

2015

Reproducing 'geopolitics' national identity representations of foreign affairs in Moldova

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/3499>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/3408>

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**Reproducing ‘geopolitics’ – national identity
representations of foreign affairs in Moldova**

by Roxana Adina Humă

A thesis submitted to Plymouth University
in partial fulfilment for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Government

July 2015

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Roxana Adina Humă

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Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been completed without the support, patience and time of a whole range of people in the UK, in Romania and, especially in Moldova. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisory team, Professor Karl Cordell and Dr Shabnam Holliday, for their patience, guidance and for always being there to encourage me whenever I needed it. I would also like to thank the rest of the department and my PhD colleagues, for their support. Lastly, special thanks to Dr Brieg Powel for inspiring me to start this project.

Sunt recunoscătoare tuturor celor din Moldova și România care au găsit o oră pentru a sta de vorbă cu mine. Am mai multe dovezi de bunătatea moldovenilor decât pentru orice alt argument menționat în teză. Mulțumiri multe pentru Ruslan și tanti Raia fiindcă au avut grija de mine în Moldova și m-au ajutat pe tot parcursul studiului. De asemenea pentru Ina și Valerica pentru că m-au suportat la Chișinău.

This project would have never been started without Mădălina and Diana holding my hand through the application process and it would have not been completed without Matt's support and rather annoying trust in my abilities.

Și cel mai important, mulțumesc mama, tata și buna pentru răbdare. Și pentru că datorită vouă am ajuns aici.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee. Work submitted for this research degree at the Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment. The study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the Economic and Social Research Council.

Relevant scientific seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented; several papers were prepared for publication.

Publications:

'The Mioritic Nation – An alternative approach to Moldovan national identity' (accepted, *Nationalities Papers*)

'A Moldovan 'sheep'? - Framing Moldovan passivity', *Nations and Nationalism* 21 (3), 2015, 503–523, doi: 10.1111/nana.12125

'Contested Borders: Representing boundaries within Moldovan museums' in "*Placing" Europe in the Museum - People(s), places, identities* (2013) edited by Christopher Whitehead *et al.*, Milan: Politecnico di Milano, pp. 45 – 60

Presentation and Conferences Attended:

'Europeanised "brotherhood": Romanian portrayals of the 2009 Moldovan "Twitter Revolution"', *ASN World Convention*, Columbia University, 24-26 April 2014.

'The West through a Moldovan lens – Reflections on a liminal identity', *Second Euroacademia International Conference 'Re-Inventing Eastern Europe'*, Prague, 15-16 November 2013.

'Between liminality and hybridity - Moldovan identity and the borders of Europe', *14th Annual UACES Student Forum Research Conference, 'Evolving Europe: Voices of the Future'*, Loughborough University, July 8-9, 2013.

'A Moldovan 'sheep'? - Deconstructing Moldova's lack of agency', *Aberystwyth-Lancaster Postgraduate Conference 2013*, Manchester University, 5-7 June 2013.

'No room for the middle ground? The problems facing Moldovan civic identity', *ASN World Convention*, Columbia University, 18-20 April 2013; developed and also presented at *BASEES 2014 Annual Conference*, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, 5-7 April 2014 and *ASN Convention, Central European University*, 12-14 June 2014.

'How a 'revolution' almost made us forget about the nation – Romanian representations of Moldova during the 2009 'Twitter Revolution"', *23rd Annual ASEN Conference*, LSE, 9-11 April 2013.

'Contested borders - representing boundaries within Moldovan museums', *MeLA Conference*, Newcastle University, 2-3 September 2012.

Word Count of the main body of the thesis: 72,275

Date 22.07.2015

Abstract

Breaking away from the positivist trend dominating the literature on Moldova's foreign relations, this thesis analyses the means through which national identity discourses impact on Moldovan societal representation of foreign policy. It contends that national identity perpetuates a Cold War inspired view of foreign affairs. This construction is defined by two main elements, the representation of the civilizational and geopolitical cleavage between East and West and the lack of agency awarded to the Moldovan self.

This is achieved through an in-depth study of the national identity debate in Moldova. It focuses on both the two main national identity discourses in Moldova, Romanianism and Moldovanism. For this analysis, I employ a post-structuralist approach, conceptualising national identity as a discourse that helps us make sense of the world. Through this function and its persistence across Moldovan articulations, national identity plays a key role in representations of foreign affairs in Moldova. More specifically, the opposition between Romanianism and Moldovanism reproduces the East-West geopolitical and civilizational cleavage, whilst the representation of Moldovan inferiority, historical debt and the Great Power Complex reiterates Moldova's passivity and lack of agency. Through this Cold War representation of international affairs, national identity offers both the resources and the limits within which official Moldovan foreign policy articulations function. In this way, national identity is crucial in understanding the mechanisms through which foreign policy is legitimated and, especially, the validity and credibility of certain arguments and the unlikelihood of others.

Contents

Abstract	5
List of Figures and Tables	9
Acronyms	11
Introduction.....	13
I.1. Relevance.....	14
I.2. Historical context.....	18
I.3. Chapter Outline	26
A note on the text.....	35
1. Theoretical and Methodological Underpinnings.....	37
1.1. Discourse – defining the world.....	38
1.2. National Identity.....	43
1.3. Identity and Foreign Policy	50
1.4. Agency and Structure in IR	55
1.5. Conclusion	61
2. Methodology	63
2.1. Data Collection	64
2.1.1. Levels of Data	67
2.1.2. Types of Data	72
2.2. Method and Data Analysis.....	85
2.2.1. Toolbox.....	89
2.2.2. Analysis.....	93
3. Moldovan national identity – ‘between’ Moldovanism and Romanianism	99
3.1. Building on the existing literature	103
3.2. Theoretical and Methodological considerations.....	106
3.3. Language.....	109
3.4. History	120
3.4.1. Historical Narratives	124
3.4.2. Key Events: 1812, 1918 and 1940.....	127
3.5. Conclusion	147
4. Articulating the East-West Geopolitical cleavage	153

4.1. Political Cleavage	154
4.2. Continuity and anti-imperialism	167
4.3. Moldovanist representations of otherness	171
4.3.1. The Romanian Threat.....	173
4.3.2. The European Union as a secondary external other.....	179
4.4. Romanianist representations of otherness	183
4.4.1. The Transnistrian other.....	185
4.4.2. National minorities – the ‘internal’ other	188
4.4.3. Leadership, the conspiratorial other	190
4.4.4. The Russian Threat.....	192
4.5. The East – West Geopolitical Divide	197
4.5.1. East and West: characteristics	201
4.6. Conclusion.....	209
5. Problematizing Moldovan Agency	213
5.1. Agency in Historical Narratives	215
5.2. Representations of contemporary agency.....	223
5.3. The Agency of the ‘Other’	226
5.3.1. The myth of the saviour	229
5.3.2. Romania	231
5.3.3. Russia	241
5.3.4. The European Union	245
5.4. Conclusion.....	251
Conclusion.....	255
C.1. Original contribution and Importance of Study.....	256
C.2. Consequences for Foreign Policy.....	261
C.2.1. National Identity	262
C.2.2. East and West	264
C.2.3. Agency.....	271
C.3. Further research	274
Appendix 1: Banal Nationalism	277
Appendix 2: Geopolitics Shelves	280
Bibliography	283

Academic Sources.....	283
Opinion polls.....	304
Online and Other Data Sources	306

List of Figures and Tables

	Page
Table I.1 Moldovan Election Results 2001-2014	25
Table 2.1 Interview codes	77-79
Table 2.2 Newspaper sources by national identity orientation	82
Table 2.3 Online data sources by national identity orientation	83
Table 3.1 Key Dates according to Moldovanists and Romanianists	146
Figure 4.1 The Moldovan Political Spectrum	157
Figure 5.1. Responses to the survey question 'Do you think Moldova is headed in the right/wrong direction?' 1998-2015	230
Figure A1.1 Chişinău 1	277
Figure A1.2 Chişinău 2	278
Figure A1.3 Chişinău 2	279
Figure A2.1 Libraria din Centru 1	280
Figure A2.2 Libraria din Centru 2	281

Acronyms

AIE – Alliance for European Integration

CIS – Community of Independent States

DA – Discourse Analysis

ENHM – Ethnography and Natural History Museum

EU – European Union

HAM – History and Anthropology Museum

IR – International Relations

JC – Jurnal de Chișinău

MASSR - Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

MSSR - Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic

PCRM – Party of the Communists of the Republic of Moldova [*Partidul Communistilor din Republica Moldova*]

PDM – Democrat Party of Moldova [*Partidul Democrat din Moldova*]

PL – Liberal Party [*Partidul Liberal*]

PLDM – Liber Democrat Party of Moldova [*Partidul Liberal Democrat din Moldova*]

PMAN - *Piața Marii Adunări Naționale* [Great National Assembly Square] Chișinău

PNL – National Liberal Party [*Partidul Național Liberal*]

RFE/EL – Radio Free Europe/*Europa Liberă*

Introduction

‘Whilst it is certainly true that all states pursue what they perceive as a rational foreign policy, the parameter of what constitutes rational choice is a flexible and elusive concept’ (Prizel 1998: 1)

With the war in Ukraine in 2014, the foreign policy choices of the former Soviet states have come under even closer scrutiny. This thesis follows this trend and focuses on foreign policy representations in Moldova, the smallest of the post-communist states on the border of Europe. My main argument is that in the Moldovan case national identity produces and reproduces a representation of foreign affairs very similar to the geopolitical, Cold War view. This is outlined through two main characteristics, firstly the oppositional relationship between East and West, as geopolitical and civilizational spaces, and, secondly, the lack of agency of the Moldovan actor within this system. This interpretation stems from the way in which my interviewees have characterised geopolitics as the main element defining Moldovan fate and, implicitly, Moldovan foreign affairs. Consequently, the main focus of this analysis are societal discourses, as articulated by political and cultural elites or put across in newspapers. For this analysis, I employ a constructivist and post-structuralist approach, focused on national identity as a discourse that helps us make sense of the world.

With this in mind, this introduction begins with a discussion of the relevance of the thesis from the perspective of the literature on Moldova. It highlights some of the issues that are explained through the post-structuralist approach to analysing Moldovan representations of foreign affairs. Drawing from the literature on

nationalism and foreign policy in Moldova, I stress the importance of this thesis in covering the important gap between positivist and national identity-based explanations of Moldovan foreign affairs. This is followed by an overview of Moldovan historical context and a summary of the content of each of the five chapters in the thesis. The historical presentation sets the basis for the discussion on national identity in Moldova; the country's shifting fate and occupiers are some of the most important elements in contemporary national identity discourses. Meanwhile, the chapter summary offers both a synopsis of the main arguments of the thesis, whilst also highlighting its contribution to the literature on national identity in Moldova.

I.1. Relevance

The literature on Moldovan foreign affairs is dominated by instrumentalist and economic analyses. Most of the writings are focused on the specifics of Moldova's relations with Romania, Russia and, especially, the European Union (EU) (e.g. Sarov and Ojog 2009). Two main topics have dominated this body of literature. The first is the management of the border between Romania and Moldova, from 2007 the border of the European Union. These studies focus on the Moldovans' freedom of movement and the impact of Romania's 2007 EU accession on border management and on Moldovan-Romanian relations (Dura 2006, 2007; Ilieș *et al.* 2008; Skvortova 2006; Popescu 2006; Pop 2009; Burdelnii n.; IPP 2002). The second set of investigations are those of EU-Moldova relations and usually assessments of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy in Moldova (e.g. Gheorghiu 2005; Wrobel 2005; Bosse 2010; Niemann and de Wekker 2010).

Conversely, another body of literature focuses specifically on the Moldovan government's actions and foreign policy options. In this way, it is the most relevant for the purposes of this thesis and its focus on Moldovan, not European or Romanian, discourses. This set of analyses has been inspired by the shifts in foreign policy in Moldova in 2005 and 2009 and the contrasting foreign policy orientations of the main parties in Moldova (pro-Eastern/multi-vector versus pro-Western). These studies take a positivist approach and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Moldova's different foreign policy options (e.g. Pop *et al.* 2005; Radeke *et al.* 2013; Cenusă 2014; Clipa 2014). One study that departs from this outlook is Korosteleva's (2010) analysis of EU-Moldova relations. She goes beyond the conventional governance framework and highlights the salience of culture in understanding Moldova's approach to its relations with the EU. The thesis reinforces her findings and expands their outlook to Moldova's relations to Russia and Romania; my analysis also goes beyond her conclusions, as I explain the persistence of cultural factors in Moldovan society through the means of national identity.

Nevertheless, this focus on rational choice and economic calculations is contradicted to a great extent by analyses of the connection between national identity and foreign policy in Moldova. These suggest that there are clear links between a political party's stance on the issue of national identity and its foreign policy orientation (e.g. King 2003; Zgureanu-Guragata 2008; Cărauş 2003), making national identity a *sine qua non* element of this analysis. There are two main national identity discourses in Moldova: Romanianism, arguing that the people of Moldova are Romanian, and Moldovanism, providing that they are Moldovan, different from

Romanians. The literature links the former with a pro-European foreign policy and the latter with a pro-Russian/multi-vector one (King 2003).

Thus, the literature on foreign policy in Moldova is divided between an identity-based argument and a rational evaluation of economic and other benefits. On a superficial level, these bodies of literature seem to contradict each other, but the reality of Moldovan thinking on foreign affairs is a lot more nuanced, with a multitude of elements and considerations coming into play. In order to close the gap between the two approaches, this thesis studies how national identity constructs the framework within which foreign policy discourses function. Thus, it does not analyse foreign policy, but national identity representations of foreign affairs. It conceptualises both foreign policy and national identity as discourses that enable us to make sense of the world. Thus, it does not deny the value of economic articulations; it treats them as one of the elements of foreign policy, yet outside the scope of this thesis. More importantly, this methodological approach allows the thesis to augment Cărăuș (2003) and King's (2003) analyses; it achieves this by expanding the focus of research from the simple connection between national identity discourses and their respective foreign policy orientation to the wider significance of national identity for foreign policy articulations across Moldovan society. More specifically, it analyses national identity's impact on representations of the structure within which foreign affairs are conducted and the distribution of agency amongst its main actors. Based on this, I infer that national identity in Moldova reproduces the East-West geopolitical cleavage and Moldova's lack of agency on the international scene.

Foreign policy analysis is the key approach to studying foreign policy; it focuses on decision making, the government and other decision-makers and the conditions

and processes that affect foreign policy. Its interest in looking inside the box represented by the state contrasts with the classical systemic theories of International Relations, such as neo-realist, neo-liberalism (Syder *et al.* 1962). As such, foreign policy analysis is not a theory of international relations, but as with this study it focuses on the state and the individual levels of analysis. Methodologically, foreign policy analysis is a complex approach, encompassing a series of perspectives, such as rational choice, human psychology, organisational studies or constructivism (e.g. Allison and Zelikow 1971; Boekle *et al.* 2001).

Applying this theoretical framework to the literature on Moldovan national identity, I note that rational choice is the underpinning for the economic analyses of Moldovan foreign policy, as presented above. Meanwhile, constructivism links in with the literature arguing that national identity in Moldova defines its foreign policy orientation. Nevertheless, in offering an alternative to these analyses, this project does not study foreign policy *per se* and, as such, cannot be included in the wider category of foreign policy analysis. For the purpose of this study, I take an approach inspired by Hopf (2002). Hence, I do not study how foreign policy is made or the actors involved in this process. I analyse the societal discourses that have the potential to influence foreign policy; they achieve this either by offering it symbolic resources it can build upon or by setting the limits of credibility and appeal across Moldovan society. Thus, the thesis' importance lies both in its methodological novelty for the analysis of representations of foreign affairs in Moldova and in widening the domain of research on this topic, from the conventional analysis of foreign policy, to societal discourses. Additionally, it augments rational and economic studies on Moldovan foreign policy, highlighting the alternative modes of legitimation for these 'rational' discourses.

In terms of practical relevance, this approach offers an explanation for the presence of elements of national identity in articulations and the legitimation process of foreign policy discourses in Moldova. For instance, Communist Vladimir Voronin explained his party's foreign policy discourse for the 2014 election by arguing that Moldova had been pro-Russian since the times of Ștefan cel Mare (Moldovan prince, 1457-1504). Furthermore, this approach highlights the means through which foreign policy discourses are promoted and legitimated to the Moldovan masses. The fact that the wider Moldovan public candidly admits to not being informed well enough about their foreign policy options, with 11% and 12% thinking they are very well informed regarding the EU and, respectively, the Euro-Asian Union (IPP 2014: 60), suggests that their foreign policy choices are also motivated by reasons that go beyond a rational analysis of costs and benefits. One of these alternative rationales is national identity and this lack of knowledge may explain political actors' impetus to employ national identity arguments to convince the masses. Thus, national identity has good explanatory power in making sense of both grassroots foreign policy options and of political articulations. All these points are expanded on in the conclusion, where the discussion on relevance is corroborated with the findings of the thesis.

1.2. Historical context

But before delving into the detail of the thesis, this section aims to present a succinct history of Moldova, pinpointing the main events that have shaped the identity debate. What currently is the territory of the Republic of Moldova has been, throughout its history part of the principality of Moldova, Tsarist Russia, Greater Romania and the Soviet Union and these shifts have shaped the identity of the Moldovan people (King

2000). This section does not aspire to present a comprehensive and detailed history or the debates surrounding different historical events, as these are discussed within the different identity discourses in Section 3.4.

This strip of land was the Eastern part of the Moldovan Principality from 1359 to 1812; the principality encompassed both the territory of the current day Republic of Moldova and that of the Romanian region of Moldova, with its capital, Iași. One of the three great Romanian principalities, along with Wallachia and Transylvania, Moldova reached its pinnacle during the reign of Ștefan cel Mare [Stephen the Great] (1457-1504), who reigned from the Carpathians to the Nistru River and the Black Sea. As an important turning point, the principality of Moldova moved under Ottoman suzerainty in 1484 after Ștefan cel Mare's defeat at Cetatea Alba. From this point on, the Porte plays a crucial role in the fate of the region. Meanwhile, a multiplicity of other Moldovan princes also made a mark on Moldovan history, for a series of reasons; one of the most important princes in this period is Dimitrie Cantemir. He is mentioned both for his alliance with Russia concluded at Țuțsk in 1711, marking an important point in Moldovan-Russian relations, and for his extensive academic work, including *Descriptio Moldaviae* [The Description of Moldova], one of the key works of medieval Moldovan geography, politics and ethnography. Thus, up until the 19th century, Moldova's history is linked to its relations with the two main powers of the region, Russia and the Ottoman Empire, but also other actors, e.g. Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, etc.

Nevertheless, the centuries following the rule of Ștefan were characterised by multiple conflicts and a haemorrhage of territories from the Moldovan Principality; concurrently Turkish power over these lands led to the imposition of foreign, Greek princes, at the helm of both Moldova and Wallachia. The pinnacle of Moldovan

problems was the Treaty of Bucharest, ending the 1806-1812 Russo-Turkic War. As an effect of the treaty, the territory of the current day Republic of Moldova came under Russian control. Renamed Bessarabia by the Russians, in order to differentiate it from Moldova and legitimise their occupation, this territory expanded all the way to the Black sea, incorporating territories currently part of Ukraine, such as the Budjak. As a region (*gubernya* from 1871) of the Tsarist Empire, Moldova was the site of various Russification policies, such as the promotion of the Russian language and the removal of Romanian/Moldovan from official use. This was augmented through the forced migration of the autochthonous population to other regions of the empire, while foreign ethnic groups were encouraged to settle here. Nevertheless, Russian historiography of the age recognised the population on this territory as Romanian (van Meurs 1998).

Unlike the other Romanian regions under Habsburg and, then, Austro-Hungarian occupation, such as Bukovina or Transylvania (see Hitchins 2002), the origins of a resistance movement in Bessarabia did not develop until 1905, after the revolution in St Petersburg (King 1994, 2000); moreover, van Meurs (1998: 41) argues that 'indications for a national consciousness in Bessarabia before the beginning of the 20th century are minimal, even among intellectuals'. In this context, it is only as late as 1916, that the Romanian nationalist movement gained some power across Moldova. Together with the military it played an important role in the decisions of the Moldovan Assembly, *Sfatul Țării*, for Moldova to become independent, in late 1917, and unite within the borders of Greater Romania, on 27 March 1918. Meanwhile, Romanian troops had entered the territory of Bessarabia at the beginning of 1918, in order to ensure stability in the region following the Russian Revolution; their pressure is argued

to have been crucial in understanding the *Sfatul Tarii's* decision (King 2000: 35). The Romanians kept the Russian name, Bessarabia, for this region within Greater Romania. Highlighting the shifting nature of symbols in Moldova, Bessarabia is now commonly used in Moldova by Romanianists, whilst Moldovanists criticise it for being a Romanian construct and challenging Moldovan persistence on this territory (Comunistul 24.02.2011).

During the interwar period, in its own nationalising project, Bucharest promoted Romanian culture and the use of the Romanian language in Bessarabia (King 2000; Bîrlădeanu 2008; Cuşco 2008). Nevertheless, even during these two decades, the Romanian elites marginalised Bessarabia, which had become 'an underdeveloped corner of Greater Romania, just as it had been the Siberia of the West in the Russian Empire' (King 1994: 348; Livezeanu 2000). In the meantime, the Soviet Union reorganised the territory on the left bank of the Prut River as the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) in 1924 and commenced its nation building project and promoting the idea of an independent Moldovan state (Berg and van Meurs 2002).

The signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 23 August 1939, establishing Nazi Germany's and the Soviet Union's areas of interest in central and Eastern Europe and the events of the Second World War brought Moldova back under Russian/Soviet control, from 28 June 1940. Under the name of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (MSSR), the new country comprised both the territory between the Prut and Dniester, i.e. Bessarabia, and that on the Eastern bank of the Dniester (the Moldovan MASSR), that had previously not been part of Romania. The years of the Second World War and those immediately following saw Soviet deportations, largely for political and

nationalising purposes, and famine across Moldova, with hundreds of thousands of casualties. During this period and up to the 1980s, Soviet policies in the area were aimed at constructing a Moldovan national identity, subsumed beneath a 'civic' Soviet identity. It was based on the differences in between Romanians and Moldovans, especially in regards to language and history (King 1996, 2000; Schrad 2004; Parmentier 2004). Still, by the 1980s, the success of the Moldovanist project was contested by Moldovan elites and the issue of cultural legitimation quickly became one of the motors that would lead to Moldovan independence in 1991 (Cash 2008). Nevertheless, Moldovan elite's ambition to maximise rent seeking opportunities and, ultimately, Moscow's agreement with the heads of the republican communist parties were crucial to Moldova gaining independence. Thus, Moldova, throughout its history has experienced two separate (and opposed?) attempts to create a sense of nationhood, one Romanian and one Soviet – Moldovan¹.

In terms of national identity, Moldova is considered a site of failed nation-building projects (Cash 2007) with two main national discourses co-existing in Moldovan society (King 1994, 2000). The first, Romanianism, holds that the people of Moldova are Romanian, focusing on both the perceived linguistic identity and the historical experience of being part of the three main Romanian medieval principalities and of Greater Romania, 1918-1940 (King 2000). During the 1980s Romanianism gained strength as a reaction to Soviet policies and gave momentum to the movement of national rebirth. Yet, with the promotion of Romanianism came the possibility of reunification with Romania which left national minorities uneasy. This culminated with the war in Transnistria and the autonomy of the Găgăuz territory in the beginning of

¹ The example of the Tsarist Empire's policies is not brought forward as a nationalising project, but as a process of Russification which may have altered the identity of the people of Moldova.

the 1990s (Crowther 1998; King 1994). Even before Moldova gained its independence, the territory east of the Nistru River seceded, proclaiming itself the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic or more simply Transnistria. Its independence has not been recognised, except by other secessionist republics in the former Soviet Union, such as Abkhazia or South Ossetia, and the conflict evolved into full blown war in 1992. A ceasefire was signed in the summer of 1992 and currently the conflict is considered to be 'frozen', with the Transnistrian government in Tiraspol being *de facto* independent. At the same time, the Găgăuz people, a Turkic Christian-Orthodox minority, were pacified by Chişinău with the creation of the autonomous Găgăuz Yeri (Berg and van Meurs 2002; see also Crowther 1998). The minorities' violent reaction to the Romanianist policies is an important argument in Moldovanist articulations, as noted in the in-depth discussion of the national identity discourses (Chapters 3 and 4). Following these events, the year 1994 was marked by two important turning points: President Mircea Snegur's 'Casa Noastră' [Our Home] speech and the adoption of a new Moldovan Constitution. With these, the Moldovanist project came back to the fore. Moldovanism provides that the people of Moldova are different from Romanians and speak Moldovan language (Ciscel 2006); moreover, they also portray Romania and Romanianism as threatening Moldovan independence. Drawing from the policies of the Tsarist period, the origins of the Moldovanist project lie in the national and linguistic project of the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic 1924-1940 (King 1999) adapted to fit the developments and requirements of each age (van Meurs 1998). Building on the history of the medieval Moldovan principality and the existence of a Moldovan autonomous or, even, independent state (1917-1918, arguably 1924-1940 and 1944-1991), this discourse accentuates the differences between Romanians

and Moldovans and, to a certain extent, strengthens Moldovan-Russian links (Roper 2005).

