the Romanian language and people took birth in ancient times. I think the Interwar period is sort of a boom from all points of view. All these elements from medieval and ancient times gathered in time and reached their apogee in the interwar years.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: Well to start with, I don't think the communist period had a contribution to our national identity. As for the fall, I think this kind of jeopardized our national identity.

I: Could you explain why?

A: Because the younger generation mistook liberty with libertinism. For the moment, younger people are interested in all sorts of things, but not in what is characteristic and representative for us Romanians.

I: What would you say that is characteristic and representative for Romanians?

A: Well, our culture, our traditions, folklore.

I: Would you say that the fall of the regime was a bad thing?

A: No, it's just that this fall has widely opened some gates towards the West, towards the exterior, and instead of adopting positive things from that part of the world; we've taken over everything that is bad.

I: So you don't think Romania was able to return to that boom period you were describing earlier. I mean you don't think Romanians were able to pick up national identity from where it was left?

A: No, under no circumstances.

I: Do you think the communist age destroyed our national identity with all the interdictions and oppressions?

A: Well, not the entire communist period was under these oppressions and restrictions. The culture was real and was not under oppression. Plus, other elements managed to survive.

I: In that period, intellectuals and the Orthodox Church were the ones who suffered the most. Despite this, after 1989, people returned to their faith, the church regained its place in peoples' lives. Do you think we were able to do the same with other elements from our national identity, or we are still in a transitory phase, in the sense that Romania and Romanians are confused and the country struggles in finding its voice, in defining what means to be Romanian?

A: The church and our religion were perpetual in peoples' lives, even in the communist years and even if they were more sort of hidden. Today, religion has escaped oppression, but it's not that present in the lives of Romanians anymore. As for the transition period, well people did not know how to handle it. As I said before, a lot of Romanians took over lots of not so positive and not so necessary things from abroad. So, yes Romania was not able to find its voice.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes? ? Do you think the Romanian ones will lose their values and traditions and implement others from the West?

A: The EU is trying to disband and to dissolve them, but I still think that the Romanian traditions and values will survive, in spite of the EU regulations.

I: Do you think that along with all the modernization the EU brings, especially in the countryside, our folklore and our authenticity will disappear?

A: Normally speaking, our traditions and our folklore should resist. Furthermore, I don't think this modernization will catch on that quickly. For most parts of its history Romania was an agrarian society and I think it will remain so in the future.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message "Discover the place where you fell reborn", a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: Because our traditions and customs have survived for a long time and it would be a pity for them to disappear in the future. Therefore, they need to be promoted and restored in the people's mind.

I: In regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, I don't know whether you are aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released or not, but, can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: Yes, they transmit elements that are part of our national identity.

I: After seeing these commercials, is there something else you would like to add to them? For example, are there any elements you consider important, elements which describe our national identity I mean, which you would have included?

A: No, for me it seems that they've managed to catch what essential.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with them, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find the commercials higher in quality? Do you think Romania has started heading towards a better direction with these commercials and with this new nation brand?

A: It's true that Romania has had other branding campaigns in the past, but I think these commercials are better.

I: Could you explain why they are better?

A: They encompass more elements that can be identified with national identity.

I: And if I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: Well, I cannot make an appreciation because I don't know how much this type of commercial costs; therefore I can't say whether it is a lot or a little.

I: But thinking of their quality, you find them well-done?

A: Yes

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: There wasn't anything that they could have changed. Normally speaking, they are not addressed to us, they are destined for foreigners

I: At the moment these commercials have only a Romanian target audience.

A: Yes, what they present it's known, at least I know everything that is the commercials. It's home, it's something normal to exist, to be.

I: So they don't bring anything new to the table?

A: No, they don't.

I: Not even for the younger generation?

A: For the younger generation, yes, for myself, not so much.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: spirituality, tradition and landscapes. As for the negative ones, you said: balkanism, easily to be influenced and betrayal. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: I'm going to start with the negative ones. I think it's clear that we are going through a period in which we didn't know how to choose wisely. Instead, we've chosen poorly, as a proof of that are the influences between the rulers. This balkanism enables all sorts of arrangements.

I: This is what you understand by balkanism?

