

The Role of "Folk" Costume in the Sustainable Development of Ethnic Communities from Tulcea County, Romania. Case Study: Ukrainians and Russian Lipovans

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Abstract

The article addresses the influence of traditional costumes on the identity development of two Slavic ethnic groups from Dobruja: the Ukrainians and the Russians Lipovans (Old Believers or Starovery). Adhering to certain traditional patterns, or on the contrary, adopting historical and modern symbols from Ukraine and Russia, these groups try to differentiate themselves, although at one time there was a great degree of isomorphism between their costumes. The investigation attempts to reconstruct old costume models, worn in Dobruja, elements with identity marker value, and also discusses the evolution of clothes over time, in relation to the cultural influences and the specific socio-economic environment.

Keywords

Traditional crafts; folk costume; tradition; innovation; identity; Ukrainians in Romania; Russian Lipovans.

Introduction

Dobruja has been and continues to be a multicultural area par excellence, becoming a model of coexistence (Chiselev, 2019; Titov, 2015; Pârâu, 2007), based on tolerance and recognition of differences, in this relatively small space coexisting a multitude of ethnic, ethno-religious, and ethnocultural groups, including Romanians, Aromanians, Megleno-Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, Tatars, Ukrainians, Russian Lipovans, Italians, Jewish, Germans, and Roma. Among certain elements of the cultural heritage, the folk costume has a role of an external identity marker, being a symbol of social and cultural differentiation and ethnic identification from the perspective of the Other, in the context of broader phenomena such as multi- or interculturality, cultural interference, and globalization.

This study aims to diagnose the current situation of the folk costume worn by Ukrainians and Russian Lipovans, trying to decode certain contemporary transformations, but also its social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. In this context, the anamnesis process, of recovering the traditional frames of folk clothing, with a referential character, was essential to our approach. Although initially the article wanted to be much more extensive, proposing the analysis of the costume of all the populations from Northern Dobruja, it inevitably knew the limitations imposed by the vastness and diversity of the ethnographic data. For these reasons, for the sustainable operationalization of the theme, I selected two groups of Slavic origin, often confused in the public space, who have a conserved or revitalized costume, in a continuous morphological and aesthetic dynamic. These are representative of the proposed theme, each bringing into discussion various facets of ethnicity and identity mechanisms, but also mechanisms of sustainable development.

By presenting some case studies, the paper tried to answer the following questions:

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- a) *What importance does the folk costume have for the development of the respective communities and what is the relationship between it and the culture of the ethnic groups, marked, in turn, by an internal dynamic, contradictions, and dilemmas of the present?*
- b) *To what extent does the costume differ, in the traditional and in the contemporary period, and why did new forms appear?*
- c) *Why do communities feel the need to maintain it in a certain form or transform it?*

The article captures, first, some aspects related to the history and culture of Ukrainians and Russian Lipovans, later focusing on traditional models and evolutionary forms, to reflect, in the end, on the identity and economic component, as well as its connections with the current complex environment, in terms of sustainable development. In the research, I used the following methods and tools: bibliographic documentation and analysis, direct and participatory observation, analysis of discourses and contexts, elements of virtual ethnography, and social networks.

We mention that in this approach, we will use the term “folk costume” with a broader meaning, including in the semantic field also the concept of clothing with traditional valences, marked by the usage of industrial textiles or a type of cut with urban and peri-urban influences, but which has been assumed by the group in question as a traditional model, for example, the Russian Lipovans and, partially, Ukrainians. In this sense, for this article, we have chosen to detail the role of the costume in shaping the identity of the two Slavic groups, mentioned above, in the context of the sustainable development of the communities, especially in the forms of institutionalized representation, recognized at a national level.

Clothing/ costume is a component of the “social skin” (Turner, 2012), highlighting subtly the socio-cultural boundaries between individuals. The individual transformations, at a given time, define inclusions in certain categories of individuals (young and old; married and unmarried). Collective historical transformations can be corroborated with certain influences, cultural appropriation, and patterns with a wider spread area and evolutionary process (e.g., urban influences; identity strategies of adaptation to the cultural realities of the countries of the origin of their ancestors). Finally, the social skin is in line with dichotomous structures, such as everyday-holiday time frame, functional-aesthetic, tradition-innovation, and norm-eluding the norm (Turner, 2012).

In the context of contemporary identity quests, groups increasingly choose to represent themselves scenically through differentiation from Others. Thus, costumes tend to mark categorical boundaries, created on the principle of ethnicity, valuing differences over similarities, focusing on social prestige, relating to elements preserved in the country of the origin of their ancestors and less to those preserved by the local groups.

We underline the fact that traditional Ukrainian and Russian Lipovans costumes play a role in the sustainability of the development of (not only) institutionalized ethnic communities, because, on the one hand, they visually singularize individuals in certain situations, especially in the context of tourists and cultural development (festivals, fairs, public or private performances, meetings with political or historical figures – e.g. The Royal Family of Romania), and on the other hand, they diversify the Northern Dobruja heritage in multicultural situations. While in the case of the Starover, the traditional festive costume was preserved in the form of church clothing and accessories with ritual and ceremonial value (*lestovka, pois, kicika*), later an increasingly elaborate and de-ritualized stage costume appeared, for the Ukrainians, the situation was somewhat reversed, the stage costume recently entering in sacred spaces, especially on feasts and solemn occasions (e.g., carol singing). If we consider only these specific aspects, we can conclude that the costume reflects the dynamics of social life, economic and cultural changes, but also the transformations of mentality or identity. Moreover, by exhibiting the costumes on various occasions and by promoting them more and more visibly, there is a current, still tenuous, whereby members outside the local branches of unions wish to

appear dressed in ethnically marked clothing, seek/ borrow, or even acquire items with identity value.

The traditional craft, UNESCO Convention and UN SDGs

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO) includes traditional craftsmanship as a domain of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). ICH is transmitted inter-generationally, constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO, 2003)

Traditional craft is one of the most material manifestations of ICH, the emphasis falls not on the realized object itself, but on the skills, and know-how connected to crafts (techniques of making and decoration, way of thinking and designing the craft piece, symbolism, and valorization). Preservation efforts should focus on encouraging artisans to continue to create and transmit their knowledge to others, especially within their communities. The purposes of this Convention are: (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage; (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups, and individuals concerned; (c) to raise awareness at the local, national, and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof; (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance (UNESCO, 2003).

On the other hand, United Nations prepared and implemented 2015 a set of principles, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), facing the problems of the contemporary world, among which we mention: poverty and hunger, degradation of the environment, fear, and violence. According to the Agenda, up to 2030, following these integrated and interconnected goals, humankind can reduce global challenges.

The 17 SDGs are as follows: 1. No Poverty; 2. Zero Hunger; 3. Good Health and Well-being; 4. Quality Education; 5. Gender Equality; 6. Clean Water and Sanitation; 7. Affordable and Clean Energy; 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth; 9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; 10. Reduced Inequality; 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities; 12. Responsible Consumption and Production; 13. Climate Action; 14. Life Below Water; 15. Life on Land; 16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions; 17. Partnerships to achieve the Goal.

Gudowska analyzed the relationship between traditional craft and several goals of *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. She notes that even if the UN SDGs are connected primarily to global system changes going towards a well-balanced life on our planet, and thus focusing on the largest political and economic players of the globe, it is worth noting the role of the crafts in this major effort for ensuring the well-being of population and environment. "Crafts are becoming an important force influencing purchasing decisions (a return to tradition, uniqueness, original aesthetics), but also increasingly is chosen as a way of spending free time among the middle class, which is important for the development of the economy, and sometimes becomes a way of earning money through sale of handicrafts or services (workshops and courses)" Gudowska (2020).