The year 2001 brought a Moldovanist party, the Moldovan Communists to power. Taking advantage of a loophole in the law banning the former Communist Party, the new political organisation named themselves the Party of the Communists or Communists' Party (PCRM). The party is not communist but more of a nationalist, populist and left of centre political group (see March 2005; Suhan 2006). Unlike ethnic Romanianism, contemporary Moldovanism is a defender of Moldovan statehood. It also encompasses an important civic element focused around the rights of ethnic minorities and the position of the Russian language in Moldovan society (March 2007). Additionally, during their time in government, the Communists have promoted the idea of a separate Moldovan history, both in text-books (Ihrig 2006) and in their speeches (Danero Iglesias 2013a, 2013b). The Communists dominated the Moldovan political life up until the, so-called, Twitter Revolution of 7 April 2009 (Table I.1). Table I.1 details the election results from 2001 to 2014 for all parties passing the electoral threshold; the left most column attempts to offer a rough guide of a party's national identity orientation². It highlight the Communist's dominance of the Moldovan political scene. Nevertheless, it also underscores the shifting fates of Moldovan parties.

² For instance, the PPCD changed their views on national identity from being a unionist party in 2001 to a Moldovanist position after 2005.

National Identity	Party	2001	2005	April 2009	July 2009	2010	2014
Threshold		6%	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%
Moldovanist	PCRM	50%	46%	49.5%	45%	39%	17%
	Socialists	-	-	-	-	-	21%
	Social-Democrats	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Electoral Bloc 'Motherland'	-	-	-	-	-	-
	PPCD	8%	9%	-	-	-	-
	PDM	-	Electoral Bloc Democratic Moldova 29%	-	12%	13%	16%
	Party of Rebirth and Conciliation	-		Our Moldova Alliance 10%	7%	-	-
	Braghiş Alliance	13%	-		-	-	-
	PLDM	-	-	12%	17%	29%	20%
Romanianist	PL	-	-	13%	15%	10%	10%

Table I.1 Moldovan Election Results 2001-2014

Thousands of Moldovans protested on the streets of Chişinău in April 2009 against what they perceived to be electoral fraud in the parliamentary election. The peaceful protests evolved into a riot and clashes with the police, who were accused of a series of abuses of human rights leading to the death of one of the agitators. In response to this violence, a recount of the votes was called, followed by snap election in July 2009. As a result, the Alliance for European Integration (AIE) came to power, with a majority in the Moldovan Parliament. AIE consists of three parties: the centrist Liberal-Democrat Party (PLDM), the centre-left Democrat Party (PDM) and the centre-right Liberal Party (PL). From 2009 to 2010 AIE also encompassed the Our Moldova Alliance; nevertheless, they failed to reach the electoral threshold in 2010 and were consequently absorbed into the PLDM. The change in regime in 2009 has brought a change in terms of official national identity articulations in Moldova. Romanianism has grown in importance, especially with the outspoken Romanianist and Liberal Mihai Ghimpu as interim president of Moldova (2009-2010). In 2013, the Liberals left the AIE, being replaced by the Reformed Liberals, a breakaway faction of the Liberal Party that led to little change in terms of foreign policy. Highlighting the shifting nature of

political fortunes in Moldova, the previously almost unknown Socialist Party won the most votes in the November 2014 election (21%), with the Liberal-Democrats (20%) and Communists (17%) trailing behind them. In this way, the Socialists became the main Moldovanist party on the Moldovan political scene. The former AIE still possesses a majority, but as of January 2014 the Liberal-Democrats and the Democrats have formed a minority government.

I.3. Chapter Outline

The next five chapters detail the argument that Moldovan national identity frames Moldovan foreign policy and foreign affairs by reproducing a geopolitical, Cold War inspired, view of the world. The thesis is structured into three main sections: theoretical underpinnings (Chapter 1) and methodology (Chapter 2), an analysis of the representations of structure (Chapters 3 and 4) and of agency in international affairs (Chapters 5). Therefore, the analysis is divided based on the two criteria employed to define geopolitics. Firstly, two chapters (3 and 4) argue that the antagonism between Romanianism and Moldovanism reproduces a cleavage between the civilizational and geopolitical spaces of East and West. Then, the second part of the analysis (Chapter 5) stresses that the Moldovans portray themselves as passive and lacking agency.

For this purpose, **Chapter 1** sets the basis for the discussion by highlighting the post-structuralist approach of the thesis and the importance of its conceptualisation of national identity and foreign policy as discourses for understanding the Moldovan case study. It argues that a post-structuralist, discursive approach, is essential in understanding the existence of coexisting national identity discourses in Moldova. Moreover, it enables me to analyse national identity's interactions with other societal

discourses, such as portrayals of politics and corruption. The reason for choosing national identity for this analysis is based on its theoretical potential, explanatory power for foreign affairs in Moldova and its presence everywhere across the country, in the media, political debates and even in the streets in Chişinău (Appendix 1). By employing a discursive approach, I conceptualise national identity as a story that tells people about themselves and helps them make sense of the world. Through this characteristic, national identity is one of the prime suspects in analysing the means through which foreign affairs and foreign policy are understood and legitimised in Moldova, based on the lack of information the people have, as discussed above.

With this in mind, the thesis is focused on the way in which, on a discursive level, Moldovan national identity frames Moldovan foreign policy thinking, offering both discursive resources for it to build on and limitations in terms of what can be presented as legitimate. Chapter 1 highlights how this argument draws from David Campbell's (1992) theoretical concept of 'Foreign Policy' (as opposed to 'foreign policy'), the matrix of meanings and ideas that forms the resource base for foreign policy articulations. The analysis also builds on Bleiker (2003) and Cochran's (1999) conceptualisation of discourse functioning as a structure in limiting agency. In this way, the chapter argues, national identity offers the symbolic resources and arguments for legitimating Moldovan foreign policy and the limits within which it needs to function. Hence, Chapter 1 provides the theoretical basis for the analysis on Moldovan national identity and foreign policy in the rest of the thesis.

This is corroborated with **Chapter 2's** focus on the methodology of the thesis. This chapter offers an in-depth presentation of the data collection process for the project, encompassing interviews, newspaper articles, online sources and

ethnographic observation. This extensive use of data offers a comprehensive view of national identity in Moldova. Building on the theoretical underpinnings presented in Chapter 1, the main method of analysis is Discourse Analysis (Section 2.2). The utility of this approach stems from its focus on the construction of dichotomies and hierarchy, essential for highlighting the construction of otherness in the Moldovan case. The analysis is augmented through the use of qualitative content analysis, relying on a coding frame developed from the literature on national identity, DA's focus on dichotomies and from the analysis of the data collected, as per the principles of Grounded Theory.

Chapter 3 turns its attention to the two main national identity discourses in Moldova. I argue that these are constructed as opposing, through a series of dichotomies encompassing contending views on nationality, language and key historical dates. Moreover, the chapter serves two other purposes. Firstly, it offers a comprehensive analysis of the literature on national identity in Moldova. Secondly, it brings this analysis up to date by contextualising my fieldwork data (2009-2014) and highlights the thesis' contribution to the literature on Moldovan national identity. The literature on nationalism in Moldova is focused on the nationalising projects in this space, especially on the way in which political elites have attempted to define the Moldovans in different ways (Parmentier 2004; Montanari 2001; Schrad 2004; Moroi 2007). These offer an overview of the main tenets of these projects, whilst also reproducing the view that Moldova is dominated by their dichotomous construction. Nevertheless, some analyses have been rather superficial, studying national identity as the means to explaining other issues in Moldovan society (e.g. Cărăuș 2003), not as a focus of research. In response to them, this thesis offers a comprehensive look at the

means through which national identity in Moldova is articulated and the way in which its different elements and themes come together in a comprehensive discourse. This is achieved through an analysis of the different elements that form the Moldovan national identity debate and the connections between them: language, history, internal and external others, drawing from the focus in the literature on these topics.

This is due to the fact that the works on Moldovan national identity examining in depth the discursive constructions of Romanianism and Moldovanism have been somewhat limited in their scope on specific areas, but making up for this in their level of detail. These encompass current day (King 2000) and historical analyses of the development of the Moldovan state and society, focused on Russian and Romanian policies on this territory (Bîrlădeanu 2008; Cuşco 2008). An important element in this discussion is language in Moldova. The literature on language includes historical analyses of the policies and language development on the Moldovan territory (Dyer 1996; Deletant 1996) and the social implications of the use of language in Moldova (Ciscel 2006, 2007; Prina 2015). Chapter 3 builds on these to argue that the representation of language highlights the way in which a name can be at the very centre of national identity construction and stresses the constructed nature of the nationalism debate in Moldova. This is due to the fact that Romanianists use the name Romanian, whilst Moldovanists employ Moldovan for what some admit to be a very similar or, even, the same language.

Yet, the main focus of the literature on national identity in Moldova is representations of history, either in textbooks and history teaching (Anderson 2005, 2006, 2014; Ihrig 2006, 2007; Roper 2005; Solonari 2002) or in historiography (van Meurs 1998). Additionally, Danero Iglesias (2013a, 2013b) studies historical

constructions in current political discourse, whereas March (2005, 2007) has analysed the Communists' Moldovanist policies. The chapter draws from these analyses to argue that Romanianism and Moldovanism construct their discourses around opposing views of key historical dates and, implicitly, build contrasting historical narratives. Three key dates are detailed within the chapter, 1812, 1918 and 1940. The analysis is based both on the comprehensive set of works above and on political declarations and newspaper coverage all the way to 2014. This stresses the consistency of these representations both across time and across media of communication and brings the debate up to date, complementing the writings on Moldovan nationalism.

More importantly, the thesis' contribution to the literature on Moldovan national identity is its comprehensiveness, achieved through its endeavour to bring all these elements into one analysis. The thesis collates the existing analyses on Moldovan nationalism, highlighting the way in which different symbols and narratives are weaved together into a coherent discourse. In this way it offers an explanation for the resilience of national identity discourses in Moldova. Its argument is that despite their different structure, i.e. Romanianism being an ethnic construction, whilst Moldovanism is a mix between an ethnic and a civic articulation of national identity, the two national identities are constructed in very similar ways. Even more, this approach enables the chapter to conclude that Romanianism and Moldovanism are constructed through the representation of otherness, of something that is different, threatening. Both employ a negative linguistic construction, representing their language as being different from Russian (for Romanianists) and, respectively, Romanian (for Moldovanists). This construction is then linked to the representation of the internal other, a group within Moldova that is threatening or, especially in this

case, hierarchically superior to the nation and the people. For Romanianists these encompass all the national minorities, Russian-speaking as they are called, whereas for Moldovanists they are the Romanian ethnic group, being represented as either the minority that undermines their position as a majority in the country or, respectively, leads the country (on the wrong path). Furthermore, these 'others' are connected to the opposing national identity construction, the Romanian 'minority' to Romanianism and the Russian-speaking minorities with Moldovanism. In this way, through their construction of othering, the two discourses represent themselves against each other, forming an antagonistic structure, othering and essentialising each other.

Building on these findings, **Chapter 4** argues that the Romanianism-Moldovanism antagonism reinforces a view of the world as divided between East and West. The oppositional character of Romanianism and Moldovanism is mirrored in the representation of external others. This idea builds on the historical representation of the two discourses and the construction of their historical others, as argued in Chapter 3. For instance, Romanianism creates an equivalence between its discursive 'other', Moldovanism, and its external (historical) other, ensuring that the fight against Moldovanism is essentially resistance against Russia; Moldovanism does the same with Bucharest. Based on this, Chapter 4 argues that the opposition between the two main discourses also extends to the civilizational and geopolitical spaces associated with their external others, the East and the West. It infers that the antagonism between Romanianism and Moldovanism is not only determined by its content, but also through their association with the two main camps in Moldovan politics, depicted by analysts as the 'democrats' and the 'communists' or the pro-European and pro-Russian (or multi-vector) parties. Building on these different levels of oppositional

constructions, the East-West cleavage is amplified through a series of dichotomies, ranging from democracy to representations of culture and civilizational differences. Thus, the East and the West are presented as opposing spaces, linked to Russian and respectively Romania as external others for the two national identity discourses. Moreover, these spaces are portrayed as in conflict over Moldova, in a Cold War scenario. Through this multi-layered set of equivalences and dichotomies, the antagonism between the two national identity discourses, their views on independence and sovereignty and the political parties representing them, is augmented in creating a wide ranging cleavage in Moldova, one that extends all the way to foreign policy. Hence, national identity plays a key role in understanding the way in which the foreign affairs scene is constructed in Moldova, as a battle ground between the two spaces, East and West, Russia and the EU (Chapters 3 and 4).

Whereas Chapters 3 and 4 stress the means through which national identity shapes representations of structure in Moldova's international affairs, by reproducing the opposition between East and West as civilizational and geopolitical spaces, the second part of the thesis (Chapter 5) is focused on representations of Moldovan agency. Its main argument is that Moldovans represent their country and their leadership as lacking agency on the international stage, with proof being brought both from the two main national identity discourses and alternative conceptualisations of identity in Moldova. The portrayal of the Moldovan state as one that does not have a say in international affairs, that cannot or will not act, is a crucial part of the geopolitical representation of Moldovan foreign affairs, as the second criterion in my conceptualisation of geopolitics. **Chapter 5** approaches this topic by looking at historical narratives and contemporary representations. It firstly analyses the nature of

Moldova's 'lack of agency' across these representations and follows this up with a study of how agency is awarded to external others. Mechanisms such as a representation of the high level corruption of political elites or of Moldovans as generally indecisive all feed into the construction of a lack of agency on the Moldovan part. Then, historical themes such as the Great Power Complex and historical debt are employed in order to attach the responsibility to act to the external others (e.g. Romania's policies helping Moldova become more European). Furthermore, Chapter 5 also stresses the fact that national identity does not exist in a vacuum, but interacts, draws from and competes with other discourses within society.

Lastly, the conclusion brings all of these themes together and underscores the thesis' original contribution. Moreover, it focuses on the consequences of the thesis' findings for Moldovan foreign policy and for Moldova in general, whilst also noting some points of further research.

A note on the text

Unless otherwise stated, I have carried out all translations across the thesis. Moreover, Moldovan and Romanian names with Romanian diacritics, as opposed to English translations, have been employed all throughout. Additionally, wherever translations are problematic due to the polysemy of words, they have been discussed in the text or footnotes. Lastly, all Romanian names, especially those of medieval princes, have not been translated, with Ștefan cel Mare being used instead of Stephen the Great.

It should also be noted that the official name of the state is the 'Republic of Moldova', yet, the term used throughout the thesis to define the country is simply Moldova. This is usually employed by the authorities in Chișinău, but it is also used to name the Romanian region of Moldova (between the Carpathian Mountains and the Prut River), formerly the Western part of the Medieval Principality of Moldova; the latter is thus called either Romanian or Western Moldova in the text. I also use the name Bessarabia throughout the text. Bessarabia is mainly employed in Romania, in order to differentiate the territories East and West of the Prut River. Based on this, it is popular amongst Romanianists in Moldova.

I use 'country' [*țară*] and 'state' [*stat*] interchangeably throughout the thesis. This is due to my interviewees' use of the two terms as equivalent and their preference for the former when discussing national identity. Lastly, it is very hard to find neutral terminology in order to describe certain events, especially when it comes to different historical narratives. Consequently, I have tried to either point out the terminology used in each one directly or to use inverted commas for this purpose.

1. Theoretical and Methodological Underpinnings

This chapter offers a summary of the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis and its main methods. It argues for the suitability of a discursive approach to analysing both national identity and the representation of foreign policy in the Moldovan case. The thesis' approach to agency and structure is informed by constructivist and post-structuralist conceptualisations of the agent-structure problem in international relations (IR). This offers the basic framework to analyse the way in which national identity discourses are employed to frame articulations of foreign policy and foreign affairs in Moldova. Constructivists and post-structuralists acknowledge that normative and ideational structures are essential in defining what we perceive as real (Doty 1997). Thus, agency and structure are constructed through discourse (Suganami 1999). Moreover, one of the most important of these discourses is national identity, which 'constantly shapes our consciousness and the way we constitute the meaning of the world' (Özirimli 2000: 4). In this way, national identity is one of the discursive tools that Moldovans use to make sense of the world. But more importantly, in the Moldovan case it is employed to portray and legitimate a geopolitical view of the world. Therefore, the thesis argues that the structure of national identity discourses in Moldova, their opposition and their content make it the vehicle through which the passive character of the Moldovans and the cleavage between East and west are reproduced and become discursively acceptable in Moldovan society.

With this in mind, the first part of this chapter focuses on the theoretical underpinnings that stand at the basis of the analysis. It is divided into three main sections, looking at the basic concepts employed throughout. Section 1.1 discusses the conceptualisation of discourses as defining the world and highlights some of the

theoretical bases of post-structuralism as a research approach. The following (Sections 1.2 and 1.3) augments this by arguing for the utility of conceptualising national identity as a discourse. This is due to the main similarity between the two notions, national identity and discourse, their power in making sense of the world. Moreover, by analysing national identity as a discourse, I am able to apply the post-structuralist focus on the creation of difference and dichotomies; this proves essential in understanding the importance of othering for Moldovan nationalism. But more importantly, this approach is crucial in understanding how two competing national identity discourses coexist in Moldova and legitimise different outlooks on foreign affairs. The last sub-section (1.4) highlights the importance discourses and, implicitly, national identity, play in constructing foreign affairs. On a theoretical level, it argues for the relevance of an analysis of the two main discourses of Moldovan national identity, Romanianism and Moldovanism, for Moldovan depictions of the international affairs stage.

1.1. Discourse – defining the world

The main reason for taking a discursive, post-structuralist approach to this research stems from the nature of Moldovan national identity. The existence of two main competing discourses of national identity, Romanianism and Moldovanism is best explained through an approach that accepts the constructed nature of reality. Meanwhile, a discursive approach allows us to delve into the details of their relationship and interactions. This method has been employed extensively in analyses of national identity and their links to foreign policy. It is used extensively in works from

Ruth Wodak *et al.* (1999) analysis of Austrian national identity and Ted Hopf's (2002) study of Russian identity and foreign affairs through literary publications from 1955 and 1999 to David Campbell's (1992) investigation into the way in which the representation of alterity is essential to American foreign policy discourse. I employ these studies to inform the approach to research (e.g. Section 1.4), to develop the theoretical framework for this analysis and to bring forward concepts or ideas that may be useful to this study; I draw relevant parallels are not here, but in the text of the actual analysis.

Other post-structuralist studies have also inspired this analysis. For instance, post-colonial studies in international relations outline how colonial powers constructed the people in the colonies as inferior, through a process of essentialisation (see Said 1978). By adapting the idea of 'colonialism', this approach allows the thesis to offer a different perspective on Moldova's relationship with Romania and Russia. This relationship, thus, encompasses both the historical element and the sentiment of inferiority the Moldovans still nurture towards their external others. Moreover, post-colonial studies highlight the use of dichotomies such as active-passive, subject-object, powerful-weak (Said 1978). These help to devise a framework for analysis, both regarding Moldova's representation of its external others and its representations of foreign affairs.

In the Moldovan case, Cărauş (2003) employed a discursive approach in order to systematise the Moldovan national identity debate. Nevertheless, she does not go into a lot of detail, as the main focus of her analysis is the reasons behind the different articulations of nationalism. Other works employed this approach to study specific details of Moldovan discourses. They stress the usefulness of the approach in analysing

the contradictions within Moldovanism; for example, Danero Iglesias (2013a) highlights the means through which the Communists' civic Moldovanism is challenged through their reiteration of ethnic elements. This work stresses the relevance of a discursive approach in understanding the contradictions between and within national identity discourses in Moldova. Similarly, Danero Iglesias and Weinblum (2013) stress the structural similarities between Moldovan national identity discourses and other types of nationalism and the importance of drawing from classical frameworks for analysing national identity, such as Smith (1991). This thesis builds on the methodological conclusions of these previous works. Nevertheless, there is no comprehensive discursive analysis of national identity in the Moldovan case. This thesis aims to fill this gap.

With this in mind, the rest of this section focuses on the tenets of post-structuralism, the definition and usefulness of discourse for this endeavour. The underpinnings of post-structuralism are represented by Lyotard's 'death of metanarratives' (Smith 2001) and a constructivist view that sees the world as constructed through language (Griffiths 1999). First, the 'death of metanarratives' is a break with foundationalist thought and rationalist ideas regarding the existence of an objective truth (Campbell 2007). Hence, the philosophical base for Discourse Analysis is anti-essentialist - it argues that there is no natural closure of meaning, i.e. there is permanent contestation of what we perceive as common knowledge or general truth (Horwath 1995: 117-118). Additionally, DA is also anti-foundational, considering all truth is historically and culturally contingent (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002). Hence, this study is not a positivist analysis, but a critique of the way in which certain discourses have come to be seen as 'general truths' in Moldova. Secondly, the interest with

discourse arises from a broader change within research. This is represented by an epistemological shift from a positivist position – a belief in universal truth and that language was a neutral and transparent medium for transmitting knowledge and truths – towards a post-positivist, constructivist, view of the world. Thus, since the ‘linguistic turn’³, language is seen no longer as transparent or as a reflection of the world, but as a site where meanings are conveyed and changed (Taylor 2001: 6). Language is a means of meaning-making, of *semiosis* and, through this, it is essential for representing what we perceive as ‘reality’ (Fairclough 2001: 229).

Based on this constructivist underpinnings, discourse is the main element of this analysis. The simplest definition for discourse is ‘language in use’ (Taylor 2001: 5), while a more comprehensive one sees it as a system of representation, a ‘production of knowledge through language’ (Hall 2001: 72). Discourse is performative: it gives meaning and it constructs the world (Campbell 2007). This does not mean that there is no real world, only that our understanding of reality is mediated by language and discourse (George 1994; Campbell 2007: 216). More importantly, post-structuralists focus on the persistence of certain discourses and deconstructing ‘taken for granted’ ideas and what we perceive as common knowledge. Through their performative character, ‘discourses reproduce the everyday assumptions of society and common perceptions and understandings’ (Burnham *et al.* 2007: 250). Hence, a discursive approach is useful in analysing the way in which Moldovan national identity, as an everyday assumption and common representation, is articulated within Moldovan society.

³ Development in Western thinking in the 20th century focused on understanding the relationship between language and philosophy. The name draws from Richard Rorty’s (1967) *The Linguistic Turn*.

The persistence of these constructions stems to a great extent from their connection to power; this is theorised by Foucault (1980) through the power/knowledge nexus (Hopf 1998: 177). Knowledge, when linked to power, becomes 'truth'; then, this truth is used to regulate the actions of 'others', to create rules for society, it creates power (Foucault 1980). Robert Young in his introduction to Michel Foucault's *The Order of Discourse* argues that the effect of discursive practices is:

to make it virtually impossible to think outside them. To think outside them, is by definition, to be mad, to be beyond comprehension and therefore reason. It is in this way that we can see how discursive rules are linked to the exercise of power; how the forms of discourse are both constituted by, and ensure the reproduction of, the social system, through forms of selection, exclusion, and domination (Foucault 1970: 48).

In this way, discourse is not only employed to construct and make sense of the world. It also defines what is acceptable, the limits within which we think and represent the world. This is extremely important in the analysis of national identities' influence on foreign policy discourses; it emphasises the way in which foreign policy borrows themes and symbols from national identity and the means through which national identity defines the discursive limits within which foreign policy functions.

Building on this, post-structuralism has developed an 'ethos of critique' (Huysmans 2001). Post-structuralists base their work on a suspicion of determinism, of those ideas in society that are widely accepted and unchallenged. They attempt to show how some discourses dominate others, how we remember some narratives while forgetting alternative ones through a series of textual strategies (George 1994; Devetak 2005: 167). This is useful for analysing how some discourses dominate Moldovan society, whilst others are marginalised. More importantly, it highlights how historical narratives of national identity are created through the

celebration/commemoration of certain events and the forgetting of others (Section 3.4.2). In this way, Foucault's theory brings forward the critical character of DA, the focus on deconstructing 'taken for granted' assumptions, as a key principle of the approach.

Lastly, the usefulness of this approach is highlighted in those cases in which the discursive construction is different from the conclusions of positivist methods. One such example is the 'European hope' discourse in Moldova. It stresses that the country will be a member of the EU within the next decade, contradicting official opinions in Brussels and the experience of the CEECs (Section 5.3.4). The next section (1.2) turns its attention to the thesis' conceptualisation of national identity. It stresses the compatibility between the post-structuralist approach to language and a discursive theorisation of national identity, through their common epistemological, constructivist, underpinnings and through the nature of national identity discourses as making sense of the world.

1.2. National Identity

A whole range of theories have sought to explain both the nature and the origins of nationalism and national identity. This section offers a small summary of these debates and concludes that the best approach for this analysis is that of national identity as discourse, building on the post-structuralist thought espoused above. It also covers in some detail other elements of national identity theory that are employed extensively in Moldova and in the literature on Moldovan nationalism. These include the cleavage between ethnic and civic national identities and banal nationalism.