A: Yes. In Romania's case this principle, that I know somebody or I give something to someone and the problem is fixed, applies.

I: And betrayal? Why betrayal?

A: Betrayal because throughout history we have betrayed our rulers, for example, Michael the Great, Alexandru Ioan Cuza so on and so forth.

I: Let's go back a little to the concept of balkanism. When hearing this word, a lot of people think about something related to the Balkan region, to the Eastern part of Europe.

A: Yes, it has Eastern influences, from Turkey. Romania is in a region where it neighbors all these Eastern European countries, like Bulgaria. We are also fairly close to Turkey. And we've always undertaken bad things from them.

I: Are you associating Balkanism with corruption?

A: Yes.

I: And are you saying that Balkan countries, like Bulgaria and Turkey are corrupt?

A: No, but throughout history they had a lot to deal with corruption. And corruption is a bad habit that has been passed on from generation to generation. Unfortunately, we've undertaken it as well.

I: However, Romania has tried to detach itself from these Eastern European influences by emphasizing its Latin character.

A: Yes, it tried and it succeeded, but there are still some reminiscent aspects, which I perceive and see related to Balkanism.

I: As for the positive aspects? Traditions, spirituality and landscapes?

A: These have always been and will be characteristic for Romania. Romania is a country with remarkable spirituality, its people are very religious. The landscapes are at a certain point unique, they have preserved themselves as beautiful as 200 years ago, an aspect which in other countries did not happen. From the point of view of landscapes and beauty we were able to remain the same as 100-200 years ago, this signifying unity. The wilderness of these clean and beautiful landscapes is unique.

I: Do you think that our natural environments did not suffer alterations in any form?

A: There are regions that were altered, but there are still clean regions. There are still clean regions in this country.

I: Regarding traditions, since you've placed them in the positive category, could you name some that are defining for Romania?

A: For example, religious traditions: Easter and Christmas. These are two important holidays for the Romanian people.

I: Not only Romanians celebrate Easter and Christmas. Why would you say that these holidays are different in Romania?

A: Because in Romania there is an ensemble of traditions and customs, which are being practiced for these two holidays, while I haven't seen in any other place from abroad such celebrations like the ones in Romania.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: From the civilization's point of view, I've come to the conclusion that we are not on the same level with other European countries.

I: What do you understand by civilization?

A: Well, our infrastructure is not on the same level with the one that European countries have. Also, when abroad, I've noticed that Romanians act differently, they act more civilized there.

I: In what way do they act differently abroad? How do they act in their own country?

A: They are more civilized abroad, while in Romania they are guided by the principle: leave it like this, it will go either way, I don't care. This implies that it is not necessary to follow certain rules and to be civilized.

I: What about the positive elements you have observed when returning?

A: Positive elements, I don't know. When you return is like you have arrived home. It doesn't matter that much that our infrastructure is bad, that people are less civilized, this is your home and you feel at ease here. Also, when abroad, you get that feeling of uncertainty and instability.

I: In what sense a feeling of uncertainty and instability?

A: Everything is more superficial there.

I: Are you saying that the feeling of connection does not exist? You feel like you don't belong to a community?

A: This too, but the safety you feel when you are home is higher than the one that you get when travelling abroad. Plus, you don't feel alone in your country.

I: And why are Westerners superficial?

A: They are not interested in others. Everyone is on his/her own there. Communities no longer exist. In Romania that's not the case. Everybody knows everybody, sort of speaking. The neighbors know and help each other. You can't find this cooperation abroad and we are voluble people. We feel the need to talk and to say hello to everybody and this generates a feeling of goodwill.

I: Ok, all the above being said, thank you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome.

Appendix no. 14- Interview 11

Name: Manuela, female

Age: 25 years old, lives in Denmark

Duration: 44:41 minutes

I: First of all, my name is Andra and for the next half of an hour of so I will be addressing you questions regarding the TV commercial you have seen in the already answered questionnaire and regarding the survey. This interview will be recorded and translated into English later on.

A: Ok

I: Would you please state your exact age.

A: 25 years old

I: Thank you. Now let's get to the questions. In case something is unclear, please tell and I will do my best to clarify it for you.