The ever-higher interest in crafts and the valorization of products with a high degree of craftsmanship, unique or produced in small series, with customization capabilities in relation to the wishes of the customer, can favor the need to maintain local producers. Also, the new crafts are related to technological development, the implications of the internet (ex: selling platforms, such as Etsy), and new capacities to trade and transport the products.

Table 1. Text SDGs and role of handicrafts

No.	SDG	Goal Explanation	Role of handicrafts
1.	No Poverty	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	the use of global sales platforms to sell handicrafts; craft participation in tourist promotion of a country or region
3.	Good Health and Well-being	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	workshops, social proximity, contact with art
4.	Quality Education	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	manual development, stimulation of creativity
5.	Gender Equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	promotion of female craftsmanship
8.	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all	price transparency, emphasizing the value of human hands work
9.	Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation	stimulating creativity, quality management
10.	Reduced Inequality	Reduce inequality within and among countries	promotion of local traditional crafts
11.	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Sustainable Cities and Communities	craft cities UNESCO, inclusive craft makers societies
12.	Responsible Consumption and Production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	conscious shopping, transparent production
13.	Climate Action	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	small scale of production, upcycling, sustainable raw materials

Source: Gudowska (2020)

Ukrainians and Russian Lipovans in Dobruja. Historical and ethnographic aspects

Our attempt to comparatively treat the two ethnic groups of Slavic origin derives its essence from several factual considerations, which corroborated an insufficient knowledge of the ethnos of these populations, of the common elements deriving from the Slavic cultural matrix, as well as of the specific, generated by different mentalities, customs, and behavioral codes.

Short history. The two Slavic groups arrived in Dobruja (Romania) for different main reasons: the religious reason (the desire to exercise the faith of the ancestors; religious persecution) for the Russian Lipovans and the political-social reason (the desire to restore the Sich; the poverty of the peasantry) for the Ukrainians. Their arrival in this space is linked to some favorable coordinates: finding territories as similar as possible to those of origin, to ensure the continuity of practicing the know-how (fishing, animal husbandry, crafts, etc.); the Ottoman rule that allowed freedom of expression of faith for the Lipovans and offered certain privileges to the *Zaporozhian* Cossacks, in exchange for their loyalty.

Competing for the same space and having similar occupational profiles, in Dobruja, the relationship between the ancestors of the Ukrainians and Lipovans was quite tense, which led to conflicts, population relocations, and the search for other territories (Arbore, 1935).

The Ukrainians settled in Dobruja for economic reasons, in the case of farmers and cattle breeders, or political-military reasons, in the case of the *Zaporozhian* Cossacks. Over time, there was a synthesis of these heterogeneous elements, coming from beyond the Danube, sometimes with Romanian infusions - if we are to believe some oral histories. Moreover, the multiculturalism of these Cossack organizations was brought into discussion by many specialists, considering that in these forms of organized religion, the observance of clear rules and service for the benefit of the community, and not the ethnic or social origin of its inhabitants, took precedence (Shuvit, 2001). The hybrid nature of the Cossack society, whether it is on the Dnieper, on the Don, or in the Caucasus, is evidenced by bibliographical and archival sources. Muscovites, Tatars converted to Christianity, Poles, Circassians or other Cossacks were active in these Sichs or Atamanates (Boeck, 2009). But, as can be seen currently, not only in Dobruja, this type of socio-military structure is heroized and over-ethnicized, becoming an enzyme in shaping statal, national, or group (imagined) identities.

The massive migration of Ukrainians to Dobruja began after the 1775 abolition of the Zaporozhian Sich. The Sich was a form of military democracy based on the cult of freedom and work in society, with its own rules of military and religious organization (Kuşnir, 2010). Although secondary migrations and settlements in the area also existed between 1768-1774, through attempts to establish economic relations with the territory beyond the Danube, the great mass of Ukrainians, between 5,000 and 12,000 according to various estimates, completed the multi-ethnic mosaic of Dobruja starting with the summer of 1775. Another wave of migrants came after the decree given by Catherine II that forbade the Cossacks to reorganize the Sich on May 5, 1779. To these were added quiet migrations, individual or in small groups, based on economic opportunities related to the occupational profile, especially fishing and cattle breeding (Kuşnir, 2008).

In 1792, the Russians deport the disgruntled Ukrainians to the Kuban area, in order not to ally with the Poles. They are known as Chernomorets (people of the Black Sea), some of them reaching Dobruja, guided by traders and carters (*ciumaki* - a term attributed to the owners of carts that transported and sold salt). The Ukrainians expand into the Dobruja plateau and increase their population with new refugees following the annexation of Bessarabia, in 1812, after which they reorganize their Sich, in 1814, at Dunavăţu de Sus, which functioned until 1828. The military community of Sich was subject to the Ottoman Empire but kept its autonomy. In exchange for military services, the Zaporozhians obtained political and economic rights in an extended area, a type of Raya.

The main localities where, over time, the Ukrainians (Zaporozhian Cossacks or peasants) have settled are Dunavăţu de Sus, Dunavăţu de Jos, Sfântu Gheorghe, Murighiol, Mahmudia, Prislav (Nufăru), Pârlita (Victoria), Caraorman, Ciucurova, Teliţa, Azacław (I.C. Brătianu), Letea, Chilia Veche, Pardina, Pătlăgeanca, Gorgova, Uzliņa, Tulcea, Ceatalchioi, Frecăţei, Teliţa, Țiganca (Nifon), Geaferca Rusă (Căprioara), Hamcearca, Constanţa (Pârâu, 2009). Later, many settled in Tulcea and some villages depopulated.

The migration of the **Starovery**, initially in the various regions of Russia, then also towards Dobruja, began in the time of Peter the Great and continued under Catherine II. The reform of the patriarch Nikon (1654) determined resistance from the clergy and the peasants and caused religious persecution. The extreme repressive forms had a corresponding reaction: refuges in isolated areas, emigration outside the empire, auto-da-fé.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the regions of Starodub and Vetka become important centers of the worship of the Old Believers. However, the danger of the imminent arrival of Russian imperial forces causes them to flee further (Prigaryne, 2004). A new southwestern migratory flow appears, between the 1700-the 1720s, in Podolia and Bessarabia. These territories were divided between Poland, the Habsburg Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, attracting in the 18th century the sacerdotal Lipovans

(Popovtsy) and the non-sacerdotal ones (Bespopovtsy). In the 18th century - the beginning of the 19th century, the main Lipovan demographic centers were established in Podolia, Bukovina, Budjak, Northern Bessarabia, and Dobruja.

Until the middle of the 19th century, the Nekrasov Cossacks, co-religionists of the Lipovans, but constituting an independent social order, made their presence felt in the North-West of the Black Sea. After the Russo-Turkish war of 1735-1739, the Nekrasovites left the Kuban, and part of them settled at the Mouths of the Danube, at Dunavăț, and Sarichioi, and later in villages such as Slava, Jurilovca, Carcaliu (Perkowski, 1990). The Cossacks settled here, like their ancestors from the Don area, did not reject the Starovery refugees from other regions of Russia, belonging to other social categories, so in the 19th century, a complex process of synthesis between the two groups took place, ultimately leading to the creation of the Russian Lipovan communities in the region (Varona, 2002).

The migratory process of Old Rite Believers from Russia towards the Danube basin continued until the beginning of the 20th century. On the other hand, the migratory returns of the Starovery (1830, 1909, 1910, 1947, etc.) to the regions of origin are also attested. Sometimes, they are followed by returns, due to socio-economic realities not in line with the expectations of those who agreed to leave.