Nationalism has been studied extensively throughout the past decades, encompassing a wide array of perspectives and approaches. On one end of the spectrum, primordialist theories argue for the antiquity and naturalness of nations; on the other end modernists hold that nations are a modern creation. Taking into account which factor is prioritised to explain nationalism, this latter group can be divided into three main explanations: economic, political and cultural. The first, represented by Tom Nairn (1981) and Michael Hechter (1978), provides that economic transformations in the form of uneven development create core-periphery differences and lead to the development of nationalism in the periphery. Within the second group, Eric Hobsbawm (1990) theorises the idea of 'social engineering' through 'invented traditions'. He argues that nationalism and the state create nations, not the other way around. In the same line of thought, Jean Breuille (1982) outlines how the transition from a corporate to a functional division of labour serves as the background for the birth of nationalism; in this case nationalism functions as a form of politics, of power and control over the state. Meanwhile, Paul Brass (1979) portrays nationalism, through an instrumentalist perspective, as the tools in the hands of competing elites.

In the socio-cultural explanations group, Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as 'a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' (1983: 1). In order to explain nationalism he distinguishes between traditional and modern societies and stresses the importance culture and, indirectly, education plays within the latter. Thus, the modern, industrialised society is the place of birth for the nation through the possibility of cultural standardization and the 'imposition of high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority' (1983: 57). Making a similar case, Benedict Anderson (1983: 6)

argues that nations are imagined communities of 'deep horizontal comradeship'. His thinking forms the basis for a discursive approach to national identity. He places the origins of nationalism in the decline in religious beliefs together with industrialization and the development of mass communication through the press. These circumstances led to the creation of a sense of belonging for people who had never met through the simultaneous enactment of mass rituals in private; this is achieved through the calendrical coincidence of newspapers and the simultaneous mass consumption of this source of information (Anderson 1983: 25-38). Anderson also stresses the constructed nature of national identity, highlighting that 'imagined' does not mean imply in any way 'falsity' (1983: 6). In this way, he conveys the importance of representation in constructing reality, mirroring the thesis' post-structuralist approach to discourse. Thus, Anderson inspires this thesis both through his constructivist approach and the importance he awards to the media, one of the thesis' sources of data, in the process of nation building.

Lastly, the centre ground in the nationalism debate is taken by ethno-symbolists with their main representative, Anthony Smith (1991). They reach a compromise in between primordialists and modernists by acknowledging the importance of pre-modern ethnic identities to today's nations. Smith draws from Kohn's (1944) conceptualisation of two models of national identity - Western and Eastern European forms of nationalism. The first is civic identity, based on a 'historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology' (Smith 1991: 11). The second is the ethnic model of national identity based on a 'community of birth and culture'; this encompasses common descent - the conceptualization of a 'fictive family' which can be traced back throughout history - ,

popular mobilization and vernacular culture: customs, traditions and, more importantly for this study, language (Smith 1991:11). These are not self-exclusive forms, but they 'reflect the profound dualism at the heart of every nationalism. In fact every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms' (Smith 1991: 13). This claim is relevant to this thesis as the civic-ethnic divide plays an important role in understanding the structure of the identity debate in Moldova; more specifically, with Romanianism is a largely ethnic construction, whilst Moldovanism comprises of both an ethnic and a civic strand.

Stemming from this classical debate, this thesis employs a **social constructivist** approach. I argue that nationalism is a discourse that constantly shapes our consciousness and the way we constitute the meaning of the world. The next few paragraphs highlight the tenets of this approach, its compatibility with a post-structuralist position and usefulness for the Moldovan case. I argue for the usefulness of this approach in this specific case study; this is achieved by highlighting its suitability for a country divided by different national identity constructions, the instrumentalism of elites in Moldova and its usefulness in understanding constructions of otherness . Both national identity and discourse help us make sense of the world. This similarity is the key element that allows us to analyse national identity as a discourse. More specifically, Uri Ram (1994: 153) argues that 'nationality is a narration, a story which people tell about themselves in order to lend meaning to their social world'. Thus, national identity determines our collective identity by producing and reproducing us as nationals' (Ozkirimli 2000: 4, see also Suny 1993). Hence, nations are constituted by the claims of nationalism, not through the presence of specific characteristics; this underscores the constructed nature of national identity and its compatibility with the

concept of discourse (Calhoun 1997). National identity's power stems from its sedimentation/naturalisation, thus from its perceived objectivity (Norval 2000). Yet, this also leaves room for the existence of resistance, contestation and alternatives to hegemonic discourses (Ozkirimli 2005: 176; Roseberry 1996; Finlayson 1998) or negotiation in between different views on the nation (Duara 1996). Moldova is a country riddled with an identity dilemma and at least two main discourses trying to capitalise on this issue, Romanianism and Moldovanism. Hence, a discursive perspective on national identity is essential in explaining the simultaneous existence of two articulations of nationalism. Meanwhile, the logic of hegemonising discourses is very useful in conceptualising the relationship (and alternation) between different constructions of national identity as hegemonic and counter-hegemonic.

National identity is produced and reproduced through institutions such as the family, school, workplace, media, within the settings of day-to-day life (Balibar 1990). Moreover, Michael Billig (1995) argues that the symbols of nationalism are part of our everyday life, from flags to currency and recurrent political discourse of the nation or words such 'we' or 'here'. Thus, the discourses of national identity are omnipresent. This has inspired the wide-ranging data collection conducted for this project, from interviews and newspapers to field trips and blogs, as detailed in Section 2.1.2. Furthermore, through this theoretisation, social constructivists ensure that the diversity of nationalisms is accounted for; they offer an answer Finlayson's (1998) critique that unitary theories of nationalism obscure the uniqueness of each case. In this manner, the concept of discourse allows the thesis to treat Romanianism and Moldovanism the same, despite some intrinsic structural differences (i.e. one is ethnic,

the other is a mix of ethnic and civic) and to evaluate their relationship as one between two discourses.

Similar to Anderson's thinking, this approach does not see nationalism as false or artificial as critics would argue, but contingent and never finished nor fixed; national identity is also open to change and re-construction. Hence, a discursive approach allows the analysis to grasp the shifting nature of national identity discourses in Moldova and the means through which they change and adapt to different political and economic circumstances. This is even more relevant taking into account the period studied in the thesis, from 2009-2014, which led to a slight redefinition in both national identity and foreign policy discourses as an effect of the new structure and composition of the Moldovan government and opposition after the so-called Twitter Revolution of April 2009 (Introduction). However, change is not the only element that needs to be taken into account in the analysis, as national identity draws from previous 'preconstituted and resonant representations of community' (Duara 1996: 165). This is considered both when discussing the elements of national identity, stressing their historical origins (Section 3.4) and in the analysis of national identity's relationship with other discourses, such as representations of politics (Section 4.1). Lastly, this approach draws from Anderson's conceptualisation of 'imagined communities' (1983), but it augments this through Brass' (1979) instrumentalism. This is due to the fact that we must always be conscious of 'which political interests are secured by different types of nationhood' (Ozkirimli 2005: 177). This is an important consideration the case in Moldova, where different political elites and parties have different ideas about the Moldovan nation, be they Romanianists or Moldovanists, and employ these to legitimise different political projects or, in this case, different foreign

policy orientations (see Danero Iglesias 2015). Thus, whereas this thesis is not aimed at explaining the reasons behind certain political acts, but their mechanisms of legitimation, it must acknowledge the importance of instrumentalist reasons both for the existence of a multiplicity of national identity and foreign policy discourses in Moldova and, ultimately, for the existence of an independent Moldovan state.

The post-structuralist approach to national identity also enables the thesis to incorporate the idea of myth, as a specific type of discourse, into the analysis. Myths are stories, narratives that 'helps feed world views and cultural outlooks' (Ansari 2012: ix). Kirk (1984: 56-7) argues myths are tales that transcend the passing of time, appealing to all generations. Through this ability together with their role in ensuring community cohesion (Boia 2001: 29), myths function on the same logic as national identity. Barthes takes this further and argues that

myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions (1977: 45)

Thus, myths are naturalised discourses, i.e. discourses that are no longer perceived as contingent, but generalised to society to the point of becoming common-sense. This conceptualisation fits in with the focus of discourse theory on deconstructing 'common knowledge'. The main function of myths is to express 'the inner truth about peoples and nations and [are] in some respect more truthful and revealing than the study of the past' (Berger 2009: 491). Through this, the myth of the saviour (Sections 5.2 and 5.3) is crucial for understanding the complex identities of the Moldovan people.

Moreover, myths 'supply man with the motive for ritual and moral actions as well as

indications to perform them' (Eliade 1998 [1963]: 20). In this way, myths mirror the power of national identity discourses, their role in making sense of the world (see Honko 1984: 47). This equivalence forms the basis of this analysis, bringing together the post-structuralist focus on discourse with the conceptualisation of myth and national identity. Based on this, I argue that the myth of the saviour (Sections 5.2 and 5.3) provides guidance for Moldovan actions, functioning as a discursive resource and/or a discursive limit.

1.3. Identity and Foreign Policy

Identities, of all types, are defined through both internal characteristics and difference, through both what 'we are' and 'what we are not' (see Jenkins 2004). The first category focuses on the characteristics or symbols that define the Moldovan nation, which interplay with otherness to construct a comprehensive national identity discourse. These encompass elements from the names assigned to languages to the representation of political myths and symbols, analysed in depth in Chapter 3. But more importantly, the main function of nationalism is exacerbating external differences and dividing the world into 'us' and 'them' (Ozkirimli 2005: 32-33; Verdery 1993). Othering mechanisms are central for this analysis through their importance for articulations of foreign policy, as relations with external others. Moreover, othering also defines the relationship between the two main identity discourses in Moldova. This is summed up through the idea of social antagonism and discussed in more detail in Section 3.2, under the analysis of the wider cleavage between Romanianism and Moldovanism.

Thus, the representation of difference is central to the thesis' analysis. Frederik Barth studies 'social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete social categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership' (1969: 10). He concludes that ethnic identities are essentially constructed through the interactional construction of external difference. Consequently, according to Barth, internal homogeneity within a group is generated through the construction of the 'other' and differentiation from him. Thus, identity is transactional and situationally flexible (Jenkins 2004). Though his initial work on symbolic interactionism is limited to the study of ethnic groups, Barth then follows up on those ideas and generalises the model to all types of identification (Hall 1996: 345; Parker *et al.* 1992: 5). These ideas are also employed across the IR literature. For instance, constructivist international relations theorists break away from the earlier IR thinkers who considered identity as a given; they equate articulating an identity with identifying the 'other' and differentiating yourself from him (Waxman 2006: 7; Barnett 2002: 62). Furthermore, post-structuralist David Campbell argues that identity becomes the 'true' identity when a threat against it is constructed and this threat stems from the 'mere existence of an alternative way of being' (1992: 3). Drawing from the difference between 'self' and 'other', identity is the 'objectification of the self through the representation of danger' in the image of the 'other' or as Devetak calls it a 'spatialised conception of security' (2005: 184). This is essential in understanding anti-imperialist representations, as detailed in Section 4.2, and the rejection of threatening others in Moldovan national identity articulations.

Based on this acknowledgement, Duara (1996) argues that nationalism is a relational identity and that it contains various 'others': historical 'others', potential

'others' or hidden 'others'. The thesis employs the concepts of internal and external others in order to make sense of the structure of national identity discourses in Moldova. Internal others belong to the same political entity with the in-group, whilst external others form a separate political unit (Triandafyllidou 1998). In the Moldovan case the former is represented by different ethnic groups or elites, whilst the latter takes the form of other states or organisations, e.g. Russia, Romania, Community of Independent States (CIS) or the EU. Together with these, conspiratorial others are also included in the analysis (Chapters 3 and 4). I define these as a specific form of internal others that are depicted as representatives of the threatening external other. Their representation merges external and internal threats into one and they are essentially a 'fifth column', with no will or agency of their own; for instance, the Moldovanist rejection of ethnic Romanian elites is based on their perceived agenda of reunification with Romania and the Romanian ambitions regarding this territory. This association between external, internal and conspiratorial others enables the thesis to highlight the connections between the different discursive levels of national identity discourses in Moldova and stresses the complexity and discursive reach of these articulations (Chapters 3 and 4). Furthermore, it offers the basis for understanding how an individual day-to-day issue, such as a shop keeper speaking only Russian, can ultimately feed into a foreign policy preference.

The relationship with the national other is commonly defined through the perspective of threat. Triandafillou argues that a significant other is represented by any group that poses a threat to the nation (1998: 600); this threat can be either direct, on independence, autonomy or territorial claims, or a threat to the distinctiveness of the nation. Both these argument are brought together in

articulations of Moldovan national identity, through the representations of internal, external and conspiratorial others. This is one of the main sources of radicalisation in Moldovan representations of national identity. In this way, Moldovanism and Romanianism cover all the logical arguments to reject their respective others. Yet, this is not the sole representation of the other existent in Moldovan national identity discourses. Romanianists articulate a positive representation of Romania, whilst Moldovanists relate mostly in the same way to Russia. Thus, the relationship between self and other is more complex than the friend-foe representation (Norval 2000). For this reason, I employ a comprehensive representation of othering, one that highlights the importance of both threatening and positive 'others' (Petersoo 2007). This is extremely relevant for the Moldovan case, where each national identity discourse has a somewhat positive external other and relate to them through dichotomies such as developed-underdeveloped (Chapter 5, especially Section 5.3). Otherness is the basis for the construction of identity, both from a sociological point of view and from an international relations one. From this perspective, the representation of external others is an important element defining external relations and foreign policy orientations (Chapter 4, especially Section 4.5); for instance, the Romanianist negative representation of Russia leads to a rejection of the whole Eastern space and a pro-European foreign policy.

Drawing from constructivist and post-structuralist approaches to IR, I infer that the relationship between national identity and foreign policy is a lot more complex, with the two discursively producing and reproducing each other. Wendt introduces identity to the study of IR and defines it as 'collective meanings, constituting the structures that organise our actions' (1992: 397). He contends that identities

determine a nation state's interest, and thus, its behaviour on the international scene (Weber 2001: 64). Therefore, national identity is a cognitive framework through which political reality is understood and determines 'road maps' for foreign policy makers (Aggestam 2004). Meanwhile, a post-structuralist approach argues that the relationship between identities and a state's foreign policy goes beyond a simple causality of identity that determines interest, which, in turn, influences foreign policy. David Campbell defines foreign policy as 'all the practices of differentiation or modes of exclusion' that have identity as an outcome (Campbell 1992: 68-69; see also Schapiro 1988: 100). Thus, he 'relocates the discourse of security as part of a larger process of identity construction' (George 1994: 210) by pointing out that foreign policy is a tool in the construction of identity, not only an effect of it. Accordingly, foreign policy and identity discourses produce and reproduce each other. As I've noted in the introduction, this thesis does not study foreign policy, but national identity representations of foreign policy. As such, these considerations are relevant for a wider study on the relationship between identity and foreign policy in Moldova and, to a certain extent, for the exploratory study conducted in the Conclusion. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that including these theoretical details offers a hint of the wider implications of this research project.

To conclude, a discursive conceptualisation of the nation is ideal for understanding nationalism in Moldova, as it sheds light on the existence of multiple national identity discourses and their conflicting relationship. And as political identity is a 'discursive and symbolic construction' these strategies of production and reproduction of identity are essentially discourses, the most important of which being foreign policy (Waeber 2001: 25). Additionally, utilising this approach also allows the

thesis to analyse the relationship between different national identity discourses and also, other societal constructions, such as lack of trust in politics (Section 5.2).

Furthermore, through its methodological focus on the construction of difference, this approach links the articulation of external otherness, as a mechanism of national identity building, to representations of foreign policy orientations.

1.4. Agency and Structure in IR

Yet, the evaluation of national identity representations of foreign affairs conducted in this thesis is more complex than evaluating a national identity discourse or policy as pro-Eastern or pro-Western. My analysis also employs the theoretical conceptualisation of structure and agency; their duality influences the thesis in two main ways. Firstly, it helps structure the superficial presentation of the thesis, into one section on structure and one on agency. Related to this, by recognising that both agency and structure are constructed through discourse, it also offers the theoretical basis for analysing national identity representations of structure and agency. Secondly, the discursive approach to the structure-agency relationship offers a different perspective on the relationship between national identity and foreign policy. I conceptualise national identity discourses as the structure that both limits and offers discursive resources for the articulation of foreign policy. In this view, foreign policy functions similarly to agency, drawing from the structure, i.e. national identity, but also reproducing and adapting identity discourses.

Firstly, the agent-structure debate impacts the thesis on a superficial level. The thesis is divided into an analysis of the representation of structure and a separate one

on the means through which Moldovan agency is constructed. More specifically, Chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis define the structure of international relations through an East-West paradigm, whilst the last two highlight the lack of Moldovan agency on the international stage. Drawing from Waltz (1979), structure is here defined as the ordering principle of the international system, including the allocation of capabilities within in. In the Moldovan case this is represented through a bipolar constructions, i.e. the cleavage between East and West as geopolitical spaces. Then, this thesis conceptualises agency as the capacity and willingness to act. Agency is attributed both to states and to individuals, i.e. political leaders. The first perspective draws from the conceptualisation of Hedley Bull (1995 [1977]) and Alexander Wendt (1999) who argue that international relations mimic human relationships. The idea of the 'state acting' is a construction in itself (Gilpin 1986), but it is very useful in the thesis' approach, enabling the thesis to equate nation with state. In this manner, it links international relations (the domain of the state) to the study of the nation as an imagined community. This connection is supported by the very definition of nationalism and its political nature, but also through the way in which my interviewees stressed the interchangeability of state and nation/people, i.e. Moldova and the Moldovans. Moreover, they employ the Moldovan 'we' when discussing international affairs to define both nation and the Moldovan state. The second approach represents the individual as the main locus for rationality, identity and agency in foreign affairs. Drawing from methodological individualism's critique of collectives as agents, Bashkar argues that nothing happens in society 'save in virtue of something human beings do or have done' (1979: 174). Translating this in foreign affairs terms, 'it is not the state which acts: it is always specific sets of politicians and state officials' (Jessop 1990: 367). This approach enables the thesis to identify agency easily, by focusing on the possible leaders that

could be portrayed as agents, and to employ the concept of 'conspiratory' (i.e. internal others with no agency of their own) others to explain the presence of external agency.

Secondly, I employ a discursive conceptualisation of the agent-structure divide. Building on the post-structuralist approach to discourse and identity, I argue that both structure and agency are social representations, constructed through discourse. Moreover, national identity as a discourse that is employed to make sense of the world, plays a crucial role in representing structure and agency on the international scene.

The debate on structure and agency is a multi-disciplinary one; it brings together elements of sociology, new approaches to nationalism and international relations. The ontological agent-structure problem has dominated a great part of the international relations debate in the past decades. It has been inspired by the more general social sciences analyses on the issue, such as Antony Giddens' structuration theory (1979, 1984). This theory holds that agency and structure are a duality, two sides of the same coin, internally related through social practices, thus constructing each other. Translating this idea to IR, Wendt (1992) contends that agency is a reflexive actor, it represents and gives meaning to structure, as 'anarchy is what states make of it'. Through this theoretisation, Wendt aims to overcome the limitations of structural analyses of international affairs, such as neorealism, by bringing the structure-agency debate to the forefront of IR. Moreover, through the application of this duality and the refusal to see either agency or structure as independent variables, Wendt's (1987) methodology associates agency with explanations of the actual and structure with explanations of the possible.

A second debate on the problem of structure versus agency in IR focused on post-structuralist critiques of the artificial divide between structure and agency in international affairs thought. Friedman and Starr (1997) state that they are separate objects only on a theoretical level or as objects of analysis. Poststructuralist Doty (1997) argues that rather than overcoming the dualism between agency and structure, previous approaches to international relations only prioritised one over the other. She criticises Carlsnaes' (1992) idea that post-structuralists, through their focus on the undecidable agent-structure opposition, cannot offer a contribution to this problematic. Moreover, her solution is to concentrate on practice in order to overcome the dichotomy. Hence, Doty (1997) contends that both agency and structure are an effect of practices. They do not have an independent pre-given existence, but are constructed by the narratives told about them (Suganami 1999). Whilst not critique free, post-structuralism offers the basis for the thesis's analysis of national identity representations of structure, as presented in Chapters 3 and 4, and agency (Chapter 5).

The debate on structure and agency goes even further in explaining the relationship between national identity and foreign policy, as that between structure and agency. This is based on the constructivists and post-structuralists' acknowledgement that normative and ideational structures, i.e. discourses, are essential in defining what we perceive as real and, ultimately, possible within this reality (Reus-Smit 2009: 222). This is corroborated with Bleiker (2003) and Cochran's (1999) conceptualisation of existing discourse as a structure that limits agency. Thus, structure consists of the multitude of discourses that define the realm of the possible, setting the limits to what is acceptable. With this overview in mind, the thesis focuses

on the mechanisms through which national identity in Moldova functions as a structure in defining the limits of acceptability for foreign policy. Furthermore, national identity is a discourse in itself, being articulated, reproduced and contested across Moldovan society; it also adapts and reproduces additional elements of structure, by interacting with other discourses across Moldovan society. For instance, a national identity representation that constructs Moldova as passive corroborated with societal discourses depicting the Moldovan government as ineffective in foreign affairs problematizes the legitimacy of a foreign policy argument based on Moldovan agency (Section 5.2). On the other hand, foreign policy discourses function as agency, as they reproduce or seek to challenge the structure defined by national identity. This offers a different insight on the limits to the foreign policy legitimation process, highlighting the credibility (or lack thereof) of certain arguments both on a political level and to the wider public.

Additionally, national identity also forms part of the matrix of resources and meanings foreign policy articulations draw from. This conceptualisation employs David Campbell's (1992) distinction between 'Foreign Policy' and 'foreign policy'. As noted above, he defines foreign policy as 'all practices of differentiation or modes of exclusion' (Campbell 1992: 68), producing identity in a very similar way to national identity discourses. Hence, foreign policy provides the 'conventional matrix of interpretations in which the second understanding (Foreign Policy) operates' (1992: 69). On the other hand, Foreign Policy is the conventional understanding in the literature in IR. Within the context of this thesis, Foreign Policy is the series of mechanisms and practices that serve to reproduce identity as defined by its counterpart ('foreign policy'), adapting it to different situations and challenges.

Therefore, based on its equivalence with 'foreign policy', national identity is conceptualised as the 'library' of symbolic meanings employed in articulating foreign policy discourses.

Concluding, a post-structuralist approach conceptualising both national identity and foreign policy as discourses enables the thesis to gain greater insight into the articulations of Moldovan foreign affairs. The conceptualisation of national identity as discourse allows me to analyse a country such as Moldova, dominated by two simultaneous national identity projects, whilst also stressing the importance of their relationship and their interaction with other societal discourses. It emphasises the means through which national identity influences foreign policy in two ways, firstly by offering the symbolic resources that can be employed in arguments regarding foreign policy and secondly, by creating the limitations within which a foreign policy discourse needs to function in order to be acceptable/palatable to the voter. They are not the ONLY symbolic resources, with instrumentalist: economic, political, etc., arguments also appear extensively; nevertheless, in order to grasp their importance, further research specifically on the articulations of foreign policy in Moldova is required. Instrumentalist arguments are employed in conjunction with the national identity based ones, stressing the importance of this study and the analysis of national identity discourses in the Moldovan case. Secondly, limitations to foreign policy articulations are more complex, from stressing the means through which a Moldovanist proponent would not be credible arguing for closer relations with Romania to problematizing the credibility of an image of Moldova standing its ground or taking agency.

1.5. Conclusion

To summarise, the main philosophical assumptions of this thesis are post-structuralist, arguing that the world is represented and gains meaning through discourse. Therefore, a discursive conceptualisation of the nation is ideal for understanding the existence of a multiplicity of discourses of national identity in Moldova. Through its methodological focus on the construction of difference, this approach connects the construction of external otherness, as a mechanism of national identity building, to representations of foreign policy orientations. Thus, national identity constructions translate into different policy orientations through representation of friendly or threatening relations with external others. Through this approach, the thesis analyses the means through which Romanianists argue for a pro-Romanian and, especially, pro-Western foreign policy orientation, whilst the Moldovanists opt for a Pro-Russian/Eastern one (Chapter 4).

Nevertheless, the thesis' examination of national identity's impact on representations of foreign policy is more complex than these equivalences. It focuses on the construction of the wider characteristics of the foreign affairs stage. For this purpose, two of the main theoretical concepts that define our view of international relations, structure and agency are conceptualised as social representations, as constructed through discourse. Drawing from its role in making sense of the world, national identity plays a crucial part in reproducing the structure that limits agency in international affairs. For instance, Chapter 5 highlight the means through which Romanianism, Moldovanism and, also, other articulations of national identity in Moldova paint a picture of the Moldovans as passive. In this way, national identity representations delegitimise or make it improbable for Moldova to take action in

foreign affairs in the eyes of the wider Moldovan public. Thus, the thesis focuses on the mechanisms through which national identity in Moldova functions as a structure in defining the limits of credibility for foreign policy. This is extremely important in understanding the process of legitimation of foreign policy, what arguments are credible and acceptable, both within the political sphere and to the wider public.