A: Ok

I: Now, first question: Could you please provide a definition for the concept of nation identity. I mean, how do you perceive this term, from your point of view, of course?

A: It's sort of a mix. A recipe between image and perception, and in its core there are different parts which define a country, a nation: from history and culture to the best food that mom cooked. There are two sides, a neutral one and a personal one, and this last one makes it more attractive. That's what identity is. Is something that can be understood by all humans, but at the same time it has to simply and concretely express something more profound, something that actually defines a nation?

I: Ok, in the survey, there were several historical periods listed. I asked each and every person to pick one, which they considered defining for the Romanian national identity. A period which they thought that had the biggest impact in shaping this national identity, and you chose the Interwar period. Could you, please, justify why this one in particular and not others like the communist, medieval or the Daco-roman period?

A: Probably because this was my favorite historical period. After World War I on the 1st of December 1918 after the union, Romania came to be. Starting from that point on, Romanians have been celebrating this union. Maybe for others this is just another day in the calendar, but for me it's more than that. I think it's important to remember that in the end, we are Romanians. We need to be proud of this, we are not just a nation that exists for the sake of existing, and we have fought to be what we are today. Apart from this, there is also my affinity towards the monarchy and Carol I.

I: Do you believe that because Romania was a monarchy back then it had a bigger cultural development, in comparison with other historical periods?

A: I remember that I've studied Romanian literature in school, and the literature from that period was more passionate, if I may say so. And this is why it stuck with me, because culturally you get the feeling that people back then lived for something, fought for something, not necessarily in battle, but fought for this country, a country that is actually big.

I: Do you get the feeling that nowadays people don't fight anymore?

A: Now I get the feeling that one a few are still fighting and no one listens to them.

I: And regarding the communist period, how do you perceive the fall of the communist regime and its impact to the current national identity.

A: If I were to have an external approach, from what I've seen abroad, the general opinion is that we have murdered our ruler. From this perspective, foreigners are confused. They don't know whether to joke about this or to say wow you have had the courage to do this, or they simply ask what is wrong with our kind, why did you do this, wasn't there any other solutions?. There are a lot of stories about the revolution and communism. In the end, a lot of countries have gone through communism, not just Romania. Back then Ceausescu started feeling pride in the fact that we were the last communist country standing, and then people went to revolution. I don't know what exactly happened, I was a new born back then, but when I think about communism and the revolution, I think about change. There was a change, in spite of the communist leaders that followed.

I: And do you think Romania was able to pick up that cultural boom from the Interwar period from where it was left when the communist regime took over? Do you think the fall of the regime had a

positive influence in this sense or do you believe that the Romanians were confused and the country struggled in finding its voice, in defining what means to be Romanian?

A: Well, the culture from the countryside never changed, not even during Ceausescu's regime.

I: Despite the oppressions?

A: Yes, despite them, because it is the village life. Ok, during the war periods, the soldiers took their supplies from village people and when communism came, they had to give all their production to the collective, but traditions were never lost. In the countryside traditions from raising sheep to pottery and the folklore never got lost. You can find these traditions in the present days and in past ones.

Now, taking a general view, yes, people are confused. They got all this freedom after the revolution and we are still talking about the difference between generations, which creates confusion. The young ones, Facebook generation look with confusion towards traditions, while the older generation is confused about everything that's new. For example, our new president, that had his political campaign online. The young generation puts its hope on him, but the older ones are more reticent towards him. For instance, I wasn't able to convince my mother that this man can actually change something in Romania, that there is still hope, not just corruption, and that we can still be proud that we are Romanians.

I: And once with the adherence to the European Union do you think that the Romanian values and traditions will suffer changes? ? Do you think the Romanian ones will lose their values and traditions and implement others from the West?

A: It's fun to have new things, but I don't think our traditions will be changed or that they will disappear. For example, I'm amazed to see that a lot of young Romanians are getting married and they choose to have traditional weddings, they both wear traditional costumes and their whole wedding theme has traditional motifs and elements. And it's something I wouldn't have expected, but I liked it. It means that they are thinking about Romania and they want to go back to their roots. Inevitably, the EU influence will arrive in Romania as well, but if one day we will have Euros instead of Lei it does not mean that Romania has found its end. We might be uniformed on certain levels, but not on a general level. I mean I don't think people can forget about their history and traditions.