In the contemporary period, in Tulcea county, there are communities of Russian Lipovans in Carcaliu, Sarichioi, Jurilovca, Slava Cercheză, Slava Rusă, Mila 23, Mahmudia, Gorgova, Sfîștofca, Periprava, Sulina, Chilia Veche, Pătlăgeanca and Tulcea.

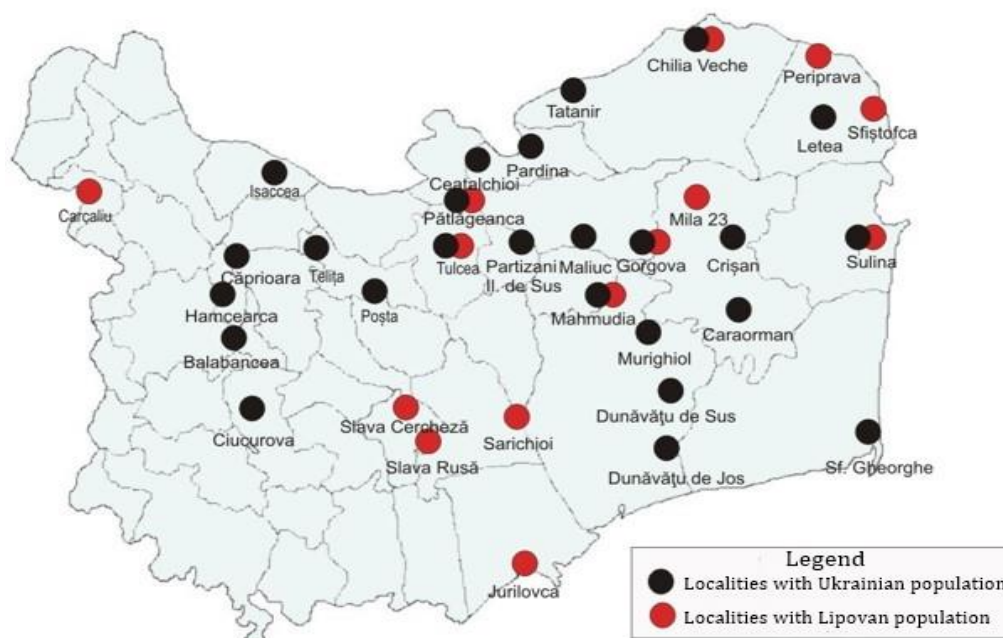


Figure 1: Map of contemporary settlements with Ukrainians and Russian Lipovans in Tulcea County, according to recent ethnographic data

Demographic data

The evolution of the Ukrainian group, from a numerical point of view, is difficult to track because they appear under the name of Ukrainians only in the censuses of the first half of the 20th century. Before this period, they are included in the category of Russians. Poujade estimates in Dobruja, for the 1850s, 50,000 *Zaporozhian* Cossacks. In 1876 the *Zaporozhian* population was estimated between 1,000 and 1,200 families, and in 1880 there were 4,555 Zaporozhians (Levy, 1982). A statistic from 1900 gives us the following ethno-demographic data: 13,475 Russians (Ukrainians) lived in Tulcea county, of which:

7,431 in the Tulcea area, 3,692 in the Sulina area, 1,374 in the Măcin area and 978 in the Babadag area (Ionescu, 1904). Between 1956-2011, a decrease of Ukrainians can be observed. This situation is the result of two phenomena: the aging and migration of the population, on the one hand, and the declaration of another ethnicity, under the effect of acculturation, on the other.

Table 2. Ukrainians from Tulcea County and Romania at the censuses

Year	1930	1956	1966	1977	1992	2002	2011
Tulcea County	5	6961	5061	2537	3846	1279	1083
Romania	45.875	60.479	54.705	55.510	65.472	61.098	50.920

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <https://insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol4/tabele/t1.pdf>

According to some statistics, in Dobruja, in 1880 there were 8,250 Lipovans, and in 1899 their number reached 12,801 (Beaumont, 2008). Ionescu records in 1900 7,919 sacerdotal Lipovans and 3,810 non-sacerdotal Lipovans, including the Skoptsy (Ionescu, 1904). In 1905, 29,415 Lipovans are mentioned at the county level, in 1907 there were 14,626 (10,849 Popovtsy and 3,777 Bespopovtsy), and in 1913 33,510 Lipovans are registered (Limona, 2009).

The evolution of the community during 1930-2011 can be seen in the following table, which centralizes statistical data from population censuses.

Table 3. Russian Lipovans from Tulcea County and Romania at the censuses

Year	1930	1956	1966	1977	1992	2002	2011
Tulcea County	22.392	26.417	26.447	20.008	20.434	16.350	10.342
Romania	50.725	38.731	39.483	32.696	38.606	35.791	23.487

Source: National Institute of Statistics, <https://insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol4/tabele/t1.pdf>

Religion. Church rite

The Lipovans and the Ukrainians from Dobruja use the Julian calendar for the religious feasts, with a difference of 13 days compared to the Gregorian calendar, officially introduced in the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1924.

Ukrainians were old-style Orthodox believers (they keep the Julian calendar but use the same church rite as Romanians). This strict framing no longer exists, each adapting according to the specific conditions in the family or locality. Currently, several celebration situations can be distinguished: continuing the celebration in the old-style calendar, adopting the new-style calendar, or marking the holidays in both calendars. Usually, carols and *shchedrivkas*/ New Year songs are performed on old-style holidays, either after the church service or in the family. The feasts of the patron saints of villages are also celebrated following the Julian calendar.

The Lipovans are Orthodox Old Ritualists, Starovery, or Staroobryadtsy. They continued to observe certain religious customs and dogmatic provisions, which were in opposition to the reformist tendencies of the Nikonians: *dvoeperstie* – making the sign of the cross with two fingers; *dvoinaia Hallelujah* – Hallelujah spoken twice, for the praise of the Lord; clockwise circumambulation of the church, in the sense of the movement of the Sun on the celestial vault; spelling the name Isus/ Jesus with a single i; the use of seven parts of prosphoron during the liturgy; Byzantine style in iconography; unison religious chants.

Ethnic denominations

Ukrainians from Tulcea county were known, over time, under the names of Russians, Rusnaks, Malo-Russians (Little Russians), Khokhols, etc. The term Khokhol is perceived by some members of the ethnic group as the effect of a mixture, predominantly

linguistic: "We are neither Lipovans nor Russians (Ukrainians s.n.). So, I don't know what... we are Khokhols. You see, Russians speak another language, Lipovans another... but we are more different... Mixed" (Oral source: F.A., 2011). On the other hand, other opinions tilt the balance towards the Cossack heritage, by deriving from *хохол/hohol*, the typical haircut of the *Zaporozhian* Cossacks, or they are put under the magnifying glass of otherness, Khokhol having the meaning of dirty (Kelly, 1998), impure, of another religion. With this meaning, the term was used especially by the Lipovans. Even if the term had pejorative connotations, over time, a semantic inversion occurred, being internalized, valued positively, and becoming an ethnonym. The process is reversible, however, the followers of the Ukrainian modernist current being more attached to the Ukrainian than to Khokhol appellative, especially after the 1989 post-revolutionary ethnic effervescence. However, there are still localities where the mature and old villagers proudly call themselves *Khokhols* (e.g., Letea, Caraorman, Sfântu Gheorghe). On the other hand, in the communities of Ukrainians, certain ethnonyms of secondary rank are also used, to represent the Other, in this context the Khokhols from other villages. Most of the time, the occupational profile is used as a differentiating factor: *Keshmané* (sturgeon intestines), is attributed to the *Khokhol* from Sfântu Gheorghe; *Kabaké* (pumpkins), the one from Caraorman, *Kyshliaké* (derived from *kyshliak* – sour milk), the one from Ceatalchioi, etc.