In order to analyse national identity and foreign policy articulations, I employ Discourse Analysis, a post-structuralist methodology aimed at deconstructing taken for granted 'truths' and explaining the relationships between competing versions of reality. This method is useful through its conceptualisation of nationalism and other Moldovan representations as discourses. Moreover, its focus on the in-built hierarchical dichotomies within these discourses and the contested nature of reality enables the analysis to look in depth at how othering forms the core of Romanianism and Moldovanism. With regards to data collection, I employ existing data, drawn from official documents, speeches and party manifestoes to opinion columns in newspapers and blogs. This is corroborated with data from a series of interviews with political elites and high ranking officials and people on the ground. This vast array of data offers a comprehensive overview of the different discourse in Moldovan society, analysed using the chosen methodology, post-structuralist discourse analysis, to argue that Moldovan national identity discourses view foreign affairs through a Cold War lens.

2. Methodology

This chapter offers a detailed account of the data collection and analysis conducted for this project. It builds on the theoretical underpinnings presented in the previous chapter, especially the importance of language in representing the world. I argue that my approach to data collection, encompassing interviews, newspaper articles and ethnographic fieldwork, is essential for providing an in-depth look into representations of national identity in Moldova. The main method I employ is discourse analysis (DA), developed from the principles of post-structuralism. This is corroborated with qualitative content analysis, employing a coding frame developed from the literature, DA's toolbox and stemming from the data itself. Discourse analysis is defined as a study of language in use (Taylor 2001: 5). I employ Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis and argue for its utility for the analysis of Moldovan national identity as a discourse. Through its focus on the construction of dichotomies and hierarchy, this method is essential for pin-pointing the dual relationship between Romanianism and Moldovanism (Chapters 3 and 4) and the representation of the Moldovan 'inferiority complex'. In this way, my choice of method builds on the theoretical underpinnings detailed in Chapter 2, whilst augmenting their usefulness for the Moldova case-study. I highlight the match between a discursive approach to national identity and DA, as a method focused on analysing and deconstructing what we perceive as common knowledge.

The chapter is structured based on the chronological development of the research project, on the artificial divide between data collection and analysis. This is an artificial divide, as the data collection and analysis were largely simultaneous, as provided by the prescriptions of Grounded Theory. The first part of the chapter

(Section 2.1) details the comprehensive data collection process. It achieves this by presenting the reasoning behind each of the three types of data I have collected: interviews, newspaper and online articles and ethnographic notes (Section 2.1.1). This is augmented through a chronological presentation of my data collection process, from interview requests to explaining my choice of newspaper sources (Section 2.1.2). Then, Section 2.2 details the process of analysis. It offers a brief insight into the workings of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis, followed by a short description of the coding process conducted in order to organise the data. This process was inspired by the tenets of content analysis and Grounded Theory. In this manner, I go beyond DA's rejection of coding and offer a complex approach to analysing the data on Moldovan national identity, but keeping with the post-structuralist provisions of discourse theory.

2.1. Data Collection

The data for this project is compiled in a whole range of forms, focusing on the period between 2009 and 2014. The first and most important reason for choosing this period was in order to bring the discussion on Moldovan national identity up to the current day, i.e. to the situation as of 2014. The 1990s, after the Moldovan state gained its independence in 1991, are the focus of most of the literature on nationalism, history and ethnic conflict in Moldova (e.g. Crowther 1992, King 2000). Meanwhile, the literature on political developments in Moldova (e.g. March 2007) covers the period of Communist rule from 2001 up to 2009. As noted in the Introduction of the thesis, the so-called Twitter Revolution of April 2009 led to a change in the leadership in Chişinău; the Communists became the main party of opposition in Chişinău, whilst Romanianists

PL were part of the ruling coalition. As a result of different parties coming to power, there was also a shift in the national identity orientation of the members of the Moldovan government; this was further augmented by a different outlook in terms of foreign policy, with the new coalition being tellingly named, the Alliance for European Integration.

Lastly, the focus of this project does not cover the years prior to 2009 for two main reasons. The utility of a comparison between the pre and post-2009 discourses is noted in the thesis' conclusion, in Section C.3. Nevertheless, due to the wealth of data on the post-2009 period an in-depth analysis and comparisons of both periods would require a wider space and considerable more time than this project. More importantly, the 'Twitter Revolution' was widely represented as a crucial turning point for Moldova (and a disappointment by the beginning of 2015). This view seems to have permeated Moldovan society, as illustrated in my interviews (e.g. YL2, EX1). The representation of 2009 as a revolution and as part of a narrative of 'progress' (PG5) had the potential to alter Moldovan views of the period preceding it. As such, I believe that conducting interviews 'retrospectively' may have only offered me an opinion of the pre-2009 period through the lens of representations the Twitter Revolution. Lastly, April 2009 is not studied as a date, as the meanings attached to it are still contested; these include the representations of the revolution, the achievements of the new government and the retrospective disappointment with this change in leadership (EX2).

Data collection and analysis was conducted on **three levels**: political discourse, elite and media discourse and grassroots discourse. This approach was informed by the fact that

common perceptions and understandings are encouraged and reinforced by those with access to the media, such as politicians, journalists and academic experts (Burnham *et al.* 2007: 250).

The three do overlap, but this three-fold typology is useful to help organise the data sources, whereas the analysis is structured according to my findings. Approaching the analysis from this perspective also offers us a comprehensive view of the discourses of national identity present within Moldovan society; this ensures articulations are not analysed in isolation and enables me to highlight the relationships between them and the variations across different levels. This wide-ranging approach to data collection is inspired by the conceptualisation of discourse, encompassing everything from political declarations to the reproduction of banal nationalism. Moreover, the first two sources are the basis for the comprehensive analysis conducted in the thesis, whilst the grassroots study is exploratory, as the thesis' post-structuralist methodology does not enable me to generalise these findings. Nevertheless, political and cultural elites, together with the press, have the discursive power and credibility to promote these discourses, leading to their trickling down across Moldovan society, offering a good avenue for generating hypotheses regarding the appeal of national identity and foreign policy (inspired) discourses across Moldova. As such, Section 2.1.1 offers an analysis of the reasons behind my choice to analyse political discourse together with the articulations of experts and grass roots. This is then followed by a detailed account of the data collection process and its intricacies, from the accessibility issues I faced for interviews to my choice of newspapers (Section 2.1.2).

2.1.1. Levels of Data

The first level of data consists of **political** discourse. It looks at political leaders' speeches, party manifestoes and policies. The reason behind this choice is the importance played by political actors in articulating national identity discourses and the space analyses of the political take up in the literature on Moldovan national identity (Protsyk 2006b; King 2003). But more importantly, the political cleavage in Moldova overlaps with the national identity one, strengthening each other reciprocally, as highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4. Secondly, as noted above, from 2009 to date, parties representing the two main discourses of Moldovan national identity have been in either government or opposition in Moldova. Hence these two different groups have had the privileged positions from which to construct and promote national identity (and devise foreign policy). In this endeavour, the data consists both of existing material, such as party manifestoes, speeches, parliamentary interventions, campaigns and official documents, mostly collected from online archives, and a set of interviews. When analysing documents the main focus of my research are articulations of national identity and foreign policy. These are not strictly limited to discussions on the two topics but also cover a whole range of other issues from policies on minorities, language, commemorations and history teaching for nationalism to attitudes towards reforms demanded by the EU criticism regarding negotiations with Gazprom for foreign policy. This is due to the comprehensive web of meaning woven by the two national identity discourses, encompassing all these elements in their constructions (Chapter 3). These are corroborated with findings from interviews with political party leaders and members. Political leaders usually have the power to articulate discourse and the articulations of political elites have the potential to trickle down to influence

grassroots discourse. This is due to the fact that political speeches and articulations, party manifestoes and campaigns are essentially objects of political consumption; this is even more pertinent taking into account the sheer number of elections Moldova has been through in the past few years (four in five years – April and July 2009, 2010 and 2014).

The **second level of analysis** is that of the media and elites. The elite group consist of two main categories, political analysts, columnists and journalists and academic and cultural elites. Hence, for the first group, the main source of data is op-eds, columns and articles in Moldovan newspapers, corroborated with speeches at different events, interviews in the media, etc. These are augmented through the data collected in a series of interviews conducted with representatives of this group. The media, beyond offering the medium of expression for a series of other actors, has a role in itself in producing and reproducing discourses (Benthall 1993; van der Gaag and Nash 1987). It also plays a crucial role in the articulation of national identity, as posited by Antony Smith (1991). Moreover, this focus on the way in which the media constructs identities is a direct application of post-structuralism's emphasis on widening the 'empirical' agenda, by going beyond the state and looking at different sub-state actors, ranging from bureaucracies to the press. One example of such an approach is the work done by Ted Hopf (2002) on the way Russian identity (1955 and 1999) can be analysed by studying its articulation within Russian society, from memoirs to the printed press. In this way, Hopf (2002) highlights the importance of written works for the articulation of national identity.

For the purpose of this thesis, cultural elites consist of academics and museum researchers as the main categories interviewed. Academics have an aura of

'objectivity' to their work, increasing their credibility, but not necessarily making their discourses apolitical (Figueroa 2008). They are central to the articulation of national identity through their works; these can range from historical analyses employed to legitimise different national identity conceptualisations to analyses of current events. For instance, the analysis of historical narratives within Romanianism and Moldovanism builds on the existing literature, focusing specifically on academic historical writings after 1991. For this purpose, three main authors and their monographs are central to this analysis conducted in Chapters 3 and 4: Gheorghe Ghimpu, Vasile Stati and Victor Stepaniuc. This choice was made in light of their importance for the Liberal and, respectively, Communist political articulations and due to their appearance in interviews with representatives and supporters of the different national identity discourses, i.e. PL and PS members (PG3, PG5). Moreover, academics are also popular writers and columnists across the Moldovan press, e.g. Octavian Ticu for *Timpul*. Meanwhile, academic works, especially those focused on geopolitics are extremely popular in Moldova, making the main shelves and windows of some across libraries across Chişinău (Appendix 2). These factors illustrate the importance of academics in the Moldovan context and illustrate their potential to promote national identity discourses amongst the people in Moldova.

Ethnographers working for different national museums form the second part of this 'academic' group. They have a wider impact on national identity constructions, through their power to organise museum exhibits, especially relevant in the case of historical representations in the History and Archaeology Museum (HAM) and the Ethnography and Natural History Museum (ENHM). Museums are part of the ideological apparatus of the state, essential in producing and reproducing the nation

(e.g. Bennett 1995). They serve in refreshing and strengthening visitors' collective memories and thus, identities (Nora 1996). In this way, museum curators determine the articulations put across to the Moldovan public. Additionally, my fieldwork highlighted the popularity of museums for school trips and thus, their potential to impact on the representations of Moldovan youths and, hence, the next generation of identity constructions.

Within this context, the **third level of data collection** is at grassroots level. The analysis at grassroots is not comprehensive; it focuses on the potential of elite and political discourses to impact on the Moldovan citizen, whilst also offering an exploratory analysis of the elements of national identity that are most important to the Moldovans. This focus draws from the view that definitions of the nation are dependent on much more than the discourse articulated by elites (or those with the power to articulate discourses, as Foucault argued). National identity is also dependent on the way in which it is internalised at individual level (Finlayson 1998). Building on the conceptualisation of nationalism as discourse, the individual produces and reproduces this type of identity discourse in forms that may be different from the official representation. In the case of Moldova, most studies focus on elite discourse on nationalism and foreign policy, and a mere few on opinions and attitudes on the ground (see Heintz 2005 for a few references, Cash 2009 for the discourse of 'people of culture'). This focus highlights the necessity for a 'on the ground' approach to analysing nationalism and attitudes towards foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the literature also notes that the two main national identity discourses in Moldova and the general debate on this issue do not extend beyond the Moldovan elites, as the Moldovan layman is more concerned with 'bread and butter'

issues (King 2001; March 2007). This problematizes the very endeavour of analysing national identity in Moldova at this level. Nevertheless, though only an exploratory study, this analysis aims to challenge this view. This is achieved through the thesis' focus on articulations by Moldovan elites, political, cultural and media representatives. Then, the analysis is enhanced through a series of grassroots interviews. The focus on elites was inspired by their centrality in the process of articulation and reproduction of national identity discourses (see Smith 1991). Thus, the thesis does not aim to generalise these opinions to the whole of Moldovan civil society, but argues that they have the potential to trickle down. This builds on the interest the thesis takes in different elements of these national identity constructions. More specifically, drawing from the thesis' focus on foreign policy, one of the crucial themes of the analysis is the representation of otherness, especially through the portrayal of external actors (Chapters 3 and 4, especially Sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). I contend that even as grassroots discourse does not reproduce national identity in its entirety, they still focus on the 'othering' process present within them, i.e. the mechanisms through which a group or nation is represented as threatening, negative for the nation or somehow superior to it. This is corroborated with the findings of recent research conducted on grassroots identity in Moldova (Knott 2014). Her initial findings stress that the Moldovan people do identify as either Romanian or Moldovan to different degrees, but that there is a clear differentiation between the two groups in terms of self-identification. More importantly for this study, one element that is reproduced consistently across these groups is the othering process, e.g. the Romanianists clearly rejecting Russian characteristics and actors (Knott 2014). Lastly, whereas national identity, through representations of language or history, may not relate to the day-to-day concerns of the Moldovans, foreign policy, especially through the expectations

people have of it (i.e. prosperity, freedom, a functioning political system) does link in to these daily concerns. Thus, I posit that some issues associated with national identity, especially othering mechanisms, are already on the minds and in the day-to-day concerns of Moldovans through their links with pragmatic issues; for instance, foreign policy worries such as gas prices have both a national identity implication, i.e. regarding Moldova's relations with Russia, and a deeply pragmatic one for day-to-day life in Moldova.

2.1.2. Types of Data

Three types of data collection methods were employed in this endeavour. The first method consists of **interviews**. They are widely used in social research, especially in studies of the social and political orientations of different groups and are associated with interpretative methodologies (Hopf 2004). As they offer the opportunity to inquire openly about meanings and motives, they prove ideal for understanding the different representations and issues that are taken for granted within Moldovan society. Given the openness of the topic at hand, the type of interviews employed is in-depth semi-structured interviews. These allow this research to grasp both general attitudes and narratives in a comparative manner (as opposed to unstructured interviews), whilst also being open to any form of development regarding the question and prompting schedule (as opposed to structured ones) (see Wilson and Shapsford 2006 for a discussion on the various types of interview).

The interviews were conducted in June-August 2012. The choice of period was due to the author's term time commitments. In retrospect, it may have been easier to

conduct interviews at a different time of the year, as many of the people I contacted were on holiday during the summer. In order to organise the interviews I initially contacted more than 120 people. They represented the first two main levels of data collection: representatives of political parties and experts such as academics, museum curators and, more generally, 'people of culture' (Cash 2007). The initial round of emails went out in April-May 2012 and I received 17 positive responses, most of which asked me to let them know nearer to the time. At the end of May I sent a reminder email to those who had not responded. Upon arriving in Moldova in June 2012, I also tried to contact interviewees through telephone and by going to their offices in Moldova. This latter approach was more successful than emails, most people being perfectly happy to spare some time to have a chat with me. It is worth noting though that in a couple of cases these have led to some tense conversations with very busy (and even unhappy) people; nevertheless, even these have yielded a lot of useful data, albeit more succinctly presented than in other interviews. Lastly, I have also expanded my list of contacts/interviewees on the advice of the Moldovans I interviewed throughout the summer and, thus, reached the 45 interview mark.

Most interviews were conducted in Chişinău; to triangulate their findings, I have also done a few interviews and made notes regarding short conversations in Drochia, in the North of the republic of Moldova. This both due to the lack of responses from the people I have contacted for interviews and the problematic transport links across Moldova, especially in the summer. As such, the representativity of the data collected through interviews is to a great extent limited to the Moldovan capital. Nevertheless, the newspaper articles and political declarations collected for the thesis

counterbalance this shortcoming of the interviews through their wide distribution across Moldova.

On the political level, I endeavoured to interview both representatives of political parties and civil servants working in the area of ethnic relations and foreign policy. In the latter category, I sent out emails and called official bodies such as the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Interethnic Relations Bureau and the Romanian and Russian Embassies in Moldova, but with little success. Only one civil servant accepted to be interviewed anonymously. In the former category, I contacted the parliamentary parties in Moldova (PDM, PL, PDLM, PCRM, Socialists) and a series of non-parliamentary parties, important because of their radical views and vocal leadership (the pro-Romanianist National Liberal Party – PNL and the Voievod⁴ Movement [*Mișcarea Voievod*]). I sent emails both to the main party contact email addresses and to some of their MPs; these were chosen due to their involvement in foreign policy related committees (e.g. the Foreign Policy Committee or the Friendship Group with Romania) in the Moldovan Parliament or because of their previous statements on national identity. One of the initial aims of this project was to analyse the importance of national identity in Moldova's relations with Romania. As such, I also contacted Romanian MPs and interviewed three members of the Romanian Parliament's Commission for Romanians Abroad. Some parties/MPs were very forthcoming in terms of their participation in the project. Yet, many political organisations did not respond to emails or telephone calls, nor were they very welcoming when I attempted to discuss my project at their main offices in Chișinău. This raises questions as to why

⁴ 'Voievod' is the Romanian for prince or military leader of a principality and it is used here as the name of the organisation.

they refused to talk, but these issues are beyond the remit of this thesis. Thus, in order to ensure all of their voices were represented, where MPs or high ranking members of the parties were not available, I interviewed youth leaders or other officials, such as local councillors or mayors. Since all the interviews were subject to access and the availability of the interviewees, they are supplemented by existing interviews conducted for a series of media outlets, such as Radio Free Europe (RFE/EL), Radio Chişinău, TVM, etc. This part of the data and my interviews with columnists is touched upon in the next pages, as it is part of the archival data collection.

I took the same approach with regards to expert interviews. I contacted academics studying national identity and foreign policy in Moldova from some of the main Chişinău universities (e.g. Moldovan State University, Free International University of Moldova). I especially focused on academics writing about national identity issues, such as Ludmila Cojocari who has studied perceptions of Victory Day commemorations (discussed in more detail in Section 3.4.2). I also sent out emails to museums and research organisations/institutes dealing with the issue of national identity or foreign policy. In the first category I contacted the Ethnography and Natural science Museum (Chişinău), the Museum of Country Life, History and Archaeology Museum (Chişinău), the Military History Museum, the National Memory Museum and the History and Ethnography Museum in Bălţi. The second category encompassed centres such as ADEPT [Association for Participatory Democracy], the NATO Information Centre or IDIS [Institute for Development and Social Initiatives]; together with these, I also contacted a few NGOs, such as the Pro-Europa Regional Centre in Chişinău and Bălţi.

Lastly, for grass-roots interviews, I firstly interviewed people I knew in Moldova, acquaintances of friends and snowballed these contacts. One important source of contacts were my former Moldovan colleagues at university in Romania. This was augmented through a set of interviews with members of youth organisations. This group was chosen due to its accessibility and willingness to participate in the study. Most of the interviewees were current or former leaders of student organisations in Moldova. Some had moved into being researchers and columnists for various newspapers, whilst others were active in political parties. As such, this group straddles the divide between grass-roots and the political elites and experts groups. But more importantly, they represent the post-communist generation, a group that has not lived in the Soviet Union. As such, they offer a novel insight into the future of the national identity debate in Moldova

Due to the contested nature of the topics discussed in the interviews, i.e. national identity and foreign policy, a great part of my interviewees, especially those in official positions, have chosen to remain anonymous. In order to avoid repeated uses of 'anon.' All of the interviews conducted in June-July 2012 have been allocated a code in order to be identified in the text of the thesis (see table below). Based on the discussion above, they have also been categorised into a series of artificial groups, in order to enable the reader to identify some characteristics regarding the source of the data used throughout. These groups are: experts - EX (academic, museum curators, researchers), members of political groups - PG (political parties and movement), people working in the media – M (columnists, editors), youth leaders - YL (current or past leaders of a series of NGOs), Romanian MPs – RO, and others - OT.

Interview Codes			
Code	Interviewee	Date	Length
EX1	Academic - State University MD	5.07.2012	0:57
EX2	Academic - Free International University of MD	25.07.2012	Notes
EX3	Curator - Ethnography and Natural History Museum	5.07.2012	1:40
EX4	Curator - Ethnography and Natural History Museum	5.07.2012	1:17
EX5	Director - Military History Museum	6.07.2012	0:38
EX6	Academic - State University MD	12.07.2012	0:33
EX7	Academic	12.07.2012	0:31
EX8	Researcher - interethnic issues	5.07.2012	1:11
EX9	Researcher - foreign policy issues	7.08.2012	0:32
EX10	Researcher - foreign policy issues	7.08.2012	0:25
EX11	Academic studying Moldova	6.08.2012	0:51
M1	Newspaper Columnist	25.07.2012	0:43
M2	Newspaper Columnist	7.08.2012	1:06
M3	News Outlet Editor	13.07.2012	0:58
OT1	Civil servant	6.07.2012	0:45
OT2	Entrepreneur	7.07.2012	0:32
OT3	Entrepreneur	7.07.2012	0:35
OT4	Engineer	30.07.2012	1:02
OT5	Entrepreneur	03.08.2012	0:28
OT6	Worker	7.08.2012	1:12
OT7	History teacher	6.08.2012	1:08
OT8	NGO Leader	16.08.2012	1:55
PG1	PNL member	11.07.2012	0:45
PG2	PNL Leader	11.07.2012	1:22
PG3	Socialist Leader	12.07.2012	0:41
PG4	Socialist Deputy	12.07.2012	0:25
PG5	PL Youth Leader	12.07.2012	1:42
PG6	PD Mayor	25.07.2012	1:03
PG7	PCRM Local Councillor	8.08.2012	1:46
PG8	New Right Leader	6.07.2012	1:43
PG9	New Right Leader	29.08.2012	1:48
PG10	Leader - Conservative Movement	7.08.2012	1:22
PG11	Leader - Actiunea 2012	11.08.2012	0:22
PG12	Member - Actiunea 2012	12.08.2012	0:40
PG13	PLDM MP's Assistant	5.07.2012	0:55

RO1	RO MP - Parliamentary Commission for Romanians Abroad	24.07.2012	Email
RO2	RO MP - Common Commission for European Integration	5.08.2012	0:43
RO3	RO MP - Parliamentary Commission for Romanians Abroad/Foreign Affairs	23.08.2012	0:35
YL1	Youth leader	26.06.2012	1:30
YL2	Youth leader and blogger	29.06.2012	0:58
YL3	Youth leader and blogger	26.06.2012	1:23
YL5	Youth leader	29.06.2012	1:09
YL6	Youth leader	12.07.2012	1:12
YL7	Youth leader	11.07.2012	2:04

Table 2.1 Interview codes

The 45 interviews were all in Romanian. All but two of the interviews were audio recorded; one interviewee asked for the questions and replied by email, whilst another refused to let me use the recorder, so I wrote down their main points and the interesting details. A few other interviewees asked me to turn the recorder off for some of their comments; these too were also written down in great detail in my notebook. On average, each interview was about 60 minutes, but they ranged from 25 minutes to 2 hours (based on the length of the recording), as illustrated in the last column of the table above.

Lastly, all interviews were conducted in the state language of Moldova, Moldovan/Romanian, encompassing two respondents who did not have Moldovan/Romanian as their first language. Hence, it may not be representative of the approximately 30 per cent national minorities in Moldova, such as Russian, Ukrainian, Găgăuz, etc. further research being needed for these groups. Nevertheless, the

Communists, as the main representatives of the minorities' vote up until 2014, together with the Socialists have promoted these discourses widely, highlighting their resonance for minority ethnic groups in Moldova. For instance, I highlight the Communists' and Socialists' reproduction of the 'Victory Day' narrative regarding the commemoration of May 9. In this way, the thesis stresses these constructions' potential to resonate with the ethnic minorities of Moldova.

The second method is archival and online data collection and was employed in order to analyse party documents, declarations and newspaper articles. These, together with blogs, were collected online. The internet is the second most trusted and most used source of information for the Moldovans, after TV (IIMD September 2014: 20). Just as with archival research, data collected online suffers from an inherit bias, but it also has two main advantages. The first one is ease of access, as it is, quite literally, a few clicks away. More importantly, spaces such as blogs, forums and comment boxes eliminate to a certain extent the interview bias created through social desirability; this is when a respondent alters their expressed views in order to correspond with the socially approved opinion (Wilson and Sapsford 2006). This is essential given discourse analysis' interest in seeking variation and extreme cases. Nevertheless, the sample of internet users is not typical of the majority of the population (Sapsford 2006). Yet this should not be a problem given DA's epistemological and ontological underpinnings, as presented in the second part of this chapter (Section 2.2), which do not seek a strict correlation between population and sample, as some positivist approaches do. Thus, these are ideal to supplement the

data collected through interviews, whilst also triangulating the findings from interviews.