I: Why do you feel that Romania needed a campaign with the message “Discover the place where you fell reborn”, a message that implies a return to traditions and customs, to the Romanian culture and nature?

A: I presume it needed such a campaign to create awareness. People migrated towards urban regions and they come back to the countryside to visit their grandparents, and maybe when hearing this message they get a flashback and they remember they should go and visit grandma, maybe she will tell a story about how things were in a different time. I presume that this type of message would imply a return to something that we are no longer living.

I: This migration towards urban regions you are talking about. Do you think that it made, the younger generation to forget or to be less aware of traditions, of the popular culture?

A: In a way, yes. I myself am experiencing this. I best remember about them when I go back home and visit, because I was born in the countryside. But when I do return, I can feel all this traditional spirit, and sometimes I start crying. You can really get this traditional vibe in the countryside. It's just like the commercials say, you return to yourself, and I remember about my childhood and about traditions which I really miss. For example, I live in a foreign country at the moment and here when it's Christmas time I don't get to see carolers, we don't have coils of bread and stuff like this that is connected to Romania.

I: Do you think that in Romania all these customs you are describing are absent from the cities?

A: Kind of, yes. There are present in urban regions, but they are practiced only by a few and with a feeling of embarrassment, sort of speaking.

I: And in regards to the TV commercial you have seen in the survey, I don't know whether you are aware that in December 2014 two more TV promos were released or not, but, can I, please, show them to you, so that we can discuss further on?

A: Yes

I: And now that you have seen all three of them, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: I like that they've used Silent Strike for the soundtrack and I've just realized that the main character is not Romanian.

I: Yes, but despite this, the campaign addresses Romanians, it aired only on local TV stations.

A: I'm ashamed to admit this, but I wasn't aware of this campaign before you showing the commercials to me.

I: It's relatively new, they've launched it in June, but coming back to my question, do you feel that they communicate elements pertaining to the Romanian national identity?

A: What I like best is that they focus on nature. I'm tired of hearing that East European countries are gray. The overall perception about these countries is that everything is gray, that people are poor, that there isn't anything to see there. And now these commercials show nature, they prove that Romania is a beautiful country. Romania is not just a former communist country and people need to get over the whole misconception that we are all poor, that we are all around Europe begging on the streets or that we are only good at picking up strawberries and oranges. We have moved passed that phase. I think that all the elements in the commercial are important for tourists to know, things like the Infinite Column, Bran castle are intended for tourists.

I: So you don't think that the images in the commercial are representative for Romania, do you think they are only touristic attractions?

A: They used to be representative for Romania, but now they've become more of a business that sells. And until a certain point, this is ok, because we want to attract tourists. But Romania is more than this. For example, when you say the Danube Delta, it's not enough to just see a picture of it; you need to go there and to experience it. In the end, the experiences you get in a country are the ones that matter. But, to get tourists from abroad to come and visit Romania, you need to show them some wow aspects and these commercials do this. They show Transfagaras and nature and they show how beautiful Romania is.

I: Yes, but at the moment they have shown all these things you are addressed only to Romanians.

A: Yes, and this is a little weird. I think that for Romanians you should show different things.

I: What could have been appropriate for Romanians? What were they supposed to show?

A: Possibilities, not just places. It is not inviting me to discover Romania, in a way the line: "This is where I would have wanted to be born" sounds more of a reproach, sort of like you are not happy because you

were born here? Look at all these things Romania has to offer. Even if they are tourist attractions, have you seen them? No? Well, then you should feel ashamed of yourself. Something like this. I actually felt bad that I live abroad now.

I: Romania has had several attempts at a national brand. In comparison with them, how do you find this new campaign? Do you find the commercials higher in quality?

A: I like this new campaign; it reminds me of a campaign done for Sibiu as the European cultural capital. As for the other campaigns, I think these were dependent on the Ministry of Tourism and every time a new minister came they changed something. Some campaigns lasted a month, some longer. Some were even fables without an impact. But this one seems different, despite the fact that I it still annoys me to see the leaf logo.