The Russians from Tulcea county were or are still known under the names of: Russian Lipovans, Muscovites, Veliko-Russians (Great Russians), Raskolniki, Popovtsy (sacerdotal Lipovans), Bespopovtsy (non-sacerdotal Lipovans), Nekrasovites or the Cossacks of Ignat (Lipovans from Sarichioi), etc. The term Lipovan has generated in Romania a series of explanatory variants, related to several levels of perception, coming from inside or outside the ethnic group. The ethnonym is explained by specialists starting from three main hypotheses, but which do not fully cover the phenomenon: the association with the Slavic term *lipa* - linden; the toponymic hypothesis (the first settlement of the Old Rite Russians was named Lipoveni/ Lipovans); the anthroponymic hypothesis (Philippovtsy - followers of Philipp) (Dobrinescu, 2015). By assigning the term Lipovan to the entire category of Starovery, coming from distinct regions of Russia, a standardization of the perception of identity aspects occurred. It seems that, from an occupational point of view, there was a differentiation among the Starovery: The Nekrasovites were good fishermen, and the Lipovans were mainly engaged in agriculture (Prigaryne, 2004). Also, the costume of the Nekrasov Cossacks had influences, both in terminology and in the functionality of some pieces, from the Turkic and Circassian peoples with whom they came into contact over time (Vlaskina, 2016).

Elements of linguistics

At the level of the studied area, the communities of Ukrainians and Lipovans speak variants of some dialects from the countries of origin of their ancestors, preserving certain old words, due to isolation from the motherland ethnos, but also incorporating and adapting words from the languages of the populations with which they came into contact in this multiethnic space. In this context, the phenomenon of bilingualism and the appearance of hybrid languages can be observed in both populations, with successive and rapid changes in linguistic codes, resulting in a discourse with terms and constructions specific to both the Romanian and the mother tongue.

Ukrainians spoke and speak Ukrainian steppe dialects, transitional dialects from the southeast to the southwest, but based on the features of the southeast dialect. Today, the idiom is less and less appropriated by the younger generation, and there is an imminent danger of its loss. Ukrainian culture functions today through the contextual use of dialectal Ukrainian for intra-community daily and festive life and the Romanian language for external communication and the religious sphere.

The language of the Lipovans represents a variant of the ensemble of dialects of the southern Russians. Contacts with neighbors and the need to adapt to different social,

economic, or political contexts led to the appearance of loans, among which Latin, Southern Slavic, and Turkish elements can be distinguished (Farisenkova & Izotov, 2014). Considering the mobility of administrative borders, it was normal for each generation to need to learn a new language: Turkish, Bulgarian, and Romanian. This is how the phenomenon of vertical bilingualism appeared, from generation to generation (Prigaryne, 2004). The Lipovan culture works in this way through the contextual use of several languages: Slavonic for the sacred sphere, dialectal Russian for everyday life, and Romanian for external communication. The mother tongue is still learned by the younger generation, there are still enough ways to ensure its vitality over time.

Traditional architecture

The similarities between the traditional architecture of these two ethnic groups derive from the use of the same materials and construction techniques, from the presence of Slavic decorative elements (the rays of the sun, the siren on the frontons of the houses), the home heating systems (*lijanka/ lejanka* – an adobe bed), etc. The differences appear in the functional thinking of the interior (e.g.: the decentered window and the narrower east wall where the iconostasis was placed at Russian Lipovans), in the use of specific decorative motifs (e.g.: the Starover cross on the pediments and at the entrances of the houses) or of some household annexes with significance for the respective population (e.g.: the Lipovan bathroom/*banya*), etc.

Religious architecture

Churches in villages with Ukrainian communities have common elements with other Romanian Orthodox churches. Church painting is generally simple (the dome is painted blue with gold stars). The Starover church has elements common to other Orthodox churches, but also a series of peculiarities generated by the faith of the Old Rite. The characteristic element is the eight-pointed cross, present at the entrance or on the towers. The interior of the edifice is divided into the altar, nave and pronaos, and a space corresponding to the porch, but with a slightly different destination, in the sense that there are icons, and people who do not have permission to enter the church can participate in the service. Multiple entries are noted, usually three. The front one is intended for women, and the side ones, closer to the altar, serve as access for men. In the past, the Lipovan churches were not painted, having at most the vault with astral motifs, their elements of resistance being the iconostases. In recent times, there is a tendency to paint the walls with different iconographic representations, inspired by Russian or Slavic mythology (Alkonost, Sirin, the Paradise birds – church from Jurilovca).

Alimentation and the food code

It is difficult to talk about food identity as a rigorously defined cultural model, but we can, naturally, talk about identity elements in the diet of Ukrainians and Russians Lipovans in Dobruja. On the one hand, there is a "corpus" of recipes common to Slavic cuisine, and on the other hand, there are differences regarding the way of "materializing" some customs through food. The similarities are related to the existence of common dishes, determined by the similar occupational profile (fishing, animal husbandry – cattle, pigs, poultry), using the same food preparation techniques, etc. The differences are related to religious norms, customs, or beliefs about food consumption (e.g.: the abundant meal on Christmas Eve for Ukrainians/ severe fasting for Lipovans), the way of preparing ritual food or food prohibitions (e.g.: rabbit meat, fish without scales for Lipovans). Even if certain dishes have the same name and/or similar ingredients, they have distinct meanings and functions. For example, *kutya* (sweetened wheat soup) is a funeral/ commemorative dish for Lipovans and one of the 12 foods for the Christmas Eve meal for Ukrainians. *Pampushka* is a cheese pie served daily by Lipovans, and a sun-shaped bread, an essential dish for Christmas Eve, for Ukrainians.

Traditional and evolutionary patterns. Crafts and identity

As far as the clothing of the Ukrainians from Dobruja is concerned, in the past, it was possible to decipher an isomorphism with that of the Russians Lipovans, if we consider the morphological structure, urban or peri-urban influences, and the use of industrial materials (*vender* - nylon, *poplin* - tabinet, *şolk* or *şouk* - silk, *sukno* - cloth). Ethnic specificity was suggested more symbolically, by the different way of wearing certain pieces of clothing (e.g., shirt in trousers or skirt for Ukrainians, over trousers or skirt and tied with a special belt for Lipovans) and using specific pieces (*kosenka* for Ukrainians, *kichka* and *pois* for Lipovans) (Chiselev, 2018).

Over time, the relationship between the identities of the two populations has been based on differentiation, which is especially visible at the scenic level, with Ukrainians abandoning certain identity markers and adopting symbols from their homeland (*vinok*, colorful and flowery *kersetka*), which are in contrast to the initial chromatic austerity (Ukrainians preferred more modest stamps, with small, flowery designs printed on a colored background, or often on a dark background, unlike the Lipovans who were delighted with polychromatic, brightly colored materials) and the behavioral patterns that were at one time functional (e.g., the obligation to cover the hair of married women). This enflowered costume is used, to a limited extent and still sporadically, for church, especially in contexts highlighting differences, such as church services in multicultural localities. It should be also acknowledged that in the middle of the last century, even at the level of stage performance, there was a mixed Russian-Ukrainian choral structure, the members of which wore a common costume based on the patterns of cultural convergence that existed in Dobruja.