Political declarations were analysed both through their reproduction by party sources and through the way in which they are reported by the media. The first category includes party documents and official blogs. Party documents and statements were collected from online archives located on the party websites. This was due to the lack of response to my attempts to see any archives Moldovan parties might have. I have consulted these online archives both by using key words (e.g. 1812) and reading their statements and press communications around key dates, from commemorations to dates when their statements made the news (e.g. on Unimedia). Additionally, I have also consulted parliamentary archives online employing the same logic. These were augmented through data collected from political leaders' blogs; for instance, Socialist leader Igor Dodon, Liberal leader Mihai Ghimpu and National Liberal Vitalia Pavlicenco are all popular and prolific bloggers. I have also collected interviews conducted by journalists in order to triangulate the data and to compensate for political parties and organisations not responding to my interview requests. This data is very easy to obtain, in most cases also being transcribed. Nevertheless, it suffers from issues such as the inherit bias and lack of control over the questions asked, as do all data collected for other purposes (Wolff 2004).

I have also consulted a wide range of newspapers and media outlets throughout my data collection. They were chosen based on three criteria. The first is their popularity and readership across Moldova; this evaluation is based on an study on Moldovan press by IMAS-INC Chişinău on a sample of 1739 people aged over 15 (IMAS 2012b). More importantly, my initial list of newspapers was expanded and refined

through conversations with my interviewees focusing on what sources of information they used. The second reason behind my choice was to achieve a balanced view of national identity representations. With this in mind, I have chosen Romanianist newspapers Timpul, Jurnal de Chişinău and Adevărul and Moldovanist publications Moldova Suverană and Comunistul; this was augmented by looking at more 'neutral' newspapers in terms of national identity, such as Saptamana. I also consulted Unimedia, as one of the main online news portals, together with Radio Free Europe. All these were consulted constantly from 2011-2 to 2014 on a daily basis. More than 400 articles were saved throughout the period; most were chosen based on how interesting and relevant the themes they touched upon were for this project – these included everything from attitudes towards Russia to columns on the Constitutional Court's decision that the state language of Moldova is Romanian. They were also sorted based on their key themes, i.e. the coding frame emerging from the literature on Moldovan national identity: language, historical dates, representations of Romania, Russia, the EU, mirroring my first coding frame (see Section 2.2.2 and Chapter 3). This shortened considerably the time it took to apply the final coding frame to the articles and columns; moreover, throughout the process many were discarded as they were no longer relevant to the general thrust of this thesis' argument as it developed.

Out of this wider sample, 120 were quoted and/or referenced in the text. The table below makes note of the articles referenced from each source, highlighting the balanced approach to the different data sources.

Romanianist	No.	Moldovanist	No.	Others	No.
Timpul	22	Moldova Suverană	9	Radio Free Europe	15
Jurnal de Chişinău	9	Comunistul	14	Unimedia	18
Adevărul	19			Saptamana	13

Table 2.2 Newspaper sources by national identity orientation

Nevertheless, none of these main publications are solely Moldovanist or Romanianist. For instance, Moldova Suverană used to be a Communist party's *porta voce* and has been used in research on Moldova as an example of Moldovanist discourse in the media (e.g. Danero Iglesias 2015). In recent years it has become independent and one of its columnists acknowledged that they do not always stick to the Communists' view of national identity any more (M1). Other newspapers, such as Saptamana, have columns (and columnists) that espouse both Romanianist and Moldovanist views, so have been very hard to classify. More importantly, these newspapers are used both for their columns and the ideas put across by their editors and for their news reports and interviews; in this way, collecting newspaper articles is a process intertwined with the collation of political statements. From this point of view, Radio Free Europe (RFE) is an excellent example of this national identity 'hybridity'. One of their main columnists, Vitalie Ciobanu, is a staunch Romanianist; meanwhile, RFE is an excellent source for interviews all across the political and national identity spectrum and, through its *vox populi*, with grass roots. As such, I argue that dividing the newspapers I consulted into Romanianist and Moldovanist is a problematic categorisation.

With this in mind, I have chosen an alternate categorisation in order to illustrate my choice of data and its coverage of the whole national identity spectrum in Moldova, as illustrated in the table below. This categorisation is not perfect, as some articles/columns could easily be interpreted as in-between categories; I have tried to

circumvent that by corroborating my categorisation with the way in which different articles were referenced in the text of the thesis to represent one or the other discourse. The codes for the categories are employed to identify the characteristics of each data sources in the bibliography ('Online and Other Sources' Section).

Category			Code	Number of sources
Moldovanist	political	radical	R-MD	3
		moderate	P-MD	46
	non-political		N-MD	22
PDM/PLDM			C	13
Romanianist	political	radical	U	5
		moderate	P-RO	25
	non-political		N-RO	29

Table 2.3 – Online data sources by national identity orientation

For this purpose, I have combined political party data and newspaper articles into two main categories: political and non-political. The political category includes official statements by party members and news pieces on their statements. The non-political is based around newspaper columns, statements by cultural elites, historians, etc. and blogs in support of a certain national identity orientation. Mirroring my approach to collecting political statements, I have also consulted a series of non-party affiliated blogs on Unimedia and Vox Publika. Bloggers are recognised all across the Moldovan political spectrum for their importance in forming public opinion. As an illustration of this, Moldovan political leaders (e.g. Socialist Igor Dodon or Liberal Mihai Ghimpu) have regular meetings with blogger groups (e.g. Dodon 3.05.2012).

Each of these categories has then been divided into Romanianist and Moldovanist, with a sub-category for extra-parliamentary/radical movements. These latter groups include the National Liberals for Romanianism and the Voievod

Movement for the Moldovanism. This divide is based on the analysis conducted in Chapters 3 and 4; therein I stress that the political articulations of national identity discourses are usually quite moderate, rejecting radicalising elements such as unionism. Additionally, I created a separate category for the Democrats and Liberal Democrats to highlight their ambiguous national identity constructions (Section 4.1). Nevertheless, in light of the fact that my interviewees tended to portray them as Romanianist, to a certain extent through their participation in the Alliance for European Integration, that category can be collapsed under the category of moderate political Romanianism. One last category, 'others', includes a wide range of sources, from columns that I could not define as either Romanianist or Moldovanist to news pieces that did not cover national identity issues; they also include grass roots interviews (i.e. the RFE *vox populi*) and statements by EU, Russian or Romanian leaders. These were employed in order to achieve a comprehensive grasp of Moldovan views on national identity.

Based on this categorisation, the table above highlights the balance between Romanianist and Moldovanist data sources employed for this project. It also highlights my main focus on moderate articulations of national identity in Moldova. The slightly larger number for my Moldovanist sources are partly due to the fact that the middle ground parties (PDM/PLDM) are in a separate category. But more importantly, I chose to consult more Moldovanist political declarations in order to make up for the lack of Russian language sources (usually supporters of Moldovanism). For instance, from the list of most popular newspapers (IMAS 2012b) I could not consult the Russian language ones, such as *Makler* or *Argumentî i Faktî* which are second and third in terms of notoriety in Moldova.

As suggested by Muller (2008), **the last method** of data collection consists of ethnographic observation in order to gain a better insight into societal discourses. The method is not employed extensively, its main use was to gather data such as the expressions of national identity pictured in Appendix 1. I have taken extensive field notes throughout my visits to Moldova, both in April and in June-August 2012. These included everything from small conversations with Moldovans, i.e. guests for dinner, to details of events I took part in, such as the 2012 commemoration of the 7th April (i.e. the Twitter Revolution). Additionally, I recorded an extra 9 hours of data at various events. These included the launch of a book on Moldova, some sessions from the Actiunea 2012 Summer School in Bacau and the launch of a new exhibition at the Natural History and Ethnography Museum in Chişinău. In terms of referencing, I also use **OT** to refer to any other of the many discussions I have had or any other fieldwork note I have made during my time in Moldova in the text of the thesis. These instances highlight the value and novelty of ethnographic research and the utility of its findings in relation to interviews, archival and online data collection.

2.2. Method and Data Analysis

Based on the data collected for this project, this section offers an overview of the data analysis process. Its main aim is to outline the thesis' methodology, discourse analysis. Since DA and those theorising it can be a lot less prescriptive and clear regarding the workings of the method than one would find in a methodology compendium, I follow this discussion on DA with a brief summary of its toolbox and an overview of the development of my coding frame, as the basis of the analysis process.

Due to its reliance on the philosophical and epistemological assumptions presented above, it is 'misleading to think of DA as a method' (Potter 1997: 144) and it is even worse to apply it just as a 'value free' technique. Thus, drawing from its compatibility with the thesis' posts-structuralist approach I argue that Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis is the optimum method for this project. Unlike other types of DA, e.g. Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse analysis, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is purely post-structuralist. It argues that there is nothing outside discourse; there is a real world, but it cannot be understood outside language. In this endeavour the first part of the section outlines DA's tenets, toolbox (2.2.1) and usefulness for the Moldovan case-study. Based on DA lack of a 'recipe', I augment this method with a series of supplementary ones, such as qualitative content analysis. The chapter closes with a detailed discussion of the data collection process in Section 2.2.2.

Post-structuralist discourse analysis is the main method employed to make sense of the data throughout the thesis. It acknowledges that language is not just a reflection of the world but constituting phenomena. As noted in the discussion above, knowledge and identities are created through discursive practices, through the maintenance and transformation of patterns and discourses within language. This enables us to employ DA to study the discourses that produce and reproduce Moldovan national identity and foreign policy representations. The analysis of discourse should centre itself on discourse as 'topic' and not as 'resource' for knowing other aspects of life, making discourse the main focus of the approach (Wood and Kroger 2000: 8-9). Thus, discourse analysis is not only a 'practice of analysing empirical raw materials and information in discursive forms' (Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000: 4) but an analysis of 'a social practice that shapes the world' (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:

18). In this context, David Howarth (2000: 128) argues that ‘discourse theory is concerned with understanding and interpreting socially produced meanings, rather than searching for objective causal explanations’. Thus, my research is not focused on causal explanations, but on the way in which national identity discourses represent foreign affairs. Then, DA illuminates how ‘all theories and discourses rely on [...] seemingly objective and natural oppositions in language’ (Smith 2001: 240). Thus, the main ethos of post-structuralist research is to uncover assumptions and internal contradictions with discourses, essential for this thesis’ focus on the reproduction of common knowledge in regards to foreign affairs across Moldova.

Discourse analysis also provides the basic framework for understanding how different structures of meaning can coexist and analyses the struggles between these discourses (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 12). This methodological focus augments the thesis’ theoretical underpinnings, being perfectly suited to analyse Moldovan nationalism, which comprises two competing articulations of national identity (Chapters 3 and 4). Other reasons that support DA’s suitability for the analysis range from its conceptualisation of discursive conflict and dichotomies to the attention it awards to a comprehensive data collection and analysis. Howarth defines DA as

the process of analysing signifying practices as discursive forms. This means that discourse analysts treat a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic material – speeches, reports, manifestos, historical events, interviews, policies, ideas, even organisations and institutions – as ‘texts’ or ‘writings’ that enable subjects to experience the world of objects, words and practices (2000: 10).

Through its comprehensive use of data, DA enables an extensive analysis of Moldovan national identity. This is very relevant, as Moldovan national identity constructions are very complex discourses, encompassing element from political statements to newspaper columns and all the way to history text-books and banal elements of day-

to-day life in Moldova. Discourse analysis, thus, allows us to study these disparate elements as parts of the same discourses of national identity and offer a comprehensive view of the national issue in Moldova.

Furthermore, DA draws from the principle of deconstruction, showing how every text depends on a dichotomy, two elements constituted in opposition and all meaning is constituted through difference (Campbell 1992: 71). These dichotomies, Derrida argues, always hide a hierarchy as one term is privileged over the 'other' (Devetak 2005). Thus, DA offers a good framework for analysing Moldovan national identity and its extensive use of dichotomies, e.g. Moldovan *versus* Romanian language. Moreover, this focus is crucial for understanding the representation of Moldova's external others and the reproduction of Moldovan inferiority and prejudices against Romania and/or Russia (Chapters 3, 4 and 5).

Discourse theory has been criticised for being idealist and reducing reality to ideas of it (Howarth 1995: 127). However, the constructivist position, even in its extreme, post-structuralist form, does not deny the existence of the real world; it argues that only through language we give meaning and thus understand and are able to relate to the material world. Essentially, through its main epistemological assumption, DA cannot tell us what is right and wrong, what is true or false, but it can illuminate the researcher on how these judgements are made, on what basis are these categories constructed (Wood and Kroger 2000). Furthermore, critics point out that post-structuralism does not pay any attention to material causes that form the limits of discourse. In response, post-structuralists argue that the economy or environmental constraints only exist when they are constructed within discourses and that through this process of articulation discourses set their own limits by 'ruling out certain options

as false' (Horwath 1995: 129). Thus, the thesis focuses on the way in which national identity articulates arguments regarding foreign policy and discourses on the economy are amongst these arguments.

To conclude, post-structuralism represents an 'ethos of critique' (Huysmans 2001) deconstructing what we believe to be common knowledge, by revealing how dominant understandings of the world, in this case representations of the foreign affairs, have come to be and are reproduced constantly. Based on an interpretivist epistemology, it does not aim to find the Truth, for as a post-modern technique, it does not accept its existence; the outcomes of a post-structuralist analysis are then merely versions of reality (Jaworski and Coupland 1999) just as national identity discourses are. But more importantly, a post-structuralist approach to discourse can prove to be extremely useful in this analysis through its conceptualisation of signs as contested and through its focus on the representation of difference.

2.2.1. Toolbox

There is not a recipe for DA; Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory has very few methodological considerations, being concerned mostly with theorising discourse and its role in society (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002). Moreover, Potter (1997: 147-148) argues that DA is a 'craft skill' without a preformed recipe and that the main prerequisite is 'analytic mentality' (see also Bryman 2008: 501). Nevertheless, whilst there are no clear guidelines, Laclau and Mouffe developed a toolbox of concepts to be employed in pursuing discourse analysis. In order to set the basis for the wider analysis conducted in the next three chapters, this small section offers a brief overview

of: articulation, empty signifiers, equivalence/difference and re-textualisation, and highlights their usefulness in the Moldovan case.

Articulation stands at the very basis of post-structural thinking and this approach to analysing discourse. For post-structuralists ‘the creation of meaning as a social process is about the fixation of meaning, as if a Saussurian⁵ structure existed’, by excluding any other possibilities. This process is called **articulation** and it is a perpetual process, as discourse is no more than a temporary closure of meaning (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 25-9). Meaning is forever contested (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 113), as is the nation, unfinished in constant need of reproduction (Anderson 1983). Thus, articulation is especially pertinent to the Moldovan case, where two discourses articulate and rearticulate (and adapt) different views of the nation and compete to achieve closure regarding the meanings attached to ‘being Moldovan’. To make sense of this discursive conflict, I employ the concept of ‘**empty (or floating) signifiers**’. They are elements that lack meaning, they are always available for definition and cannot be permanently fixed due to the existence of competing meanings assigned to them. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) illustrate this point with two examples of nodal points, for political discourses a nodal point is ‘democracy’, whereas for national discourses it is ‘the people’. In the Moldovan case, empty signifiers range from what is understood as the nation or the people and their characteristics to details of national identity narratives such as key historical dates, e.g. 1918, or the meanings attached to democracy. They are assigned different (and opposing) meanings by the two main national identity discourses and are crucial in understanding the opposition between

⁵ Developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, structural linguistics argue that each signified (an idea, concept, object) and signifier (the means of expressing the signified) are linked, fixed within a structure.

Romanianism and Moldovanism, as illustrated in chapters 3 and 4. These elements are brought together by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) to explain the creation of **identity**. They explain that identity can be constructed through the articulation of empty signifiers and that, just like them, identities are over-determined, being assigned different meanings by different discourses. This is useful for the analysis of the multiple constructions of Moldovan identity. Yet, the most important element of this view on identity is the mechanisms through which these discourses are built around empty signifiers. This is achieved through two logics: **equivalence** and **difference**. The first consists of the process through which chains of equivalence are created, equating a cluster of signifiers with a central nodal point, here the identity. Difference on the other hand distinguishes two different clusters of signifiers (Laclau and Mouffe 2001). Hence, for Laclau and Mouffe identity is constructed through the creation of two opposed clusters of meaning, one erasing differences within the group and the second constructing the 'other(s)'. Equivalences are pivotal to understanding the means through which internal and external others are equated within Romanianism and Moldovanism (Chapters 3 and 4). More importantly, they highlight the means through which the representations of the two discourses are essentialised by equating foreign policy, views on ethnic minorities, etc. into a comprehensive representation of the criteria for belonging to one national identity discourse or the other. With this in mind, I define 'essentialisation' as the process through which groups are represented as quasi-natural, through underlying essential characteristics (e.g. stereotyping). In this way, essentialisation enhances the homogeneity of the represented group and ignores any form of variance within it (Rothbart and Taylor 1992: 16). Thus, this conceptualisation of identity as built around two oppositional clusters is congruent with the sociological view of identity based on the construction of otherness

highlighted in Section 1.3 and is extremely useful in my analysis of the ways in which Moldovans construct their identity.

Lastly, **re-textualisation** is an important element in the analysis of relationships between different discourses. Re-textualisation highlights the importance of context in the creation of a discourse. It underscores that texts draw on earlier meaning formations in order to analyse how discourses are reproduced and, more importantly, changed (Fairclough 2003). However, meaningful context in itself is no more than a discourse or a collection of discourses. Hence, context, be it historical or institutional can be reiterated into different discourses through re-textualisation, by assigning similar meanings to the same floating signifiers or by employing the same logic(s) of equivalence or difference. Hence, no discourse exists in isolation; they all relate in some way to context, itself a text by post-structuralist standards. Re-textualisation, thus, offers the framework for understanding both the relationship between different discourses in Moldovan society and, more importantly, the way in which foreign policy arguments can build on national identity constructions. Thus, employing discourse analysis means analysing the following concepts: empty signifiers, chains of equivalence and difference, but also looking at re-textualisation and the relationship between discourses. Using this toolbox, DA studies how discourses constitute reality, while also highlighting how some representations function as 'truth', as taken for granted, while others are in open antagonism (detailed in Section 3.2). This toolbox has been essential in developing the coding frame for analysing the data collected for this project, as detailed in the next section.

2.2.2. Analysis

The first step of the analysis process was transcribing all of the 43 recorded interviews; they were all in Romanian and I transcribed them in the same language, only translating them if they were quoted in the text of the thesis. Thus, the analysis was conducted entirely in Romanian. This ensured I avoided any issues arising from the translation and the cross-linguistic character of this project, conducted in Romanian, but presented in this thesis in English. Translation can obscure some of the deeper meaning of these discourses or the cultural meaning embedded in linguistic expressions (Simon 1996). One example to illustrate this point is the multitude of words employed in Moldova to refer to the 'nation'. Two of these are most common are 'neam' and 'popor' [people]. The former is the most common and it also has the meaning of kin and relative. This choice of term highlights the Moldovan view of the nation as a family (e.g. Druta 1997), offering a deeper insight than the use of the term 'people'; Section 3.3 takes this discussion further, linking it to the idea of ethnogenesis.

In response to DA's lack of a strict method, I augmented it through the use of qualitative content analysis as techniques for exploring the text. Jaworsky and Coupland (1999) argue that DA needs support from other traditions of research. Nevertheless, DA's value stems from its ability to see the sort of detail that may be lost to other methods (Potter and Wetherell 1994) which would likely miss the 'creative, inter-subjective part of social relations' (Jaworsky and Coupland 1999: 13). Content analysis can be employed in a multiplicity of ways and adapted to different research questions (Weber 1990). I employ content analysis as a qualitative, interpretive method of analysing anything that can be considered as content; this includes text, images, etc. But more importantly, I do not use content analysis to refer to the

quantitative analysis of text (e.g. Silverman 1993), as this would not fit with the theoretical underpinnings provided by discourse theory. Moreover, the multiplicity of meanings attached to different terms, i.e. 'being Moldovan' (Chapter 3), makes this method impractical in the Moldovan case.

The main aim of content analysis in this thesis is to simplify material, by paraphrasing and summarising (Flick 2002). It consists of developing analytical categories and then to coding the data accordingly (Mason 1994). Coding was employed in this project to 'organise the copious notes, transcripts or documents that have been collected and it also represents the first step in the conceptualisation of the data' (Bryman and Burgess 1994: 218). It was useful in systematising the large body of data consisting of interviews, fieldwork notes, political documents and newspaper clippings. Yet, discourse analysis, as a method, rejects the idea of coding, as it believes that terms do not have a fixed meaning. Thus, coding is always corroborated with the toolbox of DA, in order to avoid contradicting the theoretical underpinnings of discourse analysis.

The coding frame was developed throughout the data collection and analysis process. Three main elements impacted on it: (1) the literature on Moldova and national identity in general, (2) the focus of DA and my endeavour to employ its toolbox and (3) the data collection and analysis process itself. The basis for the coding frame was the literature on Moldovan national identity and the main themes it highlighted, e.g. language, history, political allegiances. The main issues arising from the literature became the wider categories when coding. These were also corroborated with the analysis conducted by other authors researching national identity, such as Wodak et al. (1999) study of Austrian national identity. Wodak's

(1999) focus firstly confirmed the soundness of my initial coding frame, but also enabled me to note the presence and, more importantly, the absence of other themes, i.e. citizenship and, respectively, the representation of a long term future for Moldova.

But more importantly, the coding frame was determined by the initial focus of the research project. Building on Charles King's (2003) article (see Introduction), my initial research project had two main objectives. The first was to study how different national identity discourses are intrinsically linked to a foreign policy orientation, for instance Romanianism to being pro-European. For this purpose, I built on the post-structuralist view of foreign policy as creating others (Campbell 1992; Devetak 2005), thus on the theoretical underpinnings of this study; thus, I focused the analysis and codes on representations of othering – the way in which external others such as Romania or Russia are portrayed. This augmented my view of the other elements of national identity such as language and history, breaking down these codes into more focused ones (i.e. 'Russia's impact on Romanian/Moldovan language') that shed light on the multi-level othering in Moldovan national identity constructions as illustrated throughout Chapters 3 and 4.

My second objective was to evaluate the existence of a middle ground national identity construction that could bring the whole of Moldova together around one idea; this would function as a counter discourse to the almost hegemonic cleavage between Romanianism and Moldovanism. My findings suggest that the potential for such a discourse is problematic. Nevertheless, this focus has been essential for the project, as it also enabled me to circumvent one of the criticisms attached to discourse analysis, the fact that it reproduces the same discourse it is trying to deconstruct, having an effect of making it 'virtually impossible to think outside' this dichotomy (Young 1981:

48).. Related to this, one more issue is the fact that the researches choose the themes to analyse in their research and this can lead to them actually seeing what they want to see in the analysis; this can lead to a biased analysis and what Schegloff called 'bad politics' (Wetherell 2001: 385). Thus, by focusing on the counter discourse of a civic identity, this approach has enabled me to avoid, intentionally or not, reproducing the very dichotomy between Romanianism and Moldovanism. Moreover, my interest in the elements that stand at the basis of this construction provides the critical focus necessary to prevent that from happening. The essentialising character of the two national identity discourse is further challenged by highlighting the complexity and variations within them and by the analyses of Chapter 3 and 4.

Secondly, the coding frame was also influenced by my method, discourse analysis. I focused extensively throughout my analysis and whilst developing my codes on the main elements in the DA toolbox. For example, floating signifiers with multiple meanings, such as democracy (Section 2.2.2) underscored the pit falls of coding in the Moldovan case. Hence, my codes became more specific, for instance 'democracy as minority rights' to illustrate the Communists' representation of this point. Similarly, DA's theoretical focus on hierarchy was also included in my coding frame and it highlighted the existence of a different approach to understanding Moldova's relations to Romania and Russia, from the perspective of inferiority. Taking this approach has highlighted the Moldovan representation of its external others as superior and, ultimately, inspired Chapter 5's argument regarding Moldova's lack of agency on the international stage.

Lastly, the coding schedule changed throughout my data collection process, as the main themes of the data started to emerge. From this point of view, the analysis process followed the prescriptions of Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory provides that the data collection and analysis are not sequential processes, as the structure of this chapter would suggest, but simultaneous ones. It supports the fact that theory should be emerge from the data (Glaser and Strauss 1967). I started reading Moldovan news and column on a daily basis from the beginning of my project in October 2010. This raised new ideas that were ultimately incorporated into the coding frame; for instance the theme of the strict opposition between pro-Eastern and pro-Western political parties recurred across my readings and including it in the coding frame formed the basis for my argument regarding the East-West cleavage (Chapters 3 and 4). I also developed my coding frame throughout the interviewing process and especially whilst transcribing the interviews, as a first reading of my whole data. After each interview (or group of interviews, if they were one after the other) I would take notes regarding the key ideas that arose. These were corroborated with the themes arising from the transcription process and with the codes inspired by the literature and the discourse analytic approach. The influence of the data was on the coding frame usually a case of refining or taking a different approach to the existing categories. For instance, the initial coding schedule looked at the representation of Romania/Russia as positive or negative others. During my interview process, these categories were refined and looked at how these positive external others can act as teachers and aiders, as two different codes. Other entirely independent themes also appeared across the interviews. One such example is the ballad Miorița, a part of national identity touched upon in Chapter 5. Lastly, a part of my findings (and, implicitly, the codes attached to them) have been detailed in conference papers and articles, but

have not made it into the final version of this thesis. Amongst these are the representation of the ballad Miorița or the potential for a civic national identity discourse in Moldova.