I: This is what I was about to tell you. This is a new campaign, but it is still a part of our national brand 'Explore the Carpathian garden'. It's just a new communications campaign, the brand is still the same and it's been our longest nation brand so far.

A: Yes, I realize this, and the logo is still annoying. The commercials were ok until I got to the part with the 'Explore the Carpathian garden' and the logo.

I: Why do you find the logo annoying?

A: Well, we wanted to come up with a brand for our country, and we went in Spain, I think, to get this brand designed, instead of turning to Romanian advertising agencies. And after all this, it turned out to be a plagiarized symbol. There are advertising agencies in Romania who have done branding campaigns with their own money and because they wanted to do so, and those were better.

I: Do you know that the ITO actually recommended to keep this logo and that they found it ok? They said that Romania should continue in this direction and to stop changing its national brand. Despite this, you as a citizen are dissatisfied with it. Do you think it should be changed?

A: No, I realize that this would mean new investments, and now with these commercials it seems that they are trying to fix the damage that was done.

I: So what you are trying to say is that with this new campaign they are trying to make things right? As you've said everything about the commercials seemed fine until the end when you saw the logo. So you think that without that logo, the campaign would have been successful?

A: I would have liked to see something else in the end, because that logo reminded me of how it all began, but this does not mean that I did not memorize everything that was shown in the commercial. It's cool that they have taken this direction of Carpathian garden, because the Carpathians are a big part of Romania, but it is sad that they've had to go to foreigners to design a national brand. It's just a personal dissatisfaction of mine.

I: And if I were to tell you that the entire campaign, a campaign launched in June 2014 with an ending in August 2015, with TV spots and Media Prints aired, so far, only in Romania, cost approximately 4 million Euros, how would you feel about this? : I mean I'm not asking for advertising price knowledge. I'm just asking for your opinion, when you look at these commercials, how do you perceive the price quality ratio? How do you see this amount for destined for a nation branding campaign? Do you find it just, small, or too high?

A: I don't know what to say. Maybe all the filming equipment is too expensive nowadays.

I: Are you implying that the amount is high?

A: No, I presume that this campaign does not resume to these three commercials.

I: Well, at the moment it does. I don't know what they will do in the future. For example, the first commercial, the one from the questionnaire, was released in the summer, and in November while I was writing about this subject, they've released the other two. I myself was surprised to see this. The budget is administered by McCann Erickson and the campaign is currently running. It will still be on TV for half a year at least.

A: Well, I know that such a campaign costs a lot of money, but if this amount is for only these three TV spots, then yes it is clearly too much. I'm waiting to see maybe it will go internationally. I think this campaign needs more PR.

I: So you are saying that it needs a bigger promotion?

A: I think it needs a different type of promotion. So far, the same ways of promoting our country have been used, but who knows, usually McCann Eriksson does a great job, maybe they will surprise us.

I: Could you explain why your perception about Romania remained the same after watching the first commercial from the questionnaire? I mean, why did that commercial fail in producing a change in your attitude about your country?

A: First of all, my attitude towards Romania will always be positive, because no matter where I am, I am Romanian. But, I don't know if these commercials are able or if they mean to create a change. I don't know.

I: Do you think it failed to generate a change, because you've already known all those things from the commercials?

A: Yes, for me personally at least. Plus, they've only revealed the commercial aspects of Romania. For example, they've omitted to include the gray communist parts. But then again to sell a beautiful Romania means to sell a Westernized Romania.

I: And how do you feel about the fact that some Romanians describe their country in a negative way. In your opinion, what are the reasons generating this negative attitude?

A: I think the lifestyle is to blame. I assume it was really hard for them. And I also think the political situation has a say in this matter. I believe that political decisions are very important. But mainly their life style. For example, if you look at Romanians, you can tell that they have had a hard life. Maybe for us younger ones it was easier, we've had our share of happy moments, but I believe that our elders had a really hard life. Still, even for us the younger ones, leaving the country, this is also a sort of hardship, because we've left due to the fact that we couldn't find opportunities back home.

I: In the survey, I've asked for three positive and three negative aspects of Romania. You said that the positive ones are: diversity, nature and people. As for the negative ones, you said: poor infrastructure, life conditions and culture. Could you motivate these choices? Why were these, the first three to pop up in your head when you were faced with the question?