Figure 2. The Russian-Ukrainian Chorus, approx. 1950, Maria Efimov Archive

In the contemporary period, with new paradigms of how these populations relate to each other, even before the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the two groups choose to represent themselves differently, with common elements being downplayed, undervalued, even dismissed, and those that give them uniqueness, even if not locally specific, being brought into focus and over-emphasized.

The costumes of the Ukrainians in Dobruja

The traditional costume of the **Ukrainians** who settled in various stages - in Dobruja is difficult to reconstruct. War periods, the impoverishment of the population, and the influence of urban areas (Tulcea, Sulina, Vylkove) led to the disappearance and/or transformation of home-woven garments. The memory of the community retains some data, especially from the beginning of the 20th century, which testify to some clothing with urban influences, made of industrial textiles (Pârâu, 2007; Titov & Chiselev, 2015).

Analyzing the bibliographical data (Arbore, 1935; Kuşnir, 2008) and adding field information, we can conclude that the morphological structure of women's clothing at the end of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century included: head-dress with variants according to age, economic or marital status: *kosenka*/ textile triangle wrapping the whole hair and with delicate beaded or lace ornaments on the front, *platok*/ white, cream, brown, black headscarf, *berda*/ wool headscarf, *shal*/ shawl made of thicker and more expensive material, usually worn by old women; *kohta*/ blouse; double skirt (*spidnetsea*/ top skirt; *iupka* - a kind of white underskirt, with lace; *platia*/ dress, originally made of wool woven in the home, later of industrial materials; *fartuh*/ cloth apron worn over the skirt or dress, especially in the home to protect other clothes; *zhyletka*/ a type of vest; *katsaveika*/ very high-waisted, wool-lined silk garment with long sleeves, quilted and gathered from the waist down and having a flared cut; footwear: *ciulki*/ woollen stockings, *postolé*/ peasant sandals, then replaced by side-closed boots. (Chiselev, 2019). Over time, the female costume transformed, being replaced by "German" tailored clothes, used in urban areas by certain social categories.

Theodor Kondratovich presented some elements of old Ukrainian men's clothing: "The common Cossacks wore almost the same clothes that the Ukrainians of Dobruja wear today, i.e., wide trousers in boots, *kaparan* made of camel or sheep cloth (in the latter case blue or black), a red waistcoat and a black or surly cap. This clothing resembles that of today except that instead of the *kaparan*, especially on working days, the Dobrujan Ukrainians wear blue-sleeved waistcoats, mostly with backs and sleeves almost always made of light-colored flannels with checkered designs. Formerly the waistcoat was decorated with a large number of bright buttons, sometimes in four rows." (Arbore, 1935).



Figure 3: The image of the Cossack in the imagination of a contemporary artist.
Painter Nistor Safca, 1995

In the morphological structure of men's clothing appeared the following pieces: *shapka*/ fur cap; *kapelyukh*/ hat; *sorochka*/ embroidered shirt; *poias*/ wool wide belt or *ucikur*/ leather belt; *shtany*/ trousers; *jeletka*/ a type of vest, which was worn over the shirt, provided with buckle, for adjustment; *kaparan*/ coat for cool weather, like the *katsaveika* worn by women, but with a straight cut. Boots were made of cowhide or sheepskin. The thicker leather soles were sewn with *dradva*/strong thread and fastened with wooden nails. The heel and toes were fitted with a shoehorn to prevent the sole from gnawing. These shoes were used at feasts or the fair. Married and wealthy people also had long, leather, buckled officer's boots (Oral source: A.C., 2015, 2016). Elders wore shirts with detachable cuffs (*ciohli*) and collars, fastened by a system of stitches. In Chilia Veche village, Pârâu identified a type of men's shirt, the one with *manishka* (a piece of cloth applied over the breastplate of the shirt) that could represent a specific element of this population (Pârâu, 2007).

The transformations of the costume are captured in the study *Russian Colonies in Dobruja*, originally published in 1889 and translated in 2019: from the usual Ukrainian costume, which appears similar all-over Little Russia, in Dobruja, from all the male costume only the black or often greyish cap and the wide pants (*sharovary*), left in long boots, have been preserved. Even the flowered shirt is already a rarity in these parts. Surcoats are no longer worn in Dobruja, and over the shirt, as a rule, the vest with sleeves is worn, especially the vest made mostly of blue material, with many buttons; and the back and sleeves are necessarily made of colored stitched flannel. Over this vest is worn, especially on holidays, the so-called *kaparan*, made of blue or brown cloth, something like the waistcoat, also worn by Turks and Bulgarians and called by them *anteri*. As overcoats are worn *cekmens*, instead of our *kobenyaks*, resembling the *armyaks* worn by the Velikorussians or Tatars. "We used to wear long caftans, and now who the hell knows where these *cekmens* came from" (Ivanov, 2019).



Figure 4. Crișan village, approx. 1930-1940

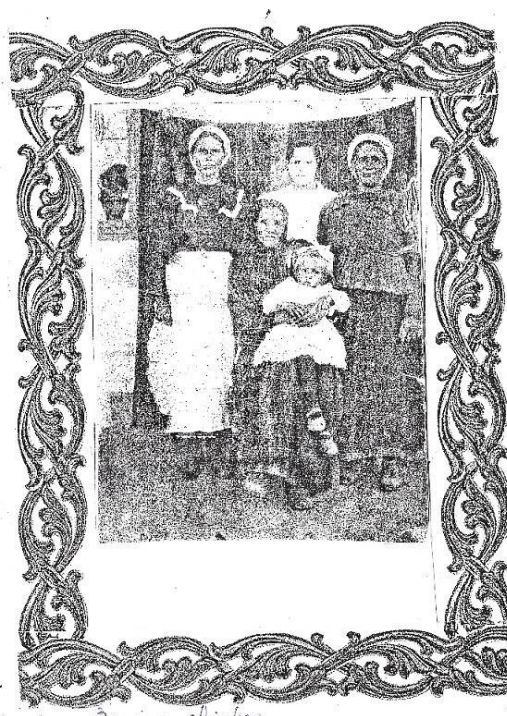


Figure 5. Letea village, 1926

Currently, in the Ukrainian assemblies from Tulcea County, exist different variants of stage costumes. The most diverse costume is presented by the members of the ensemble Zadunaiska Sich, Tulcea, showing several periods of Ukraine's culture (e.g.,

Cossack, Kyivan). The girls wear a costume from the Kyiv region, with *vinok* (crown of flowers and ribbons) on the head, shirt with floral patterns in cross stitched point, *plakhta* (a piece with the role of a skirt made of three components), and flowery apron, *kersetka* (long jacket flared on back), red boots. Men's costume, worn during dances reminds of that used by the Cossacks and is composed of *zhupan* (a long coat worn over the shirt), shirt with tunic-type collar, partially buttoned with three buttons, *sharovary* (large pants), wide belt, red boots. Married women from the choir *Zadunaiska Sich* wear a costume like that of women from assemblies from Crișan, Pardina, and Caraorman and other localities: *vinok*, *vyshyvanka*/ embroidered shirt, red beads, vest, and floral skirt, *sapyantsi* style boots/ red leather boots (Chiselev, 2017). Some groups still wear *platoks* as distinctive head-dress.



Figure 6. Founding vocal group *Zadunaiska Sich* - Tulcea, 2022

While at the time of the crystallization of the vocal groups, the costumes were sewn and ornamented voluntarily by women with a talent for tailoring, the decoration being made with sequin applications in the form of discreet and balanced floral motifs, nowadays the ensembles opt for the services of specialized companies and individuals, for a fee. Groups try to differentiate themselves from each other, even within the same Ukrainian community, by selecting, first, the general background of the costume, so that it becomes a visual marker of a particular chorus. In some cases, at least one row of costumes is made in Ukraine or in cross-border cooperation projects, which demonstrates cultural exchanges and a certain evolution of identity politics.