Built on these three pillars, the literature, DA and the data itself, the coding scheme was applied to the whole of the interview data and the saved selection of the archival data, as described above. The process was not linear, but repetitive as per the provisions of Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). As I discovered more nuance in certain representations, I adapted my coding frame and reapplied it to the relevant interviews. Moreover, my approach was refined further by looking into the literature on structure and agency in International Relations, as the key theoretical theme that could help me make sense of my findings. As such, during the coding process two main themes arose from this reorganisation of all the information and comprehensive comparison of different views. The first was the obsessive representation of the Romanianism-Moldovanism cleavage, whilst the second was the reiteration of a 'passive' Moldovan identity. These are the basis of the thesis' main argument, that Moldovan national identity reproduces a geopolitical view of the world. The former is analysed in great depth in Chapters 3 and 4, whilst Chapter 5 turns its attention to representations of Moldovan 'passivity'.

3. Moldovan national identity – ‘between’ Moldovanism and

Romanianism

Romanianism and Moldovanism dominate both the political scene in Chişinău and the academic writings on nationalism in Moldova, as illustrated in the brief literature review in the Introduction. Based on this, I argue that the cleavage between the two national identity discourses is essential in understanding the East-West divide that dominates Moldovan foreign policy articulations. In this context, the main aim of this chapter is to offer a brief analysis of the two main national identity discourses in Moldova, Moldovanism and Romanianism and to argue that their constructions are opposed to each other. Building on this chapter’s findings, Chapter 4 contends that the national identity divide translates into East versus West one in the Moldovan case. In this way, the two chapters work together to explain the Moldovan representation of the structure of foreign affairs.

The chapter begins by offering an overview of the literature on Moldovan national identity (Section 3.1). It argues that this body of literature focuses almost entirely on the two main discourses, Romanianism and Moldovanism, and reproduces their dominance in Moldovan society. This is followed by a brief section (3.2) detailing some theoretical considerations for the analysis, such as the conceptualisation of Moldovanism as comprising of both an ethnic and a civic strand. Then, the main part of the chapter (Sections 3.3 and 3.4) examines the main tenets of each discourse, their views on **nationality, language and history** and highlights the opposition between Romanianism and Moldovanism on these criteria. The choice to analyse these elements was made in light of the theoretical writings on national identity, especially Antony Smith’s (1991) work on civic and ethnic nationalism and their elements; his

theoretisation is essential for making sense of both ethnic Romanianism and hybrid (ethnic and civic) Moldovanism. Moreover, language and history are also central in the literature on Moldovan national identity (King 1994; Ihrig 2008) and have been noted as important by my interviewees. The analysis encompasses academic writings, official discourse, media representations and grassroots interviews, in order to argue for the widespread character of these debates.

The third section, 'Language' (3.3), argues that both discourses represent language through othering processes. For instance, Moldovan language is defined through the fact that it is different from Romanian and threatened by it. But more importantly, Moldovanism also equates Romanian with Romanianism, the Romanian 'minority' in Moldova, as an internal other, and with Romania, as the external other. On the other hand, Romanianists contend that Romanian is threatened by Moldovanism's promotion of Russian language and, ultimately, everything Russian. A similar process of equivalence and othering is present in historical representation, as discussed in Section 3.4. I argue that the two discourses attach contradicting meanings to key dates, such as 1812, 1918 and 1940. For instance, 1918 is depicted by Romanianists as a liberation and by the Moldovanists as an occupation by the Romanian other. But more importantly, each of these key dates is defined against an external other and, i.e. the threatening other associate with the opposing discourse. Thus, these elements are woven into a series of equivalences in between external, internal and linguistic others, building into an antagonistic structure between Romanianism and Moldovanism. This overlaps with the political cleavage across Moldova, 2009-2014, with the left, the Communists and Socialists, being Moldovanist and the political right, the Liberals and even Liberal-Democrats, Romanianist. The

political cleavage is highlighted throughout this chapter, employing quotes from political figures or party manifestoes to illustrate certain elements of national identity; additionally, an in-depth analysis of party position on national identity is offered in Section 4.1.

Furthermore, political articulations of national identity in Moldova are the best illustration of the way in which both Moldovanism and Romanianism have moderated. Though outside the scope of this thesis, this phenomenon extends to grass-roots articulations of national identity, as suggested by Knott (2014). One of the main manifestations of this moderation is the fact that representations of otherness are not radical, excluding groups from the polity or rejecting any form of contact or cooperation; they are essentially rejections of hierarchic relations. For example, the Romanianist rejection of the Russian language is ultimately a dismissal of the Russian-speaking minorities refusal to learn Romanian; Romanianists argue this is due to the minorities superior position in Moldovan society (see Section 3.3).

But more importantly, these discourses are more moderate in principle, considering their ultimate goal. Romanianism as articulated in the political sphere is not as radical as unionism, whereas Moldovanism is not as radical as constructions of Soviet identity. This is due to the hegemony of the discourse of Moldovan independence and the fact that neither Romanianism nor Moldovanism challenge this principle. The idea of an independent Moldovan state is widely accepted across Moldovan society, contestation being limited to some extra parliamentary parties and NGOs (PNL, Actiunea 2012). For instance, Romanianist leader of the Liberal Party, Mihai Ghimpu stated:

When we talk about the Romanian language it doesn't mean that Moldova will be united with Romania. It's a bluff. Unification with Romania will never happen! During Băsescu's last visit it became clear that we will never be a part of Romania. Moldova is an independent state. Speculation regarding unification with Romania must be put aside, somewhere, in a coffin. Today, we must take care of the economy and end these speculations (quoted in Druta 2011).

Similarly, Moldovanists also articulate a nuanced discourse, for instance by suggesting the use of the 'Moldovan (Romanian) language' expression to define the national language.

As such, the reality of the political national identity cleavage in Moldova 2009-2014 challenges King's (2003) radical view of Romanianism and Moldovanism. In fact, what he defines as a middle ground national identity discourse ('denationalisation theory') best describes the moderate character of the national identity debate in Moldova. Denationalisation theory holds that the Moldovan people 'are certainly Romanians, but decades of Soviet cultural policy have had a deleterious effect on Moldovans' national consciousness' (King 2003: 63). Building on this, my interviews have noted that the theory of denationalisation can easily be construed as either a part of Moldovanism or Romanianism. For instance, a view that sees the Russian impact on the Moldovan people as positive is essentially Moldovanist. Such a construction is the PPCD's representation:

with one lung I breathe in Romanian culture and with the other Russian culture. And I am convinced that this is the source for the uniqueness and beauty of the culture and spirituality of our country and our nation [...] a great advantage, a gift bestowed upon us by destiny (Rosca 25.01.2011).

Alternatively, a view of the Moldovans as 'tainted' by the Russian influence (EX1), 'brainwashed' (PG5) and needing educating in order to remind them they are Romanians is part of the Romanianist articulations.

Stemming from this focus on moderation, the second reason for the existence of moderate national identity constructions is the lack of national identity conflict; based on the idea that identities become true identities when they are under threat (Campbell 1992), Romanianist and Moldovanist can become more defined and, in some cases even, radicalised. This is usually due to circumstances, such as protests and situations where officials are forced to choose a side. Romanianism and Moldovanism can come into debate whenever language, historical dates or even foreign policy become a focus of conflict across Moldovan society.

Moldovans, especially at the grass-roots, are characterised by an ignorance of national identity issues, supporting King's (2000) argument regarding the Moldovans' interest in 'bread and butter issues'. This leads to a perpetuation of moderate and, even, middle ground representations of national identity. Additionally, I note all throughout where there are attempts at articulating a middle ground construction, such as a neutral view on Moldovan language or a common narrative of the veterans of 9 May 1945. I refer to any attempt to bring the whole of the Moldovan people (Romanianists, Moldovanists or those who do not take a stance) together under one identity as a middle ground construction of national identity; through this widespread appeal, middle ground constructions are essentially different from moderate representations of moderate Romanianism and Moldovanism.

3.1. Building on the existing literature

Moldova is a 'site of failed nation-building projects' (Cash 2008: 75). The academic examinations usually portray it as divided in between Moldovanists and Romanianists,

a dichotomy widely accepted within the literature on Moldova (King 1994, 2000; Anderson 2008; Cash 2007, 2008, etc.). For example, Protsyk (2006b) analyses the nation-building projects in Moldova and presents the two projects through opposite characteristics (e.g. similar/dissimilar). Meanwhile, Ihrig (2006: 43) starts off his analysis of history textbooks with: 'Two narratives of the nation – Moldovanism and Romanianism – have been competing for the hearts and minds of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova since the early Nineties'. Very few analyses acknowledge that there is space for more nuanced approaches (see Anderson 2008), whilst only King (2003) and Zgureanu-Guragata (2008) actually touch upon them. King (2003), in an analysis of national identity and foreign policy, outlines the three main orientations of Moldovan foreign policy and associates them with three conceptions of Moldovan national identity. Though not analysed in depth, this work does account for a third, middle ground view in national identity, a form of civic Moldovanism. Similarly Zgureanu-Guragata's (2008) work acknowledges the existences of other types of national identity but seems to be entirely driven by the idea of assigning different, ethnic or civic, labels to different political parties' national identity discourse and does not discuss in depth the details of each national construction. Hence, in its limited coverage, Zgureanu-Guragata's article offers an argument for the complexity of national identity constructions on Moldova. Nevertheless, both authors fail to construct an academic counter discourse to the dualistic nature of the Moldovan national identity debate. On the other hand, critical analyses of national identity, focused on the lifeworld of Moldovans, have discussed alternative elements of Moldovan national identity. These include hospitality and religion and go beyond the constructions of Romanianism and Moldovanism (e.g. Cash 2007, 2008). Yet, none of these works argue for the existence of an alternative discourses, only elements,

symbols and characteristics that can be built into and merged with the other representations, including Romanianism and Moldovanism. In this way, the critical part of the literature on Moldovan nationalism also fails to offer an alternative discourse of Moldovan national identity. Hence, academic analyses have largely reproduced the opposition between Moldovanism and Romanianism whilst failing to offer an alternative representation of the Moldovan situation.

Lastly, a different understanding of the divide between Romanianism and Moldovanism needs to be highlighted. As illustrated by Ihrig's (2006) quote above, there is a view that given the deadlock between the two national identity discourses, they are equally balanced, each appealing to half of society. This is very hard to prove in the Moldovan case, whilst the extent of grassroots appeal is beyond the scope of this analysis. Firstly, Census (2004) data shows that 2% of the population declare themselves to be Romanian⁶. Additionally, more recent surveys highlight that 63% of Moldovan speak Romanian and 33% say that speaking Romanian means they are Romanian (Magenta 2014)⁷ and, thus, challenge the numbers in the census to a certain extent; the survey is rather problematic as according to one of my interviewees (YL3 in a conversation in 2014) some of their results are 'a bit surreal', which may be explained by the fact that the poll was commissioned by Romanianist newspaper Timpul. Nevertheless, the perception of the Romanianists as a minority is balanced out by the fact that most of the Moldovan intelligentsia, the actors that modernist thinkers

⁶ As of January 2015, the 2014 Census results regarding ethnicity had not been released. Nevertheless, there has been a leak, whose accuracy was later denied by the census organisers. It noted that the percentage of Romanians had gone up to 23 and that 40% of Moldovan citizens speak Romanian (Independent 2.01.2015).

⁷ Moldovan surveys do not include two separate categories for Romanian and Moldovan under the ethnic identity question. As such, I am unable to draw any further conclusions regarding the results of this opinion poll.

place at the centre of nation-building, are Romanianists (see King 1999). Hence, the impression that the two are equal is not based on their spread within society but in the importance each discourse assigns to the other in its representation of Moldovan realities or, more specifically, the fact that the two discourses produce and reproduce each other.

3.2. Theoretical and Methodological considerations

Since this cleavage between the two national identity discourse is also present within the academic literature, this thesis employs the academic definitions of Romanianism and Moldovanism, together with their use of the ‘-ism’ versions of the terms to refer to the national identity discourses and national projects linked to them. The main argument of the chapter is that the two are constructed in opposition to each other, the self-representations of Romanianism and Moldovanism forming an antagonism. Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue that of social antagonisms ‘occur because social agents are unable to attain their identities (and therefore their interests) and they construct an “enemy” who is deemed responsible for this “failure”’ (Howarth 2000: 106). Hence, as none of the two national identity discourses has actually achieved a form of totality, i.e. become the norm in Moldovan society, the two draw in their constructions from the articulations and existence of the other. This chapter argues that through their representations of nationality, language, history and, especially, constructions of otherness (internal and external) as accrued within every type of identity representation, Romanianism and Moldovanism constitute an antagonism. Thus, the main focus of the investigation is on both the way in which these discourses are constructed by their supporters and how they are represented

through the eyes of their 'other', i.e. Romanianist representations of Moldovanism and the other way around. This is achieved through an overview of the dichotomies that stand at the basis of their antagonism, from their views on language to those on certain historical events.

Lastly, the thesis focuses mainly on the Communists' version of Moldovanism, as the most popular and common version within the period discussed (due to the party's position as the main opposition party 2009-2014); this is corroborated with the Socialists' articulations, taking into account their rise to prominence from 2010 onwards. Drawing from March's (2007) analysis of the Communists' policies, I define Moldovanism as comprising both an ethnic and a civic discourse (see also Danero Iglesias 2013a). This is in contrast to Romanianism that is dominantly an ethnic construction. This conceptualisation challenges the Communists' and Socialists' claims to promote a civic Moldovan identity that would end the ethnic conflict in Moldova. At the same time, it stresses the impact of Soviet 'institutionalized definitions of nationhood' (Brubaker 1994) in the region and the persistence of ethnic, almost primordialist, forms of identification and their exclusionary constructions (Opalski 2001). Due to its focus on the comparison between the two discourses, this chapter stresses most of the ethnic elements of Moldovanism, but also touches on some civic issues, e.g. the promotion of the Russian language. More importantly, I argue that beyond the different focus of the ethnic and civic strands of Moldovanism, they function in a very similar way. More specifically, the process of othering, crucial for the analysis of representations of internal and external others and, hence for foreign policy articulations, is common to both the civic and the ethnic strands. The choice to conceptualise Moldovanism as a hybrid discourse is also motivated by the fact that

there was no distinction across my data collection in between the supporters of civic and ethnic Moldovanism, especially amongst Romanianist representations. Thus, Moldovanism is analysed as a single discourse both due to the similitudes between intrinsic characteristics of its two strands and the external representation of the discourse. Lastly, this study of Moldovanism reiterates March's (2007: 604) conclusion that civic Moldovanism is 'often an unworkable compromise', with elites usually struggling to maintain that middle ground position.

Moreover, Moldovan society illustrates the existence of both moderate and more extreme views of national identity. This thesis mainly analyses the moderate versions, but also highlights elements of the more extreme discourses (e.g. arguments for reunification with Romania). This approach draws from Finalyson's (1998) argument that opposing discourses can coexist, but that these dualistic structures radicalise themselves at extreme moments. He offers the ideal framework to explain the simultaneous perpetuation of the competing, Romanianist and a Moldovanist, discourses across Moldova. More importantly, the argument regarding radicalisation is essential to this analysis, as it highlights the ability of these discourses to exist in both a moderate form and in their more radicalised versions, depending on events. It also explains the shifts within the Moldovanist discourse, across the years. More specifically, the literature concludes that after 2005, the Communist regime slowly became more Bessarabist, tempering its anti-Romanian rhetoric (King 2003; March 2007). Despite this, I argue that after 2009, the anti-Romanian rhetoric had returned, especially after the framing of the Twitter Revolution in terms of a Romanian organised *coup* (BBC 9.4.2009). Moreover, these moments of radicalisation are widely covered across the Moldovan media and impact on a great part of Moldovan society;

in this manner, they perpetuate a radicalised version of Romanianism and Moldovanism and the image of a radical (Romanianist and Moldovanist) elite and political class. This is illustrated in the way in which, during my interviews, non-elite members of Moldovan society reproduced radicalised elements of these discourses, from the idea of leaving Transnistria behind to an outright rejection of Romania's policies regarding Moldova.

3.3. Language

Language is the first element of national identity that is analysed from the perspective of Romanianism and Moldovanism. Language is the basis for vernacular culture and one of the main elements of an ethnic view of the nation (Smith 1991: 11-12).

Language has dominated the literature on Moldovan identity (Ciscel 2007) and is also considered as the 'means of political control' in Moldova (March 2007). Romanianists argue that the **language** spoken by the people of Moldova is the same as Romanian or a regional version of Romanian. More importantly, this chapter infers, their representation of language is based on othering, on the rejection of Russian language, Russian-speaking ethnic minorities, Soviet 'Russia' and, implicitly, Moldovanism. On the other hand, Moldovanists insist that the language spoken in Moldova is actually Moldovan and hence different from Romanian; through this, they too focus on othering and the rejection of everything that is Romanianist or Romanian. The origins of a separate Moldovan language lie in a Soviet project to differentiate the two languages implemented in the Moldovan ASSR on the left bank of the Prut River,

nowadays Transnistria⁸ (King 1994). Moldovan became a language through the standardization of a central Bessarabian dialect starting with 1929 and after the Second World War in the whole of Bessarabia (Schrad 2004). During the Soviet period and up until 1989, the biggest difference between Moldovan and Romanian was the fact that the former was written in Cyrillic while the latter in Latin script (King 1999, 2003). Currently, linguists such as Deletant (1996) or Dyer (1996) argue that Moldovan has more Slavic influences than Romanian. They emphasise certain words that are seen as either archaisms or regionalisms in Romanian; to illustrate this category and the constructed nature of difference, the PCGN Report (2005) notes *bortă* (hole), *gospodar* (prince) or *mîță* (cat), words that are also widely used in the Romanian region of Moldova to this day. Moreover, they note the existence of words that have been brought into the language from Russian throughout the 19th and 20th century, whereas Romanian was importing neologisms mostly from French and other European languages. An analysis of the famous Moldovan-Romanian Dictionary compiled by Moldovanist Vasile Stati in 2003 illustrates how differences are created at the level of vocabulary, and not grammar, in an attempt to legitimise the existence of a separate Moldovan language (PGCN Report 2005). As a reaction to the Soviet policy, one of the most important demands of the Popular Front of Moldova in the late 1980s was the recognition of the language as Romanian and the return to Latin script, which was ultimately achieved with the Moldovan declaration of independence. Moreover, Soviet promotion of the Moldovan language enables the Romanianists to perpetuate the link between contemporary Moldovanism and the former regime, with all its negative characteristics, from deportations to the imposition of Russian(-speaking) national

⁸ Another part of the Moldovan ASSR with the capital at Balta currently lies in the Ukraine (see Introduction).

elites (e.g. YL3, PG2, EX7). This mirrors Moldovanism's rejection of Romania, as a linguistic other. Nevertheless, in 1994 the Moldovan Constitution stated that the official language of the Republic of Moldova is Moldovan, overturning the initial success of the Romanianists. Since then, the Moldovan Academy of Sciences has recognised that the two are the same, the one difference between the two languages being the grammatical changes Romanian has been through in the 1990s (see PCGN Report 2005). Similarly, in late 2013, the (Romanianist dominated⁹) Moldovan Constitutional Court (2013) also concluded that the language spoken in Moldova is Romanian, but due mainly to ideological reasons, a series of Moldovan parties, e.g. the Communists, Socialists and Democrats, have not recognised this on the political level (Gândul 6.12.2013).

Thus, Romanian and Moldovan are the largely the same but divided through representations of sameness (Romanianism) and difference (Moldovanism). An important layer in this cleavage is the nuanced representation of the difference in vocabulary between the two. Researchers at the Moldovan Natural History and Ethnography Museum have used the term *grai* or 'speech' to define the difference in between Romanian and Moldovan

Our speech is the same as the one in Iasi [Romanian Moldova] with 'și', with 'ghine', 'oleacă', not 'picuțu' as in Ardeal. [...] And we in our Moldovan speech also use some words, Russian mangled words, Russian terms... but you have this issue in Romania too with English words (EX3).

This exhibits the way in which the language used to talk about language, be it 'language', '*grai*', 'dialect', etc. defines our representation of it. In the Moldovan case, it helps augment or erase differences in terms of ethnicity and national identity, thus

⁹ Alexandru Tănase, the president of the Court, is a well-known Romanianist and son of *Timpu* editorialist and Romanianist supporter, Constantin Tănase.

stressing the constructed nature of this representation. Additionally, the impact of Russian terms ensures that the language the Moldovans speak is perceived as 'not proper' or less 'beautiful than Romanian', leading to a sentiment of inferiority, discussed in more depth in Sections 4.3 and 4.4.

Related to the language debate, one of the most important elements of a nation's history from the point of view of ethnic identity is national ethnogenesis. The representation of ethnogenesis in Moldova offers us a sum-up of the main tenets and othering arguments of the two discourses. According to Romanianists, the people of Moldova have been part of the same transformations as those within the rest of the Romanian space¹⁰, a nation created from the mix of the Dacians and the Romans, following the Roman occupation of Dacia in 106 A.D¹¹. On this line of thought, writer Gheorghe Ghimpu notes that

the ethnonim 'Romanian people' and the glotonim 'Romanian language' have appeared and have been used by these people since the 8th-9th centuries, from the time this people came to being on the territory of historical Dacia. And with the centuries, the Romanian people have kept their original ethnic name and the correct name for their maternal language, Romanian, as sacred things (2002: 638-639)

According to this primordialist view, the Romanian people have been on this territory for the past millennium and their autochthonous character legitimises their national demands to this day. Moreover, the use of the Romanian language is equated with being Romanian, an idea that is still applied in current day. Surveys have shown that 33% of the Moldovans also adhere to this view, i.e. that speaking Romanian means you

¹⁰ The current territory of the Romanian state and somewhat beyond its borders, encompassing southern Dobrugea, Voivodina, Northern Bukovina, etc. depending on who and for what purpose is articulating this discourse.

¹¹ This is in itself an idealised view of Romanian ethnogenesis, ignoring, amongst others, Hungarian, Slavic, Bulgarian, Turkic, etc. influences on both the nation and its language (see Boia 2010: 171-256 for a comprehensive analysis of Romanian writings regarding Romanian ethnogenesis).

are Romanian¹² (Magenta 2014). On the other hand, Moldovanist historian Victor Stepaniuc argues that in the Carpathian – Dniester area ‘the population formed as a result of the merger of radical free Dacians with Romanized Dacians who came from the West and with the Slavs who came from the East’ (2005: 19); he echoes the way in which Soviet history textbooks underlined the importance of the Eastern Slavs amongst the tribes that amalgamated to form the Moldovan people (Solonari 2002: 421). The Moldovanist argument is, thus, based on the importance of the Eastern Slavs and the Slavic element, but also on the difference in between the people of Moldova and the Vlachs in Wallachia (Druță 2008). Additionally, whereas this construction focuses on the ethnic representation of the Moldovan nation, the importance of the Slavic element is also stressed in civic Moldovanism, through the importance awarded to the Russian-speaking ethnic minorities, their rights and the promotion of Russian as the language on inter-ethnic communication, as portrayed by Communist policies (March 2007).

Thus, the Romanianist and Moldovanist focus on the issues of language and ethnogenesis illustrates the primordial character of the two ethnic constructions. Another element that marks the importance of blood ties in Moldovan national identity discourses is the terminology used when talking about the nation. The direct translation of the word ‘nation’ is *natiune* (somewhat of a neologism), but the most used synonyms are those of *popor* and *neam*. During my fieldwork (2012) *popor* was employed as a scientific term used in conjunction with terms like ethnogenesis, but its meaning, ‘people’, can also be used in democratic legitimation. *Neam*, on the other

¹² Nevertheless, the extent to which these respondents are Romanianists or Moldovanists, thus referring to their one or others’ identities is not mentioned.

hand, was the most extensively used of the three when discussing national identity in across my interviews. It has two meanings in Romanian¹³, nation and kin. In this way, the use of *neam* to define the nation implicitly stressed the idea of family links within the national community, highlighting its primordialism.

Then, Romanianism and Moldovanism build on their representation of ethnogenesis to stress the importance of othering for their discursive articulations. The rejection of the Slavic influence on their language (both through the rejection of the Cyrillic alphabet and through the use of Russian terminology) is one of the key themes of the Romanianist discourse. It draws from the demands of the independence movement in the 1980s (King 2000). The importance of the Romanian language is commonly associated with the role it played in Moldova's national revival of the 1980s and independence (Ghimpu 2013). In this way, Romanian language is a crucial element defining the idea of Moldovan independence and the rejection of Moldova's Soviet past. More importantly, the portrayal of the Slav as the 'other' within the Romanianist discourse is based on a strict representation of belonging to different language families, the Romance and the Slavic Indo-European groups. Some of my interviewees have mentioned an expression that is quite common in Romanian schooling – 'Romania is an island of Latinity surrounded by Slavic people' (e.g. YL1, YL5, OT8). This view also explains the Romanianist repudiation of Russian language and its use in contemporary Moldova, especially their representations of Russian as a 'threat' to the state language. The Moldovan Liberals have stressed, at their 2005 party congress, that

Law 3465-XI regarding the functioning of languages on the Moldovan Republic's territory, adopted 1 September 1989, declared that the official state language was Romanian. Since then, sixteen years have passed and the Russian language

¹³ Without taking a side within the national identity debate, I take the scientific view that the language spoken by the people of Moldova is Romanian, for ease in the writing of this thesis.

continues to be dominant in all domains. The promotion and development of the Romanian language as a state language has been stopped (PL 2005).