A: I think it's just my own personal filter. When you have to state this sort of thing, you passed them through your own personal filter, considering what you and the people around you have gone through. From experience, I can say that Romanian people are warm and they help you when you are in need, this is how we are built. We are diverse, in spite of the disputes we are having with Hungarians over

Transylvania. We are diverse and we welcome everybody. For example, the other day I was talking to a friend of mine about how little it takes to become a Romanian citizen.

I: And the negative ones?

A: The negative ones? Well, take a look at Romania. We don't have bike lanes; we are building road passages that can't fit two buses. I mean we are building a lot of absurd things, without thinking. I mean until now I haven't seen well done things in Romania.

I: Do you think these flaws in the infrastructure are affecting the way we preserve or not our architecture?

A: Yes. For example, comparing the Moldavian region with the Western region of the country, in the West they actually took into account this principle and they tried to have cleaner cities and they care about their buildings. I myself, for instance love Sibiu, because you can still see the historic architecture and you also have good roads to walk on with your bike, by foot or by car. But, when I go back to Iasi in Moldavia I'm not able to take my bike. Plus, they don't take care of their architecture. The oldest street in the city, Lapusneanu, is closed. They've removed an old cinema that was there, they've built a bar, and next to the bar they sell pretzels. I think what I'm trying to say that nothing is coherent.

I: Do you think they've done the same with the old center in Bucharest?

A: No, things are cooler there, even though it annoys me to see that some buildings appear over night and they don't have anything to do with the rest. Even if it is not that easy to reach it, in the two or three times I've visited I got lost, despite the fact that I went with someone who lived in Bucharest, the old city is beautiful and romantic. But, for a tourist who doesn't know his or her way around Bucharest can be a little problematic to find it.

I: Ok and the last question: how has your travelling/living abroad influenced your opinion about Romania, both in a positive and the negative way? In other words, what positive aspects and what negative ones have you observed about Romania when returning from a trip abroad?

A: Hmm. Positive. First of all, that it is where my family is. I am the only one who lives abroad. And this personal thing, it's the place you call home and usually you can't find flaws in your home. On the other hand, if I were to look at the negative aspects, things became political. You take a look back to the past and you remember all sorts of stuff, like anger because of bureaucracy, anger because of the poor student accommodations, where 7 people had to share a room, anger about professors who are

redundant and teach the same thing year after year after year. I mean we are pretty much behind, and this angers me the most. There are a lot of people who follow their own interests and are not interested in others.

I: Do you think that because we are behind we are promoting this type of archaic culture? I mean, do you think that this is the only thing that we have and that we can promote? In comparison with other countries, we are left only nature and life in the countryside?

A: We do have this archaic culture, but at the same time we promote ourselves as very technological, we want to be part of everything that is new in the West. No, we were behind because at least 10 years ago we should have had major changes, because we made bad decisions.

I: Ok, all the above being said, that you very much for your time and your answers.

A: You're welcome. Hopefully my answers are good.

I: Your answers are perfect; there are no good or bad answers.

Appendix 15- Questionnaire Results

Identitatea nationala si brandul de tara

Id: 54aa7bb728798
No. of Views: 450
Start Date: 10/12/2014
End Date: 31/01/2015

Q# 1: Inainte de a raspunde la intrebari, sunteti rugati sa vizionati urmatorul spot publicitar.

Options Response Percentage Responses

Answered 0% 1

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 1 Skipped Responses: 215

Q# 2: Sunteti:

Options Response Percentage Responses

Barbat 41% 89

Femeie 59% 127

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.588 Std. Deviation: 0.492 Satisfaction Rate:58.796 Variance: 0.242 Std. Error: 0.033

Q# 3: Indicati categoria de varsta in care va incadrati

Options Response Percentage Responses

Sub 20 ani 12% 25

Intre 21 si 25 ani 43% 92

Intre 26 si 35 ani 21% 45

Intre 36 si 45 ani 13% 29

Peste 45 ani 12% 25

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 2.708 Std. Deviation: 1.184 Satisfaction Rate:42.708 Variance: 1.401 Std. Error: 0.081