Easy-to-wear and carry costumes are preferred, so some garments are tailored in a modern spirit: part-over-part skirts with easy adjustment and fastening. On the other hand, the open society and economic exchanges allow the emergence of materials and designs from the most diverse geo-cultural areas: silk and velvet from Turkey, decorative tassels and lacing from Dubai, decorative patterns from Ukraine, boots, necessarily red, made in Romania. All in all, this creates the image of a heteroclite and eclectic costume, which does not contradict the realities of the old Cossack society, characterized by intense cultural exchanges on many levels, since the costumes of the Zaporozhian Cossacks included Tatar large trousers and Astrakhan Circassian hats if we refer only to their clothing.



Figure 7. Vocal group Zirocika - Ciucurova, 2021

The selection of the Cossack element and items seen in the folk ensembles of contemporary Ukraine constitute transactional elements, so the identity of the ancient Dobrujan Khokhols is in continuous change, through multiple intercultural exchanges, displacements, or documentation in the virtual media. Elements such as *vinok*, *vyshyvanka*, or *zhupan* are now a constant on-stage performance, but they are reconstructed and imported based on local traditions that have been diluted over time. *Vinok*, the flower wreath, was used by maidens for weddings and the Ivana Kupala feast, the flowered shirt testifies to a period when the domestic textile industry was not in decline, and *zhupan* and similar forms were part of the men's wardrobe for the cold season. But they were recalled, accepted, and taken up only in a relationship of connection with the cultural identities and politics of the country of origin, the source of inspiration being contemporary ensembles and less heritage institutions. These identity takeovers and re-creations of costume occurred long before these elements of dress were even revalued in Ukrainian society after the Orange Revolution of 2014 when the difference from the Russians had to be highlighted as much as possible.

The costumes of the Russian Lipovans in Dobruja

The traditional clothing of the **Russian Lipovans** is preserved in the form of the church costume, worn at services or rites of passage (especially at weddings and funerals). The fine, high-quality industrial materials (*palotno*/ canvas, *barhat*/ velvet, *sholk*/ silk, *sukno*/ cloth) and elegant tailoring testify to the peri-urban influence of this community from the time of its migration and settlement in Dobrogea. The costume follows certain religious or behavioral rules, which can be deduced from the concealment of the head, wrist, or ankle and the highlighting of certain identity elements, such as the *lestovka* (Old Believer rosary) or the *pois* (tasseled belt).

In the structure of the women's costume, there are the head-dress (the sign of the married woman: *kichka*/small bonnet made of fine cloth, decorated with sequins, beads or needle-stitched all over in rhombs or in the technique popularly called 'goose sole', over which is worn *kasiak* or *kaseak*/ three-cornered silk headkerchief with tassels, *shalik*/ cashmere shawl or *platok*/ headkerchief); *kohta*/ short blouse up to the waist, buttoned at the front, hemmed at the edges with lace; double skirt (*iubka*/ wide skirt

with pleats; *jubka*/ a kind of petticoat made of thin cloth); *pois* and *zapan*/ apron made of silk or thin cloth, at one point wrinkled and with a pocket. In the past, the skirt discreetly indicated a woman's social status, being decorated at the bottom with one stripe for maidens, two for married women, and three for widows. There is also a variant of costume with *sarafan*/ strapless dress with a high cut at the top. In winter they wear *kufaika*, *arka*, or *katsaveika*/ quilted coat, tailored without a collar, flared at the waist by a system of pleats obtained by sewing on pieces of reed or by hand, *ciupiki*/ black leather boots with laces and buckles or *ciobote*/ boots (Titov, 2020; Chiselev, 2019). Moreover, as Titov (2020) argues, the existence of the *katsaveika* in the reality of Lipovans villages constituted a rarity, as it was mostly worn by old women. However, in 2009, during field research in Mahmudia, she found that it was worn mostly by the younger generation. This phenomenon is due to the revival of the tradition and its diffusion from one community to another, one of the community leaders, originally from Sarichioi village, a locality where there were still seamstresses who knew how to make *katsaveika*, became a spreader model, after having ordered such a piece of clothing for herself and her daughter.



Figure 8: Jurilovca village. Paul Condrat Archive. Interwar period



Figure 9. Katsaveika, Mahmudia village, 2009



Figure 10. Mahmudia village, costume with sarafan, pois and lestovka, 2021

The traditional men's costume consists of the following garments: *rubashka*/ tunic-type shirt, worn over trousers and fastened at the waist with a *pois*/ tasseled belt; *shtany* or *briuki*/ trousers, worn in *ciobote*/ boots. In the cold season, are worn over the shirt a *padiovka*/ ankle-length coat, or a *pinjak*/ *palto*/ short cloth coat with a collar, closed at the front (Chiselev, 2019).

The *pois*/ belt is invested by members of the community with certain meanings: it provides a link to the divinity, the tassels representing the archangels Michael and Gabriel; it physically separates the upper, pure part from the lower, impure, worldly part. It is tied in the middle so that the tassels are at the same level because they represent the Archangels, defenders, and protectors of the faithful. But this custom tends to be forgotten, with cases of non-compliance often occurring in the field. The cord is made of wool or silk, woven, or braided (Titov, 2020).

Lestovka has symbolic and practical meanings in the Starovery imagination: the materialized expression of the whole Christian dogma; the ladder of Christ, the ladder of virtue or the ladder of spiritual ascent; the eternity of prayer by reference to the circle formed by the two bands of the object, symbol of eternity, perfection and Divinity; a calculating/counting device used during prayers, which facilitates concentration on prayer to God; a device for measuring the degree of atonement for sins. Structurally, *lestovka* is made up of a row of rolls or steps (*babochki*, *zupty*), 100 small and nine large, three of which divide the small rolls into unequal segments. The string (*kareshok*) is fastened and finished at one end with an attachment made up of two rows of triangular or, in rare cases, trilobed surfaces (*lapostki*, *laposki*) stitched in pairs. The string is made up of two strips of leather or synthetic material, 1.5-2 cm wide, one perforated so that the other is passed through to form tight loops into which pieces of wood (on which rolls of paper are wound) or, more recently, pieces of rolled paper are inserted. According to tradition, these steps had little pieces of paper embedded in them on which the prayer of Christ was written in Slavonic. Beyond the purely material characteristics, the piece has received through a cumulative process multiple and multi-layered meanings, both as a

whole and in its components. As mentioned, the *kareshok* has 100 smaller rolls and nine larger rolls, three at the beginning, three at the end, and three in the middle, which symbolize the nine angelic groups or the number of months in which the Mother of God carried Christ in her womb. The beginning and end of the ladder are marked by simple segments without *babochki* (*prostoye mesto*), representing Earth and Heaven. By three large scrolls (symbol of the Holy Trinity), the *lestovka* is divided into four unequal sections: from the Earth to the first large step are 12 steps (the 12 Apostles); from the first large step to the second large step including them are 40 steps (the Lord's 40-day fast in the desert), and without them are 38 steps (38 weeks, the time Christ spent in the Marian womb); up to the third great roll there are 33 steps (the years of Jesus' earthly life); after the third great roll and up to Heaven, there are 17 small steps (17 OT prophets about Christ's coming to Earth) (Titov, 2015; Robson & Smilianskaia, 2008; Crasovschi, 2005). The two rows of *lapostki* signify the dual nature of Christ (the divine - top row and the human - bottom row) or, in another interpretation, the Tablets of the Law revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Hidden between these rows were seven small movable devices (*piridvijki*) strung on a ribbon, signifying the seven mysteries of the church and the seven *lestovkas* that every devout Christian should pray during the day. In the case of most contemporary Old Believer rosaries, *piridvijki* are represented symbolically, the triangles being very closely stitched together and becoming immobile (Vurgaft & Ushakov, 1996). Concerning gender, a chromatic and ornamental differentiation of these ritual pieces can be observed. Men use chromatically sober *lestovkas*, with simple *lapostki*, or decorated with the initials of evangelists (Chiselev, 2020). Women, on the other hand, prefer stronger colors (e.g., red, cherry) and rich ornaments embroidered or made of beads and sequins.