Similarly, Mihai Ghimpu, the president of the Liberals, argued in parliament that ‘the Russian language is the language that has destroyed Romanian, it is an occupation language’ (PL 7.12.2012). Hence, Romanianists portray the current situation in Moldova as similar to that during the Soviet Union, their main complaint regarding the national minorities being the fact that they, allegedly, refuse to learn the Moldovan/Romanian language. Linked to this is the common usage in Moldova of the expression ‘Russian-speaking’ to define national minorities such as Ukrainians, Găgăuz, Bulgarians, etc. (e.g. YL1, YL2, EX6). The concept of ‘Russian-speaking’, encompassing ethnic minorities from Russians, to Ukrainians and Găgăuz (who speak a Turkic language) essentialises them as the linguistic other against which the Romanian majority defines itself. In this way, the internal ‘other’ is linked to the linguistic and, through its name, the external other, Russia. Moreover, there is the perception that the Romanian-speaking majority usually bow to the will of the minority and speak their language, Russian. A common Moldovan joke is that if ten Moldovans are sat in a group, all speaking Moldovan/Romanian and a Russian arrives, they all change to Russian (see also Ciscel 2006, 2007). This is a remnant of the Soviet hierarchy in which the ethnic Russian and Russian speakers dominated society and communication, a sentiment echoed even 20 years after the fall of the regime in my interviews:

We cannot say we should have the Russian language too [referring to the possibility of officialising a bilingual society] ... how could it be equal, when at the time when I finished my studies in Russian, I was inferior because I had previously done 10 years in Romanian (PG6).

Hierarchy is omnipresent in this type of representation, the mere idea of equality between the Moldovan majority and its minority ethnic groups being rejected by Romanianists through their historical experience. This is consistent with the feeling of

entitlement regarding language use in the post-Communist countries (Kymlicka and Grin 2003). This representation highlights how othering is framed in terms of a rejection of a hierarchic relationship and, implicitly, and in this case, the moderate character of Romanianist discourse. Currently, 'lack of dignity' is the main concept used by Romanianists to explain this attitude, as dignity would ensure that the people of Moldova would act *en masse* to defend the use of their language. Thus, from a linguistic point of view, the Romanianists' other is the Slavic/Russian language and the perception of its generalised use within Moldova as mentioned within my interviews in June-August 2012 (e.g. YL2, OT6).

Thus, just as historically, Romanianists associate Moldovanism with the Soviet Union and its perceived Russian character, so to this day, representations of Moldovanism are equated to the Russian language and its position in Moldovan society. This view is often linked with the Communists' party's policies, such as the 2003 National Political Conception which establishes Russian as a second language in Moldova, a language of inter-ethnic communication (e.g. March 2005, 2007; Danero Iglesias 2013a). Yet, the Moldovanists have gone further in their attachment to the Russian language and rejection of the Romanianist narrative of the 'Russian threat'; for instance, Mihail (3.10.2011) argues for value of Russian for 'civilising' the Moldovans, e.g. through the thirty translations of Shakespeare in Russian as opposed to a single one in Romanian. Additionally, the fact that the PCRM leadership chooses to speak Russian on different occasions further strengthens this link (Năframă 18.05.2012; Mihail 14.12.2012). One of my interviewees also highlighted this line of thought, as:

You can see it at the level of party leadership. For example, the Communists, at their congresses, even at the last one, they spoke Russian... and even from elementary things like this you can tell who is interested in what (OT4).

Echoing Moldovanism's rejection of the Romanian language, Romanianism constructs Russian as a threat. Even more, in the case of Romanianism, the linguistic 'othering' also feeds into the internal 'othering', whilst the idea of 'dignity' stresses the hierarchical relationship between the two languages and echoes the findings of Ciscel (2007) and Prina (2015) regarding the concept of 'respect'. The national identity debate is also reflected within internal Moldovan politics. The paragraphs above have already highlighted the position of the Liberal and National Liberals in regards to the Romanian character of the language; the most telling example in this case is the PL's motion to rename the national language day, from 'Our Language Day' to 'Our Romanian Language Day' (PL 5.9.2012).

On the other side of the political and national identity spectrum, the PCRM was the main Moldovanist party up until November 2014, when the Socialists burst onto the Moldova political scene, getting the most votes in the parliamentary election. Both parties have often argued for the existence of a Moldovan language, separate from Romanian. This argument is based on both a democratic reasoning and the precedence rationale. Upon being asked who is right in regards to the language spoken in Moldova, former president and leader of the Communists, Vladimir Voronin (12.10.2007), stressed that:

The citizens are right. [...] When we held the referendum on October 1 2004, 2.1% of citizens declared themselves Romanian. The other 78% declared themselves Moldovan. This is what we guide ourselves on.

In this way he reproduces the equivalence between language and ethnicity present in Romanianism. Then, he has also argued that the Moldovan language is older than Romanian; this reproduces the contention that the Moldovan state and nation precedes its Romanian counterpart, through the fact that the first dates back to 1359,

whilst the second to 1859¹⁴; a similar view is reproduced in Moldovanist newspaper *Comunistul* (21.04.2010). More importantly, the existence of the Moldovan language is essential for claims of national originality and, linked to it, the rejection of Romanian superiority:

Without any bit of anti-Romanian thinking, where did the whole false idea of 'our Romanian language' come from? Why is all of your energy aimed at oppressing the souls and hearts of the people and its aspirations towards originality, towards cultural innovation? Why should this aspiration work on the matrices set by Bucharest, that have appeared 400 years later than the notion of Moldovan language and Moldovan people. Why this wish to transform into provinciality everything that has enabled our people to have a contribution to our common European history (Voronin 2011).

The claim of 'originality' stresses the main point of Moldovanism, i.e. creating a nation different from the Romanian one, but the use of hierarchical constructions adds a new layer in our understanding of their project. This is highlighted through the use of the term provincial, implying a centre-periphery relation; this is constructed through the representation of 'Bucharest', the Romanian capital, as superior to the Moldovans. Thus, the linguistic 'other' in the Moldovanist case is associated directly with the external 'other', Romania. This argument comes as a reaction to the hierarchical representation of Romanian language as superior to its incorrect counterpart, Moldovan. It weaves the historical thesis of precedence with the linguistic elements of the nation in order to challenge the perceived dominance and superiority of the Romanian language in Moldovan society. But more importantly, the speech the excerpt belongs to is held in front of the Moldovan Sciences Academy and is aimed to be a critique of (their) Romanianism. Similarly to the moderate Romanianist representation of ethnic minorities, the anti-hierarchical element of Voronin's

¹⁴ 1359 is the first documentary mention of Moldova; 1859 is the year when the Western part of Moldova and Wallachia were united under the name of the Principality of Romania (see Introduction).

Moldovanism is a part of the mechanisms of othering the Romanianists. Additionally, this group is also represented as an internal other, whose perceived rule over Moldova is rejected by Moldovanists (PG3); besides for the members of the Moldovan Sciences Academy, who argue that the Moldovans speak Romanian, this group also includes Romanianist cultural elites and perceived Romanianists amongst politicians, e.g. the members of the Alliance for European Integration. This illustrates the reproduction of the political cleavage through the lens of national identity. Lastly, at the 2008 Munich Security Conference, Voronin acknowledged that Romanian and Moldovan may be identical. Nevertheless, he argued that since Moldovan language existed before Romanian, there is a legitimate argument to support the difference between the two (Mediafax 10.02.2008). This leads to no more than a battle of glossonyms in which both sides acknowledge the similarities in between the languages, but argue for their discrete/separate character. Furthermore, taking into account the importance awarded to the name of the language together with its equation with nationality, this former element is an important criterion in assigning individuals and/or parties to the two discourses. Concluding, Romanianism argues against the superior position of the Russian speakers, which they associate with the Moldovanist discourse and, mirroring this, Moldovanists reject Romania and all things Romanian. This underscores the symmetrical construction of the two discourses and their reciprocal 'othering'. Moreover, the battle of the glossonyms highlights the constructed nature of this cleavage.

Yet, due to its nature as a conflict of 'names', the debate on language also offers the potential for finding common ground in Moldova. This potential was also augmented through the Constitutional Court's decision that the state language in

Moldova is Romanian. This decision was a mechanism discursively aimed at hegemonising this representation of the state language as Romanian and offering a form of closure to the conflict on language. Thus, language represents one of the key points of moderation and, even, consensus for national identity projects in Moldova; illustrative of this is the fact that even some leading Moldovanists acknowledge that their language is Romanian. For instance, Ilian Casu (2015) argues that he is Moldovan, but speaks the Romanian language. Yet, more importantly, he is a member of Our Party [*Partidul Nostru*], a pro-Eastern and Moldovanist party led by Renato Usatii, and their candidate for mayor of Chişinău.

3.4. History

This cleavage is deepened through the representation of history across Moldovanism and Romanianism. This section argues that this is achieved through the contrasting representation of key dates in Moldovan history and their association with national external others. History, the second element of the analysis, is part of both the ethnic and the civic conceptualisations of nationalism (Smith 1991). A history that portrays the nation as an imaginary family by stressing ethnogenesis or genealogies is part of the ethnic view, whereas history emphasising the idea of a historic land as a 'repository of historic memories' can be seen as an element of civic identity¹⁵. Smith's argument outlines the importance of studying the different representations of history within Moldovan national identity discourses. Moreover, it enables us to analyse Moldovanism's ethnic and civic strands as part of the same representation of

¹⁵Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that history in itself does not determine the nature of a nationalist discourse; its categorisation as civic or ethnic is defined through the convergence of all the elements in that discourse.

nationhood and history. Historical representations are firstly analysed through historiography and history textbooks. This is augmented by an examination of the way in which contemporary discourses represent a series of key dates in Moldovan history (1812, 1918 and 1940), in order to highlight the antagonism created through these representations.

The choice of years (1812, 1918 and 1940s) for the analysis has been inspired by the attention awarded to these key historical points both in the Romanianist and Moldovanist narratives, but also in the literature studying them. These three dates mark shifts in Moldova's history (e.g. King 2000; Caraus 2003; Birladeanu 2008); for instance, King (2000) notes the years 1812 and 1918 as the beginning and the end of a distinct age in the country's development, marked by the Russian influence on this territory. Significantly, they are also employed to define the different ages in Moldovan museums; the Moldovan History and Archaeology Museum divides its rooms into '1812 to 1900' and '1900 to 1920'. Through their importance and association with the various national others such as Russia, these key dates are ideal to illustrate Romanianist and Moldovanist contrasting views on national identity. Furthermore, the analysis is not limited to the dates in themselves but also focused on their consequences and the periods following them; as such, the comparison between the Moldovanist and Romanianist representations of history actually covers their attitudes towards Moldovan history beginning with 1812 to current day.

Other important dates that could be the object of this study are 1848, 1859, 1877-1878 and 1924. The first three mark the revolution of 1848 in the Romanian principalities, the unification of the Romanian principality of (Western) Moldova and, respectively, achieving Romanian independence (see Introduction). Nevertheless, since

none of these events have included the people on the territory of current day Moldova, they rarely appear in Moldovan representations of their history. Some are mentioned in Romanianist constructions (e.g. EX1) but not beyond that; they are especially absent in Moldovanist representations of history and, as such, not relevant for a comparative analysis of historical constructions across the two main national identity discourses. Then, 1924 marks the founding of the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, a crucial point in the narrative of Moldovan stateness (Sections 4.2 and 4.3). Yet, it is absent from the Romanianist version of history; moreover, it is also marginalised in Moldovanist writings, with both Stati (2007) and Stepaniuc (2007) dedicating only 10 pages to the MASSR out of more than 400 (55 and, respectively, 96 pages are concerned with 1918 and its consequences). Lastly, the key date of 1991, marking the independence of the Republic of Moldova, is not included in this chapter's analysis. Nevertheless, Section 4.2 touches upon the meanings attached to current day independence and sovereignty and, implicitly, reiterates the values attached by the two discourses to 1991. Lastly, 2003 is also an important date, as it marks the moment when the Moldovan Communists became pro-European, as a result of the rejection of the Kozak Memorandum. This date is key for an analysis of Moldovan foreign policy, but not for this thesis which is an analysis of national identity in Moldova. This section builds on the extensive literature on Moldovan textbooks and historiographical research. Whilst drawing from some historical studies on the nature of the Moldovan debate, the main focus in terms of academic writings is on the period of Moldovan independence, in order to ensure the current day focus of the thesis, as opposed to a historical one. Similarly, the main aim of the fieldwork evidence presented is to illustrate the current representations of the historical debate; they are not exhaustive, as representations of history in Moldovan society are not the central

focus of this thesis. For this purpose, the analysis of academic writings on the two discourses concentrates on authors that both write after 1991 and are influential amongst the current Moldovan elites. Three two main authors used in this analysis are Romanianist Gheorghe Ghimpu and Moldovanists Victor Stepaniuc and Vasile Stati, all recognised in the academic and political domains through their links with the Liberal Party and, respectively, the Communists. Gheorghe Ghimpu is considered to be the spiritual leader of the Liberals; his brother Mihai Ghimpu is the official party leader. Meanwhile, Victor Stepaniuc is a Communist ideologue and MP for the Communist party in the Moldovan parliament since 1996. Vasile Stati was also a communist MP 1994-2001 (see Section 2.1.1).

Historiography plays an important role in understanding the nature of the national identity debate and its historical development in Moldova. It stresses the role played by Moldova's history in Romanianist and Moldovanist representations across the ages. More importantly, it highlights the importance of the foreign origins of these national identity projects. Meanwhile, textbooks have been the most studied environment for the re-articulation of history in Moldova, largely because of the ample debate on their content and various changes in official policy on textbooks (Roper 2005; Anderson 2005; Musteață 2008). They offer an evaluation of contemporary articulations of history across Moldova and the existing conflicts. Whereas for a short period in the 1990s, Moldovan schools used Romanian textbooks, in 1995 the government's attempt to change the Romanianist 'History of the Romanians' textbook with a 'History of Moldova' caused large-scale protests (March 2007). A similar attempt in the early 2000s was unsuccessful, but a compromise solution was found; Moldovan and universal history were integrated into a comprehensive history

textbook, but this was changed again, back to Romanian history in 2011-2. These changes are due to the shifts in government in Chişinău, from pro-Romanian in the early 1990s to Moldovanist after 1994 and an arguably Romanianist after 2009, thus affirming the link in between political parties and national identity. Hence, my focus on history textbooks has been inspired by their contested nature and the interest awarded to them in the literature on Moldovan nationalism. More importantly, history textbooks play a crucial role in reproducing historical narratives, as summed up by Hundt and Bleiker

While narratives of nationhood create boundaries between self and other from the very beginning of the education cycle, secondary school education plays a particularly crucial political role. It is at this level that historical narratives are first taught in detail, thereby providing interpretative and factual foundations for the previously established way of performing a particular way of political socialization (2007: 71).

Thus, history textbooks are the means for constructing and disseminating a dominant, widely accepted narrative of history. Hence, as representations of Moldovan ethnogenesis have already been covered, the next few pages focus on a discussion of the way in which a series of key events for Moldovan history are represented and celebrated/commemorated in contemporary Moldova. This analysis is augmented through an in depth study of the narratives employed to understand these events; these highlight the common structures around which Romanianism and Moldovanism are constructed in an antagonism.

3.4.1. Historical Narratives

Romanianist and Moldovanist national histories share key historical elements, but differ very much in terms of **narrative**. Narratives, I contend, are essential in

understanding the relationship between past, present and future and hence an important element of foreign policy-making. Romanianist history textbooks concentrate on a narrative of the 'people as nation', in which the Romanian people as a whole are the main actor (Solonari 2002). The main themes of this discourse are progress as emancipation and unification. Thus, unification with Romania is the main ideal of Romanianists, stressing the positive representation of the Romanian external other (Solonari 2002). This is the theoretical, academic approach to Romanianism, as current day representations of it are more nuanced. As noted above, the political articulation of Romanianism does not challenge the theme of Moldovan independence; hence, unionist ideals are only espoused by extra-parliamentary parties, whilst groups are somewhat marginalised. From a historiographic point of view, the history of the people of Moldova is a part of Romanian history; thus, this narrative is not dissimilar with the history of other Romanian regions, such as Transylvania, which was chronologically under Hungarian, Turkish, Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian suzerainty or control from the 12th century until 1918 (Hitchins 2002). Hence, the main moments of Romanian history are the 1600 unification achieved by Mihai Viteazul [Michael the Brave], 1859, when Wallachia and Western Moldova united forming the Romanian state and 1918 with the creation of Greater Romania (see Ihrig 2007).

On the other side of the debate, there are two main approaches to studying the historical narrative of Moldovanism: in school text books (Solonari 2002; Ihrig 2006, 2007) and in Soviet and Moldovan historiography (van Meurs 1998). Van Meurs (1998) undertakes a comprehensive study of Russian (Tsarist and Soviet) historical sources on Moldova. Meanwhile, Solonari (2002) studies a series of different school

books, both from before 1991 and after; he covers a wider range of sources than other studies, for example Ihrig (2006) who only analyses the post-independence Moldovan textbooks. These three main studies, together with general works touching upon the issue of the history of the people of Moldova highlight the main issue with Moldovanist articulations of history: the fact that they tend to be incoherent and different representations are in competition under the greater umbrella of Moldovanism. This is apparent in comparing Soviet, Moldovan pre- and post- Soviet discourses and through the divide between civic and ethnic Moldovanism (King 2003).

Solonari (2002) outlines the main historical narrative of Soviet textbooks as one of 'people-as-toiling-and-exploited-masses'; this draws from Marxist views of a society based on class conflict and reproduces a civic representation of the 'community'. This view outlines the way in which a narrative based on the nation is avoided, denying any coherence to the grand historical narrative of the Moldovan people. Meanwhile, the post-Soviet Moldovanist articulation brings a few changes to the narrative, nuancing the positive representation of the Russian influence and the external, Russian, other (Solonari 2002). Firstly, the Russian/Eastern Slav influence is depicted as positive in both constructions relating to the ethnogenesis process and in the cultural development of the nation; yet, post-Soviet constructions also stress the role of other ethnic groups, Hungarians, Pechenegs, Kumans¹⁶, etc. Meanwhile in terms of external relations, there is a wider focus than just on those with Russia, as happened with the Soviet narrative. Hence, it can be argued that post-Soviet history teaching is less single minded than the re-independence versions of history, but still focused on constructing of a separate Moldovan nation and the representation of the

¹⁶ Other migratory peoples that have come in contact with the indigenous population on this territory during the first millennium.

positive Russian other. However, the existence of different versions of history only serves to complicate the narrative and to problematise any attempt of hegemony for Moldovanism, as long as there is a form of resistance within the discourse itself.

3.4.2. Key Events: 1812, 1918 and 1940

Having assessed the general characteristics of the Romanianist and Moldovanist historical narratives and the importance they both award to their positive (internal and/or external) others, the next section focuses on representations of some key events in Moldovan history in order to highlight the antagonistic character of the two narratives. One important common element for the two discourses is the history of the medieval principality of Moldova, from 1359 to 1812 and encompassing the reign of Ștefan cel Mare and the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Ștefan cel Mare is an omnipresent figure in Moldova, from statues and boulevard names to his portrait being on all Moldovan banknotes. But more importantly, this period and the figure of Ștefan cel Mare are crucial in understanding similarities between Romanianist and Moldovanist representations of history. Ghimpu (2002) argues that Ștefan cel Mare, prince of Moldova between 1457 and 1504, is actually a Romanian prince; this is based on the fact that his language was named 'Romanian' in the writings produced by his chancellery and in foreign documents referring to the principality. At the other end of the spectrum, the Communists have made Ștefan cel Mare a central symbol of Moldovan history and of the continuity of the Moldovan state, negating the Romanianist argument regarding his nationality. This is based on the idea that he, as a prince of Moldova, could not have been Romanian, especially since he chose to

repeatedly punish the Wallachian princes for their cooperation with to the Ottoman Empire (Obretin 2010; Ghidirim 2010). Hence, the same representation of difference in between Moldova and the other Romanian principalities is used here to create a Moldovan identity for Ștefan. In this way, the Moldovanists not only rewrite the historical narrative, but also borrow Romanian historical symbols. This problem is not limited to representations of the medieval period in Moldovan history. During the time the Communists were in power, celebrations for the 9 May¹⁷ were always started with a wreath laying at the statue of Ștefan cel Mare, ensuring his figure was integrated within the ritualistic articulation of the Moldovanist discourse of national identity. On the other hand, on 7 April 2012 after the commemoration of those who perished in the Twitter Revolution, groups of young people with Romanian tricolours¹⁸ left their candles all around Ștefan's statue in the central square in Chișinău; in this way, his historical figure was integrated into their narrative of the fight against communism, as one of the main themes of the protests. Concluding the Romanianist and Moldovanist representations of Moldovan medieval history are similar in terms of narrative, i.e. the fight against the Turks, but as the case of Ștefan cel Mare has shown, incompatible through their assignation of Moldovan or Romanian etiquettes. This incompatibility is further augmented by representations of the following key moments, starting with 1812 and all the way to Moldovan independence in 1991. One by one, these dates are discussed in the next pages. The first part of each discussion focuses on the post-independence evaluations of these events, whilst the latter stresses the way in which these narratives resonate and these dates are remembered and commemorated in

¹⁷ Victory Day, celebrating the end of the Second World War in Europe, a date this chapter returns to later.

¹⁸ 'Tricolour' is the name Moldovans and Romanians use for the Romanian flag, so from now on, whenever this name is used within the thesis it is with this meaning.

contemporary Moldovan society, in the press and in political discourse. In this context, an important focus is on protests and conflictual situations, as these have the potential to be covered in the news and have a greater impact upon the Moldovan citizen.

16 May 1812 is crucial for Moldovan history and Moldovan identity creation as it represents the date in which the eastern part of the medieval principality was removed from Moldovan control and came under Russian administration, following the Treaty of Bucharest. Moldovanist Stepaniuc (2007) argues that at this time, Moldova was actually divided between the Russians and the Turks. Based on this idea, Stati (2007: 206) presents the events as liberation from the centuries old Ottoman 'yoke'. A similar view is presented in Moldovanist history textbooks, stressing the use of the word 'absorption', a trope with no negative connotations to present Russian actions (Solonari 2002: 422). Furthermore, from this point of view, the Russian occupation of 1812-1917 is perceived as no more than 'postponed stateness' (Stepaniuc 2007: 8), thus strengthening the narrative of the Moldovan state's continuity (see Section 4.3 for more detail). Conversely, the Romanianists refuse to see these events as any form of liberation, but portray it as a trade in between the two empires. They reiterate Romanian statesman Nicolae Iorga's statement that 'the Romanian people never asked the tsar to be liberated' (Ghimpu 2002: 369-370). Romanianists contend that the Moldovan state as a totality is better than division and occupation and this reproduces the narrative of unification present in the history textbooks (see Solonari 2002).

In a similar normative evaluation, Moldovanists represent the loss of autonomy following the first decade of Russian occupation quite neutrally or even as an important element in the process of national revival in Moldova, leading up to the

independence of 1917 (Stepaniuc 2007). Romanianists though, link this event directly with the perceived betrayal of 1812, as a continuation of the disregard for Romanian/Moldovan voices within Bessarabia. This period is described as being dominated by

the anti-popular, antisocial and anti-Romanian regime introduced by the occupants in order to change the ethnic structure and Romanian character of Bessarabia, to make the population in between the Prut and the Nistru one which the imperial Tsarism can trust [... and] despite the Russian and those Russified cruelty in Bessarabia for more than 100 years, despite all of their cunning attempts, Bessarabia continued to be Romanian. Even more, Bessarabia became a fortress of Romanianism (Ghimpu 2002: 377).

This quote highlights the narrative of Moldovan survival, as a miracle against all odds, but it also stresses the negative image of the Russian occupation in Moldova, as a threat to the nation. These ideas have been drawn from writings on Moldovan history, but also resonate with Moldovan society.