Q# 4: Indicati nivelul educational

Options Response Percentage Responses

Liceu 10% 22

Scoala postliceala 2% 5

Facultate 55% 118

Studii postuniversitare 33% 71

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 3.102 Std. Deviation: 0.865 Satisfaction Rate:70.062 Variance: 0.749 Std. Error: 0.059

Q# 5: Care dintre urmatoarele elemente considerati ca apartin identitatii nationale romanesti?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Limba romana 38% 81

Religia crestin-ortodoxa 6% 12

Cultura populara romaneasca 40% 87

Istoria Romaniei 37% 80

Teritoriul si aspectele geografice 31% 67

Toate cele mentionate 52% 113

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 7.866 Std. Deviation: 4.377 Satisfaction Rate:57.227 Variance: 19.161 Std. Error: 0.209

Q# 6: Care dintre elementele de mai jos le considerati a fi definitorii pentru cultura populara? Selectati, cel putin doua.

Options Response Percentage Responses

Tradiții 89% 193

Folclor 83% 179

Spiritualitate și biserică 23% 50

Bucătăria tradițională 51% 110

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 5.282 Std. Deviation: 3.332 Satisfaction Rate:38.158 Variance: 11.105 Std. Error: 0.144

Q# 7: Când se face referire la geografia și particularitățile teritoriale ale României, care dintre următoarele elemente vi se par a fi caracteristice? Selectati cel puțin două.

Options Response Percentage Responses

Peisaje naturale și salbatice 91% 196

Peisaje rurale 85% 184

Peisaje urbane 14% 31

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 3.042 Std. Deviation: 1.573 Satisfaction Rate:29.927 Variance: 2.475 Std. Error: 0.078

Q# 8: Când vă gândiți la istoria României, care perioadă considerați că a avut cel mai mare impact asupra identității naționale românești?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Perioada antică Daco-Română 19% 42

Perioada medievală 18% 39

Perioada interbelică 26% 57

Perioada comunistă 36% 78

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 2.792 Std. Deviation: 1.13 Satisfaction Rate:59.722 Variance: 1.276 Std. Error: 0.077

Q# 9: Pe o scară de la 1 la 5, 1 fiind cel mai mic și 5 cel mai mare, notați următoarele evenimente istorice, în funcție de

contribuția lor la formarea identității naționale.

Options Response Percentage Responses

1 18% 116

2 17% 108

3 23% 150

4 16% 105

5 26% 169

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 648 Skipped Responses: -432

Q# 10: Ați mai văzut spotul publicitar, înainte ca acesta să vă fie prezentat prin intermediul acestui chestionar?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 72% 156

Nu 28% 60

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.278 Std. Deviation: 0.448 Satisfaction Rate:27.778 Variance: 0.201 Std. Error: 0.031

Q# 11: Cui considerați că i se adresează reclama?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Străinilor 41% 89

Românilor 59% 127

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.588 Std. Deviation: 0.492 Satisfaction Rate:58.796 Variance: 0.242 Std. Error: 0.033
Q# 12: Care dintre urmatoarele elemente, considerati ca sunt evidentiatae in spot?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Limba romana 16% 35
Religia crestin-ortodoxa 31% 67
Cultura populara romaneasca 50% 108
Istoria Romaniei 15% 32
Teritoriul si particularitatile geografice 70% 151
Toate cele mentionate 25% 53

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 7.843 Std. Deviation: 4.322 Satisfaction Rate:55.964 Variance: 18.683 Std. Error: 0.205

Q# 13: Cand auziti sloganul "Aici simt ca renasc" la ce anume va ganditi?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Intoarcerea la natura 47% 101
Intoarcerea la cultura romaneasca 34% 74
Intoarcerea la traditii si obiceiuri 61% 131

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 2.972 Std. Deviation: 1.23 Satisfaction Rate:54.902 Variance: 1.512 Std. Error: 0.07

Q# 14: Considerati ca Romania are un brand national?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 53% 115
Nu 47% 101

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.468 Std. Deviation: 0.499 Satisfaction Rate:46.759 Variance: 0.249 Std. Error: 0.034