Lestovka is an artifact with identity value for Old Rite believers everywhere, constituting a true relic of the material spirituality of the Old Russians. Although it has inevitably undergone morphological transformations over time (primarily modern materials tending to replace natural ones; the immobility of *lapostki* rows and the disappearance or symbolic representation of *piridvijki* devices) and semantic accumulations or adjustments, they continue to be distinct signs of an ethnic-confessional group (Chiselev, 2021).

Thus, Brodero from Slava Rusă village makes simple or decorated *lestovkas* with various geometric, religious motifs (Crucifixion scene, monograms, faces or symbols of the Apostles), floral and phytomorphic motifs (four-petalled flower, vine, tree of life), avimorphic (peacock), astral (star), crown, iconographic representations, Scripture verses, etc. The string is handmade from Italian leather or Czech beads, with symbolic, geometric, or stylized representations made by computer embroidery on artificial leather, glass bead applications, or, on request, with Swarovski crystals.

Pois and *lestovka* are elements with a sacred tinge, and there are certain customs in their manufacture: they must be made by pure people, in prayer (Oral source: H.A., 2015; Clopot, 2016). The craft of making them, as well as the *kickka*, continues to exist today, even if it undergoes inherent modernization in relation to new technological capabilities, because the pieces are invested with ceremonial values, and there are clear prescriptions regarding their use in church or certain moments marking rites of passage. For example, in the case of burial, these pieces are indispensable, the obligatory funerary instruments comprising these three items, as well as the *ruka pisaniya*/ a letter to Saint Peter, the protector of the Gates of Heaven.



Figure 11. Lestovka and kichka, Slava Cercheză village, 2011

In recent times, stage or occasion costumes have been individualized and used in contexts that are not in keeping with religious conservatism. In this situation, the *pois* has fallen out of use, and the head-dress, the symbol of the married woman (*kichka*), once hidden under the *kasiak* and *shalik*, has become much more elaborate in the form of the *sbornik* and is worn conspicuously. In some localities there is a tendency to replace these headbands with a *kokoshnik*, a type of richly ornamented tiara worn in the past by wealthy women in Russian society, especially in the northern and central parts of the Tsarist Empire, to demarcate social class and geo-cultural affiliation. Nowadays, Katyusha Design from Jurilovca village produces and sells this handmade clothing accessory, made of silk, velvet, beads, sequins, semi-precious stones, rhinestones, colored glass, or pearl netting, at travel fairs and handmade exhibitions. The *kokoshnik* has completely lost its role as a marker of civil status and is now worn by married women and children alike, visually differentiating them even among the Russian Lipovans community.

Although the craft of this head-dress is still in a state of development, it may in the future constitute a model for reconfiguring identity strategies, by selecting new and attractive artifacts at the expense of those with a local value, accepted and appropriated by the community, in a wider process of reconnection with the identity of the country of the origin of their ancestors, in other words, through a phenomenon of reinvention of tradition that is diffused at an intra-community level. Moreover, the *kokoshnik* has the potential to become a local souvenir with brand value, which can bring capital to the community, even if it is based on a renegotiated tradition or cultural implant.



Figure 12. Kokoshnik, Mila 23 Ensemble, 2011



Figure 13. Girl with kokoshnik, 2022

The economic dimension of folk costume

The craft of folk costumes also has an economic impact on communities. First, local initiatives and businesses appear, which can include a labor force, but can produce, at the same time, retraining of the population, in conditions where industrial activities are in decline, agriculture is carried out in associations or by leasing land, and fishing suffers.

In the case of the Ukrainians, the costumes of the ensembles are made by small local businesses or simple persons, not necessarily co-ethnics, being financed by the Union, town halls, and NGOs, which also leads to the specialization of the staff in less accessible cuts and patterns. Given that we are talking about a complex suit, made of velvet, and taffeta, with trimmings of gold thread and accessories that imitate certain models considered standard, or it goes back to models from the first stage of the crystallization of the local branch of the Ukrainian Union, the cost per costume is high. There were cases when they worked with the client's material, positively valued by the ethnics because it was procured in the past from Ukraine, the final price being considerably lower. A market for the creation of head-dresses (*vinok* or other types) has not yet developed, being manufactured by skilled members of the community by applying artificial flowers, decorative ribbons, or other decorative elements to a velvet backing. Regarding them, the problem is not definitively settled, some types of *vinoks* that appeared at the initiative of some, or others being rejected by the group, either because they resembled the ornaments of other ethnic groups, or because they did not correspond to certain aesthetic preferences. As for the ornaments, the string of large red beads, somewhat stereotypical, were sourced from Ukraine. There are early initiatives, for example, that of Arthluedanube Sfântu Gheorghe, which brings to the market beads inspired by Ukrainian culture, multiple overlapping strings of little beads of different colors, but it remains to be seen whether they will be accepted by proud Ukrainian women, who have a pattern in the mind of the 1990s, when the group got a name and had a reputation, not without the involvement of specialists from Ukraine and with different cultural implants.

At Lipovans there are several ethnic initiatives, a fact related, among others, to the presence of the wedding costume, worn at the religious service, later replaced by the classic bride dress. For example, Katiusha Design is a creative workshop/craft workshop from Jurilovca, a creative business developed through the project *Integrated measures in Jurilovca commune - Steps towards sustainable local development!*, a project co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme Human Capital 2014-2020. Equipped with professional sewing machines, in the workshop, there is the ability and plan to produce, in addition to *kokoshniks*, *sarafans*, shawls, *pois*, and stitches. The local business has a presentation website and Facebook page, classified in the Luxury Store category. From the presentation on the website, we learn that this manufacturing workshop is also a training and education center for future folk craftsmen/artisans. Moreover, here all those who want to do such courses or workshops will be able to learn the secrets of sewing and applying beads to traditional ornaments, and several members of the community can re-profile themselves, going to work for the cultural center in Jurilovca. Valentina Şevval, "the fairy of Russian fairy tales", brings to the fore pieces that are in demand, in the context where there is a market in full development, costumes, and hair ornaments being constantly requested by folklore ensembles. We mention that the localities where *kokoshniks* are in great demand are the most developed from a tourist point of view (Mila 23, Jurilovca), a fact that can highlight the relationship between the development of tourism and tradition, through an inevitable process of commodification. Although they are not strictly from Tulcea county, it is worth mentioning other businesses, for example, *Tsarina* by Cristina Climov, which makes creations inspired by Russian fairy tales: church wear, wedding wear, *rubashka*, *pois* with golden thread embroidery, etc. Also, Alina Nikei Design (Constanța) is a refined clothing brand with a source of inspiration from Russian clothing culture. The brand highlights the traditional elements of the clothing of Lipovans, reinterpreting it in a modern vision. The creator tries to bring traditional clothing into everyday life, by interpreting small details and introducing them into the modern world. Finally, beyond the impact on the local economy, we can see an increased appetite for accessing European funds for the creation and reinterpretation of traditional costumes, including at the school level. Not least, children learn about different elements of ethnic costumes, new or old, participate in contests about folk costumes and there are many indications that the transfer of the heritage to the younger generation will succeed.