Q# 15: De care dintre urmatoarele campanii de branding ale Romaniei, va amintiti?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Romania, Explorati Gradina Carpatilor 86% 186
Romania, Land of Choice 39% 85
Made in Romania 21% 46
Eterna si fascinanta Romania 23% 49
Romania Fabulospirit 1% 3
Romania, mereu surprinzatoare 23% 49

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 4.625 Std. Deviation: 2.794 Satisfaction Rate:27.799 Variance: 7.807 Std. Error: 0.137

Q# 16: Sunteti multumit/a de actualul brand de tara, "Explorati Gradina Carpatilor"?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 50% 109
Nu 50% 107

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.495 Std. Deviation: 0.5 Satisfaction Rate:49.537 Variance: 0.25 Std. Error: 0.034

Q# 17: Dupa campaniile "Explorati Gradina Carpatilor", considerati ca Romania mai are nevoie in continuare de un brand de tara?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 79% 170
Nu 5% 11
Nu stiu 16% 35

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.375 Std. Deviation: 0.747 Satisfaction Rate:18.75 Variance: 0.558 Std. Error: 0.051

Q# 18: Considerati ca Romania are nevoie de o campanie, care sa se adreseze romanilor?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 86% 185

Nu 14% 31

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.144 Std. Deviation: 0.351 Satisfaction Rate:14.352 Variance: 0.123 Std. Error: 0.024

Q# 19: Considerati ca spotul din chestionar transmite elemente ce tin de identitatea nationala?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 87% 187

Nu 13% 29

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.134 Std. Deviation: 0.341 Satisfaction Rate:13.426 Variance: 0.116 Std. Error: 0.023

Q# 20: Daca ati sti ca reclama din chestionar se adreseaza romanilor, v-ar putea aceasta schimba opinia pe care o aveti despre strategiile de branding ale Romaniei?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 15% 32

Nu 58% 125

Nu stiu 27% 59

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 2.125 Std. Deviation: 0.637 Satisfaction Rate:56.25 Variance: 0.406 Std. Error: 0.043

Q# 21: Pe o scara de la 1 la 5, 1 fiind cel mai mic si 5 cel mai mare, notati impactul pe care reclama l-a produs asupra perceptiei dumneavoastra in ceea ce priveste Romania.

Options Response Percentage Responses

1 1% 3

2 1% 2

3 8% 18

4 29% 62

5 61% 131

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Q# 22: Numiti 3 aspecte pozitive legate de Romania.

Options Response Percentage Responses

Answered 100% 216

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Q# 23: Numiti 3 aspecte negative legate de Romania

Options Response Percentage Responses

Answered 100% 216

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Q# 24: Considerati ca Romania poate fi caracterizata mai mult prin:

Options Response Percentage Responses

Aspecte negative 40% 86

Aspecte pozitive 60% 130

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.602 Std. Deviation: 0.49 Satisfaction Rate:60.185 Variance: 0.24 Std. Error: 0.033

Q# 25: Ati calatorit/ locuit in strainatate? Daca nu, treceti la intrebarea 27

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 76% 165

Nu 24% 51

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.236 Std. Deviation: 0.424 Satisfaction Rate:23.611 Variance: 0.18 Std. Error: 0.029

Q# 26: Faptul ca ati vazut alte culturi si alte tari v-a influentat perceptia asupra Romaniei?

Sunt de acord Sunt partial de acord Nu sunt de acord Nu stiu

Da, in mod pozitiv 19% (42) 32% (69) 19% (42) 6% (14)

Da, in mod negativ 20% (43) 28% (60) 19% (42) 10% (22)

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Q# 27: Ati fi dispus/a sa participati la un interviu (skype) pe tema prezentului chestionar?

Options Response Percentage Responses

Da 13% 27

Nu 88% 189

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0

Mean: 1.875 Std. Deviation: 0.33 Satisfaction Rate:87.5 Variance: 0.109 Std. Error: 0.022

Q# 28: Daca da, sunteti rugati sa lasati datele de contact mai jos.

Options Response Percentage Responses

First Name 13% 29

Last Name 13% 29

Email Address 13% 27

Total Responses: 216 Answered Responses: 216 Skipped Responses: 0