Discussions and conclusions

The manual nature is almost completely absent in the making of these costumes, being exclusively used materials of industrial origin, and even being introduced mechanically made embroideries. Nevertheless, these ethnic communities are served by people who have know-how regarding the type of tailoring assumed as right traditional, or representative. Whether we are talking about the church costume or the one for ethnic representation, these garments mark the individuals in the great Northern Dobruja ethnic mosaic, but also at the national level.

For harmonious development in the future, groups need recognition of specificity, including from a visual perspective. Even though new technologies, methods of easy movement of goods, and sources of inspiration have their say in the confection of traditional inspired costumes, they do not fundamentally change the need to appear differently to the community and the public or tourists. Old identity symbols are still used, and new ones are imposed in the modern socio-cultural reality, which proves that the "folk" costume is alive, it adapts and adjusts to the complex situation of the present, through a nostalgic reference to the past and the heritage of the countries of the origin of their ancestors.

The folk costume has, without reason and perhaps, a clear identity value, being the witness of social changes of any type. There is no doubt that the appearance of the stage costume, among the Russian Lipovans, is related to the modification of the customs of this population, the dis-enclavisation and the acceptance of the new, under the conditions of multicultural policies, media openness, increasingly intense tourism development and competition with the group of Ukrainians from the delta, to attract the public eager to know the ethnic culture. If in the past only the religious song was accepted, the community was closed and the church costume represented the unavoidable norm, later, the need for novelty, fabulous, to impress and attract capital at the same time, determined the appearance of clothing for spectacles, which would not be confused with the one used in the sacred sphere, but which emphasizes the elements of Russian culture. Culture from which the group of Starovery is drawn and towards which it tends, considering that the reconciliation with the Russian authority and church occurred only in 1971, after the revocation of the anathema cast on the Old Believers in the 17th century. Slowly, the initially isolated and marginalized community will crystallize the idea of its existence as a diaspora, a fact that can also be decoded from the attempts of some natives to adopt the official name of Russian, giving up the term Lipovan. Likewise, Dobrujan Ukrainians experienced an openness to Ukraine, using the term Khokhol less and less, instead promoting the image of the legendary Cossack, a fighter for freedom and defender of justice.

It is not surprising that in these socio-political and cultural conditions, the sources of inspiration for stage costumes will come from Russia and Ukraine, not taking as a model the peasant costumes of these states but selecting elements specific to prestigious social classes (*kokoshnik*, Pavlovo Posad shawls) or revitalized identity markers (*vinok*, red boots, Cossack clothes). We note that in isolated cases, the display of a certain type of costume can point to certain political visions, being an indicator of external influences and pressures, in relation to certain ideologies to which some or others adhere, but also intra-community dissensions or fractures.

The desire for representation is idealized and aestheticized, perhaps also because there are no longer links with the traditional costume among Ukrainians, which disappeared a long time ago, and because they do not want to be identified with the church costume, among Lipovans. In this sense, the members of the ensemble from Jurilovca told the designer Alina Nikei: "Alina, we want costumes inspired by the royal clothing, we want something Tsarist, we only have red and gold in imagination, elegant and delicate, we leave the rest to you and your talent". In the same perspective, the Ukrainian women from the *Zadunaïska Sich* chorus said: "We don't want to appear on stage with a

headscarf, like peasant women. Our mothers wore enough *platok* and *fartuh*. On stage we want to be beautiful townspeople, not like the old women from the village." (Oral source: M.E, 2021). If for Russians this situation is specific to the mundane festive world because they have a religious costume that must remain decent, maybe a little modernized with lace applications or other special materials, for Ukrainians, precisely the stage costume tends to enter the church, against the background of the loss and the non-use of popular clothing for a long time.

If we brought up the religious component, we must mention that in the communities of Lipovans the norm of wearing a specific costume at church ceremonies, of using certain ritual accessories, and of dressing the dead in a certain way, imposed by tradition, have determined the persistence of some local craftsmen, the most appreciated of which are the creators of *katsaveika*, *kichkas pois*, and *lestovka*. Several types of people make these pieces: seamstresses and, more recently, designers, for clothing pieces; nuns from the Slava Rusă monastery, old women, and local artisans for the religious pieces.

So that the products made have different aesthetic qualities and prices, which are imposed according to the valorization given by the community. As happened in the past with other objects, with a relatively modest market value, they were purchased by Starovery at prices four to five times higher, because they had special meaning from the point of view of identity and religion (to understand - political). For example, a simple and sober *lestovka* sold on the website of Episcopate of Slava costs approx. 23 euros but can reach up to approx. 120 euros at Brodero, a small embroidery workshop specializing in making religious accessories (*pois*, *lestovka*), embroidered headscarves, and Russian-style gifts. The business is a project of a Starover family that combines old Russian crafts with the vision and technology of today. The products are well marketed, for example for *lestovka* there are variants with names such as *Slavyanskiy uzor*/ Slavic pattern, *Moskow, Rozhdestvo*/ Christmas (*lestovska* seems to be a tree with globes on the edges), and Symbols. The most expensive is the *Lestovska Tsarkaia*, with embroidery on white velvet, using Madeira gold metalized thread, for the Preciosa pearl bead cord there is the possibility of personalization by writing the desired initials in the spaces without steps (*babochki*). Also, nearly 200 Swarovski crystals and glass beads are used to decorate *lapostki*. In an entrepreneurial spirit, pairs of *lestovska* are also sold, identical or made in the same compositional aesthetic, for weddings for 157 euros. All these quality materials involve relationships, exchanges, and economic transactions, resulting in the creation of luxury products, for which the members of the community are willing to pay, given that there is a real competition between Lipovans regarding the most attractive garments, made from the best materials and with the greatest care (flawless).

The folk costume, in addition to its identity and social value, has economic implications in the communities that choose to conserve or upgrade it, in connection with the development of tourism. Local initiatives show that the craft itself can bring well-being, an increase in knowledge, (re)qualification and improvement, highlighting economic exchanges and possibilities for the circulation of goods, retail spaces, and opportune periods of commercialization and sales methods (e.g.: physical and online stores, at church, fairs, feast of churches, custom-made).

As Gudowska (2020) argued the role of handicrafts in achieving the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we will nuance some things about the craft of folk costume making. Participation in hand-made fairs and exhibitions, attracting tourists eager to know the local heritage and keeping them in the community, but also the possibilities of employing the population and trading on virtual platforms can fight against poverty, reduce inequality, and provide added value to the community and economic growth. Also, the involvement of students and tourists in creative activities and training workshops, with the possibility of developing manual skills, aesthetic qualities, criticism, attitudes, and social skills, bring improvement in general well-being and quality of education. This craft is eminently feminine, but there are no limitations for men to make certain pieces of clothing or ritual ones (e.g.: *lestovka* or *pois*), a fact that

contributes to gender equality. A costume is highly valued, inherited and passed on, restored when needed, and even thesaurised in museums, promoting responsible consumption and production. As was the case with the Lipovan seamstresses, they did not throw away any textile scraps, using them to make patchwork, in an economic spirit, and to protect the natural environment. Besides, these activities are not polluting, being organized on a small scale, with the possibility of recycling so that waste does not appear. The development of craft workshops can also have an impact on the development of localities, especially in the context of tourist development and the possibility to attract European and national funding.

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