In 2012, Moldova marked 200 years since the Russian liberation/occupation which led to widespread debate regarding the date both in parliament and in media coverage. The two most read Romanianist newspapers, *Timpul* and *Jurnal de Chişinău (JC)*, excelled in historical analyses (e.g. Caşu 15.05.2012), interviews with historians (e.g. Dragnev 2012; Negrei 2012) regarding the date and editorials about it, most arguing against the 'lies' of the Soviet interpretations. They re-textualised the previous arguments regarding Moldova's lack of choice in the events of 1812 and the negative character of the Russian occupation. The main theme of most articles was representations of 1812 as a 'national tragedy', the Russification of Moldova and the portrayal of Russia as threatening the Moldovan nation (Cebanu 23.01.2012). Furthermore, given its position as the first of the contested dates, the meanings attached to 1812 are argued to be crucial to understanding 1918, 1940 and 1991

(Cojocaru 2012); this highlights the lack of compromise vis-à-vis the meanings attached to this event – in their view it is either one narrative or the other, one of Russian liberation or one of Russian occupation. Lastly, the effects of 1812 are associated with contemporary events, from the war in Transnistria in 1992 to the shooting of a Moldovan citizen Vadim Pisari by Russian peace-keepers on the Moldovan-Transnistrian border in January 2012 (Tănase 6.01.2012). This highlights the constant negative character of the Russian side. Moreover, a series of events regarding the date were well mediatised, such as a series of academic conferences on the topic in Chişinău and Iasi, with a notable Romanianist view (Caşu 15.05.2012). At the same time, the Russian Youth League organised a round table entitled ‘Century-long collaboration in Moldovan-Russian relations: important stages, problems and perspectives. 200 years since the Bucharest Peace Accord’ (Corai 19.12.2011), underscoring the collaborative character of these relationships (not occupation). A participant at the round table has been quoted to say that Russia is the main actor to thank for saving Moldova and Moldovan stateness, emphasising the positive effects of Russia’s influence; this statement that was widely criticised in the Romanianist press (Corai 19.12.2011).

Similar sentiments are echoed in the political sphere, where Igor Dodon, leader of the Socialist Party, argued in Parliament that ‘these 200 years have been beneficial for the Republic of Moldova. We have established important historical relations with the Russian Federation’ (Parliament 11.05.2012). Similarly, former president and leader of the PCRM, Vladimir Voronin declared that

Bessarabia, in a few decades was transformed from a backward province of the Moldovan principality, scene of endless conflicts between the Russians and the Turks into one of Russia’s most dynamic regions (PCRM 24.10.2011).

This statement sits very well within the Moldovanist narrative, whilst also highlighting one of its main issues. There is a mention in the text of Bessarabia as a 'backward province of the principality of Moldova', thus pinpointing the fact that Bessarabia was never the centre of the principality and thus would struggle to obtain legitimacy as its heir. Liberal Mihai Ghimpu and the independent Mihai Godea (Parliament 10.05.2012, 11.05.2012 and 17.05.2012) reacted to this statement by arguing

everything we feel today: poverty, glum, organised crime, communism, is linked to the occupation of 1812, which is the basis for the occupation of 28 June 1940 (Ghimpu in Parliament 10.05.2012) [and] it is from 16 May 1812 that our true dramas come from. This date has generated the most terrible historical problems, whose inheritance has made us to this day cowardly, amnesic and lost (Godea in Parliament 17.05.2012)

This is very useful in understanding both the impact of this type of historical remembering and the way in which blame is assigned to external 'others' in Moldovan national identity discourses. But more importantly, the commemoration of the date has also led to protests regarding the meanings attached to it. One such example materialised in a peaceful demonstration and '1812-2012, 200 years of occupation' being written with candles in *Piata Marii Adunări Naționale* (PMAN) [Great National Assembly Square], the biggest square in Chișinău, at the initiative of the Liberal Party (Unimedia 16.05.2012). Next to it, there were two placards, one quoting Romanian poet Mihai Eminescu 'To say the name Bessarabia is to protest against Russian occupation' and the other 'Russia – recognise the occupation!'. These emphasised how Russia, as an external 'other' is the central element of the debate on 1812. Simultaneously, *Actiunea 2012* organised a 7,000 person protest through Chișinău to commemorate the date (Galbur 14.05.2012). The Moldovanists, on the other hand, celebrated 1812 with a concert. In an interview given for this occasion, Mihai Garbuz, leader of the Patriots of Moldova argued that

We have an orthodox country, it's only normal to celebrate the liberation from Ottoman occupation. We want, through this [concert] to unite all the nationalities that live in the Republic of Moldova. Today, they are divided, on barricades (2012).

Likewise, this stressed the representation of the Christian, Orthodox, self as opposed to the Muslim Turk, a construction of otherness based on religion, common in representations of Europe (Section 4.5.1). Lastly, whether representing the general public or not, these actions have both visibility, media coverage and, hence, an impact on civil society, as disenchanted as they may be with the political class and uninterested in Parliamentary debates.

Thus, historical writings attach two different meanings to the historical date of 16 May 1812. This dispute is echoed within Moldovan society, through the importance awarded to the topic in the press, parliamentary debates and protests. Through these, the narrative of Moldovan-Russian brotherly relations competes with that of the unity and survival of the Romanian nation. Yet, the difference between the two does not only lie in the use of different narratives to explain the importance of the date, but in the different ways in which relations with the external 'other', Russia, are represented. The Moldovanists either construct a neutral imagery or positive influence on the part of Russia, whilst the Romanianist discourse portrays the period as an aggression against the Romanian nation in Bessarabia; hence the good-evil dichotomy is used in differentiating the two national identity discourses. Lastly, 1812 acts as a central focus of the two historical narratives, a key turning point, whose understanding influences the representation of all the other important dates of Moldovan history, as illustrated in the next pages.

The next key date is 1918, the formation of Greater Romania. However, given that the events marking this are spread out across a range of dates, commemorations/celebrations are not as clearly set as those for 1812. To be more precise, Bessarabia first declared its independence from Tsarist Russia on 2 December 1917, only to be united with Romania on 27 March 1918, after a decision of the Moldovan Assembly (Introduction). The date of 1 December 1918 is widely celebrated as the date of the reunification of the whole of Greater Romania, following the decision of the Transylvanian people¹⁹; this representation underscores the themes of emancipation and progress through unification as noted by Solonari (2002). In this context, Ghimpu (2002) stresses the crucial importance of the Moldovan element in the process of Romanian unification both in 1859 and in 1918. In 1859 a Moldovan prince, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, was the one elected in both principalities officialising the formal union; meanwhile in 1918, Moldova decided on unification first, Bukovina and Transylvania waiting until November and, respectively, December 1918. This emphasises the perceived unity between the Moldovans West of the Prut and those in the Republic of Moldova, as recognition of Moldova's belonging to the Romanian nation. Pride in Moldova, as a totality encompassing both the Republic and the Romanian region, was also acknowledged across my interviews (e.g. YL2). The second element of the Romanianist narrative counteracts the Moldovanist argument that the choice made by Moldovan Assembly in 1918 was a pragmatic one, in order to avoid being annexed by Ukraine. This is achieved by citing a speech made by Constantin Stere, one of the leaders of the Assembly, on the day of the vote: 'You must carry the

¹⁹ Representatives of the ethnic Romanians across Transylvania met at Blaj 1 December 1918 and unanimously decided on the union. This decision was supported by the German minority, but rejected by the Hungarians in Transylvania.

flame [...], be the defenders of the whole Romanian nation in the hardest moment of its history' (quoted in Ghimpu 2002: 419-420). The speech is employed to legitimise Stere's and the assembly's actions in the name of the Romanian nation. Moreover, just as was the case with 1812, the meanings assigned to the date also encompass its consequences. Hence, the Romanianist narrative portrays these events as crucial in Moldovan development and, even more,

If pre-WWI Romania is described at all, then the Romanianist textbooks of the Republic of Moldova stress that there was progress and positive development in all parts of Romanian society - which is contrasted against the backwards and retarding Tsarist regime in Bessarabia (Ihrig 2007: 35).

This is an extremely important point, because through a narrative of progress through union this construction also conceals an important dichotomy which is reiterated in relations between Moldova and Romania: developed – undeveloped (Section 5.3.2). Hence, the Romanianist representation of history marks 1918 as a key event in the process of unification, central to this narrative, whilst portraying the period following it through positive characteristics.

On the other side of the spectrum, the Moldovanists consider 1918 to be the start of Romanian occupation on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Through a meaning substitution, the act of union with Romania is being presented as the interest of the exploiting classes, thus through a Marxist type of narrative (Solonari 2002) or as an 'occupation', as pointed out by Stati, since

the Romanian armies, by political order, not only occupied but also extended, for 22 years (1918-1940) the Romania political regime, the Romanian Kingdom's sovereignty over the occupied territory, which in international law is called *conquest* (2007: 63).

This occupation is then followed by a dark period characterised by economic degradation (Ihrig 2007). Nevertheless, even Western academic writing has argued

that during these two decades, Bucharest had a tendency of marginalising Bessarabia, which had become 'an underdeveloped corner of Greater Romania, just as it had been the Siberia of the West in the Russian Empire' (King 1994: 348; Livezeanu 2000). Still, the Moldovanist construction represents the absolute opposite to the Romanianist one through a dichotomised representation of Moldova's second external 'other', Romania. Yet, as mentioned before, these representations are more complex than a simple good-bad binary. This is indicated through the fact that the Moldovanist view also focuses on another element, the brief period of Moldovan independence, as illustrated by Stati

there are three phases in the national revival and evolution of Moldovan statality in the contemporary age: the first Moldovan Republic (1917-1918), the second Moldovan Republic (1940-1991) and the third Moldovan Republic (1991 – current day) (2007: 11).

Worth noting here is that the period between 1940 and 1991 is also seen as a period of Moldovan stateness, though Moldova was an autonomous republic within the Soviet Union. This raises questions regarding the Moldovanist understanding of autonomy and independence, especially in light of the view that 1812 was an act of liberation as discussed above. My main argument is that the nodal point of the Moldovanist discourse is not, as believed, independence, but actually stateness, the existence of Moldova as a state within itself, irrespective of whether it has autonomous powers or independence, which would explain the views on 1940-1991 (see Section 4.3 for more detail). On the same line of thought, the 1924 formation of the Moldovan autonomous 'state', within the Ukraine, is presented as 'a progressive act protecting the national rights of Moldovans' (Stati 2007: 96). Thus independence/stateness is a key element of the Moldovanist historical discourse, defined against the Romanian 'other'.

Commemorations and celebrations related to 1918 also made the headlines in 2012. Firstly, they appeared in the press through the reproduction of political statement and a series of editorials regarding the meanings attached to the date (Cașu 27.03.2012). Then, protests and moments of political activism also made the headlines. These were mainly organised by Romanianists and focused on contrasting the representations of negative periods in Moldovan history with the positive nature of reunification. For example, in his 1 December 2011 speech, the PL's Valeriu Munteanu argued for the Romanian character of the people of the Republic of Moldova and, in that context, for the importance of 1918 as a national achievement. Moreover, the narrative of Romanian resistance is also present in this speech, highlighting its importance for the Romanianists, as

Today in Bessarabia, even if for 50 years of Soviet occupation and 20 of communist and neocommunist, we have been subjected to a denationalising policy, condemned to pauperism and barbarity, 80% of the people of this land are Romanian, even if lacking knowledge, they identify themselves differently, 80% speak Romanian, even if they call it something else, because we have all paid a tribute to a regime that has been unfair to this land, to its good people, just as homemade bread on Easter Saturday (PL 01.12.2011).

The statement also indicates the way in which the narrative of survival is not only defined in terms of occupation, but more importantly against Moldovanism and its imposition throughout the land. It stresses the pacifist and 'good' character of the people of Moldova, associated to a certain extent to a narrative of victimhood, a theme that is covered in Section 5.1. Next to political declarations, the Liberal Youth have also organised commemorations of the date, laying wreaths at Ștefan cel Mare's statue in central Chișinău, offering Romanian tricolours to the public and, in 2010, opening a path towards a plaque commemorating those fallen in 1940-1941 (PL 26.03.2010, 30.11.2011). As before, these events, through their press representations

manage to put the date on the civil society's agenda. Moreover, they also highlight Romanianism's historical coherence. This is achieved through the connection of these key historical dates and periods, Ștefan cel Mare as a Romanian and then the equivalence between the perceived liberation of 1918 and its reversal in 1940-1941, as stressed in the next subsection. No one date is isolated, the meanings attached to them all run through this narrative and hence, none of them can be used in achieving some form of historical compromise with the Moldovanist discourse.

Yet, these have not been the only type of commemorations, as on 25 March 2012, *Actiunea 2012* in collaboration with the Council for Unity organised a march of approximately 3,000 people in Chișinău. Previously, the Communists, Socialists and Social-Democrats had called the planned events a provocation, aimed at destabilising the country (see *Comunistul* 13.09.2012). Socialist party leader Igor Dodon even stated that such actions should be banned together with all parties and organisations that promoted the union with Romania (News 24.03.2012; Dodon 27.09.2012). However, the radical antagonism is not only a present on the discursive level, with one side striving to curtail the other's 'right of expression'. This conflict has also spilled into violence in a clash between participants in the march and a counter-manifestation organised the Party of the Moldovan Patriots. The leader of the Patriots, Mihai Garbuz, claimed that 'We came out to defend Moldovan stateness' (quoted in *Lița* 27.03.2012) stressing the importance of this nodal point of 'stateness' for the Moldovanists; meanwhile the Patriots were chanting 'We are home. We defend our country' and 'No to Romanian expansion' (Unimedia 25.03.2012). Moreover, PCRM leader, Vladimir Voronin, also reiterated the argument regarding 'Romanian occupation' and its disastrous consequences in relation to 1918 (PCRM 24.10.2011). Thus, similarly to the

way in which the meanings attached to 1812 were linked to different representations of an external other, those relating to 1918 are comprised of a dichotomy between good and bad, positive and negative in portraying Romania (and Romanian rule). Additionally, the Romanianist theme of unification clashes with the Moldovanist one of stateness. Lastly, national identity conflicts in contemporary Moldova do not limit themselves to academic debates, they also spill over into the political sphere, into street manifestations and even violence. These developments ensure that any form of nuance, concession or understanding between the two is marginalised only to radicalise Romanianism and Moldovanism further.

The last key event to be discussed in this context is the Second World War with two key dates: firstly the commemoration of 1940, when the territory of the Republic of Moldova came under Soviet rule, and 9 May 1945, marking the end of the war in Europe. The first has made the headlines repeatedly, especially with the Liberal party's project to have a commemoration day on 28 June, the date of the first wave of Moldovan deportations. Meanwhile, 9 May is commemorated yearly, as Victory Day, being widely covered by the Moldovan press. Based on the previous analyses of key dates in Moldovan history, the meanings attached to the Second World War may already become apparent. June 1940 is seen in the Romanianist narrative as the start of the Soviet occupation on Romanian territory. The legitimisation for this development is the signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact (23 August 1939), usually called the Nazi-Communist agreement amongst Romanianists (PG5). This is done in order to represent the act and its consequences solely as the deed of two totalitarian regimes, hence detaching it from the norms of democracy and the legitimacy it may be able to lend it. Moreover, this representation obscures the problematic nature of democracy in 1940s

Romania²⁰, perpetuating an idealistic image of the positive external other amongst Romanianists. Following the pact, on 26 June 1940 the Soviet Union sent Romania an ultimatum regarding Bessarabia; on national grounds, it argued that the population of Bessarabia was largely Ukrainian [*sic*], whilst Northern Bukovina and the Hertza Region would be a compensation for the 22 years of Romanian rule over Bessarabia. Two days afterwards the Romanians gave in. This point in history is widely debated, as the Moldovanists do not hesitate to define these actions as a legitimate transaction between two states, according to international law (Stati 2007: 100-101) and present them as the 'liberation of the Moldovan Democratic Republic and North Bukovina from Romanian occupation' (Stepaniuc 2007: 352). Additionally, even as this was achieved with the Soviet army entering Moldova, this is argued to have constituted a peaceful solution to the Bessarabian problem in line with the previous protests against 'Romanian occupation' (Stepaniuc 2007: 318-351). Furthermore, Moldovanists legitimise the Soviet annexation of June 1940 as a follow-up to 1812, when the Tsar decided to annex Moldova in order to protect its essentially Russophone population. Hence, they define 1918-1940 as an illegal Romanian occupation (van Meurs 1998: 48-49).

On the other hand, Romanianists construct the intervention as occupation, whilst assigning blame to a certain extent to Romania²¹. An excerpt from the Council of Unity's declaration regarding this date highlights these ideas:

²⁰ As a snapshot of Romania's political woes: due to the weakness of the Romanian king the Romanian military seized power (September 1940), placing General Ion Antonescu who collaborated with the extreme right Iron Guard to form the National Legionary State 1940-1941 and, ultimately, allied Romania with Nazi Germany in the war.

²¹ The one element nuancing this view is the fact that marshal Antonescu, the Romanian leader in 1941, ordered his armies to cross the Prut and liberate Bessarabia, thus reclaiming the land they could not defend in 1940. This was though only achieved after the, previously mentioned, alliance with the Third Reich.

At that time, Romania was threatened on four fronts: from the North by the Soviet Union, from the West by Hungary and the Germans, from the South East, Serbia was ready to attack, and helped by Stalin. Surrounded by enemies, abandoned by all her friends and allies, trying to avoid useless bloodshed, Romania is forced to adopt the dramatic decision to evacuate its army and administration from Bessarabia (26.06.2012).

This excerpt not only offers a clear representation of the circumstances of 1940 according to Romanianists, but also illustrates contemporary thinking, through the views of an organisation such as *Consiliul Unirii* [Council of Unity], a group of pro-unification organisations and parties. This view is not consistent across Romanianism, Ghimpu (2002: 513) arguing that Romania ‘ceded without the smallest of opposition in order to save national dignity [...] against the wish of a lot of Romanians’. Even more, none of the representations mention the extreme-right leanings of the Romanian leader, Ion Antonescu, or his alliance with Nazi Germany. The problem of assigning blame in the events of 1940 is very complex and one element in which the Romanianist discourse can offer different solutions. It impacts on Romanian-Moldovan relations through the perceptions of Bessarabia being left behind as detailed in Section 5.3.2. This is an important point in the analysis of power relationships within ‘otherness’ or more specifically whether for Romanianists being Romanian truly means being equal to the citizens of Romania.

As with the other dates, these historical narratives are then translated into political discourse through their reiteration by political party members. Since 2010, Liberal Mihai Ghimpu has proposed that 28 June should become ‘Soviet Occupation Day’ and should be treated as a day of mourning; moreover, a stone was installed to commemorate this in front of the Moldovan Government building, to mark the place where a monument to all those fallen as a consequence of the events of 1940. However, this idea has been repeatedly challenged by critics (Ghimpu 2012). The same

day, 28 June, has also led to a rather heated debate in Parliament in 2012. These declarations are very telling in constructing otherness, as

If it weren't for the 1812 occupation, there would not have been a 1940 and if it weren't for the annexation in 1940, the [marshal Antonescu's] words 'Romanian soldiers, I command you, cross the Prut'. It is here that we have to start: Who was the executioner? (Parliament 28.06.2012)

This statement makes no mention of Romania's acceptance of the Soviet ultimatum, further noting Antonescu's words as redeeming Romania's guilt. In addition, the equivalence created in between 1812 and 1940 ensures both the coherence of the historical narrative, but also that the threatening 'other', as the occupier and executioner is clearly identified as Russia. Hence, this type of political discourse is characterised the lack of ambiguity regarding the good and bad characters in the story, Romania and Russia. The Communist reply to this claim was to argue that it is a moment of celebration, congratulating the citizens of Moldova for the 'liberation of Bessarabia from Romanian occupation' and for returning to the historical name of Moldova, the name used by Ștefan cel Mare and hence 'all who respect Ștefan should stand up and celebrate' (Parliament 28.06.2012). The simple opposition between holding a moment of silence as the Liberals had asked and a celebration demanded by the Communists stresses the contradiction between the two. At the same time, an attempt to reach a compromise by ignoring the issue altogether as suggested by Democrat Dumitru Diacov was received with anger and calls of 'lies' from the Liberals, and mockery regarding him being a Romanianist through his alliance with the Liberals, from the Communists. This emphasised the impossibility of reaching a consensus, even one empty of content, on this issue. Then, among organisations, the Council of Unity called 28 June 1940 a 'black day in the history of the Romanian people'. Likewise, the current situation in Moldova is seen as a direct consequence of the events of the

Second World War (Council of Unity 26.06.2012); this stresses the importance of history in providing explanations to current developments in Moldova and the linear character of the historical narrative. The representation of the pact is also symbolic of the Moldovan Great Power Complex, discussed in more detail in Section 5.1.

Simultaneously, the Russian Youth League held a commemoration march with placards saying 'Thank you Russia!', some statements from participants being:

We are here to support our own, our Moldovans! [and] The 28 June 1940 was a first step in the economic development of the country, its social situation and demographic growth. That is, it was a positive event (Publika 28.06.2012).

The unity in both discourse and activities between organisations representing the Moldovan national minorities, such as the Russian Youth League, and Moldovanists aids the Romanianist representation of their equivalence. Through this, the internal 'other', the national minorities, is closely associated with the discursive 'other', Moldovanism, essentialising this group. The Romanianists too organised a march and chanted '200 years of occupation, enough!' and 'We demand the annulment of the consequences of the Hitler-Stalin pact!' (Timpul 28.06.2012).

The representations of 1940 are also based around the application of a good-bad dichotomy to the two external 'others' of Moldova, Romania and Russia. Yet, the meanings attached to the Second World War are also prevalent in the celebration of the end of the war, more specifically 9 May 1945. Named Victory Day in Russia, this day is seen as a key moment of Soviet occupation by the Romanianists and as a day of celebration for the Moldovanists. In the case of Victory Day there have been clear attempts on the part of the Moldovan leadership to bring the two sides together in a common commemoration. The 2012 commemoration was marked by discourses from the leaders of AIE – the prime-minister, speaker of parliament and president – centred

on the idea of commemorating war heroes, without noting the side they had fought on (Diaconu 2012). The government focused its commemoration on the veterans of the war, without distinction or note of the side they fought on, an idea reiterated in some of my interviews (YL1, OT4). This attempt highlights the moderation of the official discourse on national identity in Moldova. However, the dichotomist narrative is not entirely challenged by this attempt at finding a common ground. Cojocari (2007) has stressed that people gather together at the *Eternitatea* Complex, the main war cemetery in Chişinău, in a joint commemoration of their dead. Yet, they relate to the commemoration in essentially opposing ways, just as when asked about the motherland some would talk about Moldova or Romania, whilst others mention the Soviet Union (Cojocari 2007).

Meanwhile, the Communists, as a party of opposition in 2012, chose to celebrate the end of WW2 in a different location, challenging the government's narrative of the commemoration in its entirety. In previous years' commemorations (e.g. 2007) the Communists, then in power, made statements regarding 'the liberation of the Moldovan land' and 'glory to the Soviet Army', illustrating the use of the Moldovanist historical narrative (Cojocari 2007: 98-103). Similarly, Danero Iglesias (2013a: 12-15) has also highlighted the representation of the Nazi, fascist Romania in Vladimir Voronin's speeches 2001-2009 at these commemorations. Conversely, Mihai Ghimpu stated that he would not attend the 9 May 2010 celebrations in Moscow, as 'How could I take part in this parade next to the army that brought us communism, organised famine and deported us to Siberia?' (Unimedia 24.04.2010).

The necessity for discussion and debate on these problems has been seen as the main solution to finding some form of common ground, but to what extent this is

possible when the two views of history are politicised to this extent is debatable (EX6). One such example is the use of symbols linked to the two understandings of the day, the ribbon of St George and the Romanian tricolour. The first is the Soviet Union's and, now, the Russian Federation's symbol for the commemoration of their victory in the Second World War²², whilst the second has been employed in past years as a symbol of Romanianess to counter the omnipresence of the ribbon of St George. These are worn and distributed around on the day. In 2011 the mayor of Chişinău, self-declared Romanianist Dorin Chirtoaca, received the ribbon of St George and chose to wear it, something the Moldovan press eagerly picked up on (JC 9.05.2011). Upon being asked about the connotation they attach to 9 May, most of my Romanianist interviewees would bring up this topic and argue that it was some form of treason (e.g. YL1). This emphasises the main challenge in achieving some compromise in regards to such events. In response to this criticism, the following year Chirtoaca decided that all buses in Chişinău should be painted in the colours of the (Romanian?) tricolour: red, yellow and blue, for Victory Day (PL 4.05.2012; News 6.05.2012). At the same time, the Socialists' Party has had advertising panels with the ribbon of St George all over Chişinău, congratulating the people of Moldova on Victory Day (Unimedia 27.04.2012). Thus, through its symbols such as the tricolour and the ribbon of St George, the conflict between the two national identity discourses is omnipresent in day-to-day life, especially in the capital of Moldova.

Summing up, these case studies have stressed the fact that history is not only present in academic writing and history textbooks but is a subject of contention across

²² It is the ribbon used for the medal "For the Victory over Germany in the Great Patriotic War 1941–1945" awarded to all personnel, civilian or military, who helped the war effort, hence its association with Victory Day.

Moldovan society. Whilst historical narratives can offer some form of common ground, their reverberations across Moldovan society, in the press, politics and protests have radicalised their message and reproduced two opposed understandings of national identity. Though oversimplifying two very complex historical representations, the opposition between the representation of key dates in Romanianism and Moldovanism is summed up in Table 3.1. It highlights very clearly the contrasting representations of 1812, 1918 and 1940-1945 and their consequences. Moreover, it also stresses the importance of historical external others, such as Romania and Russia, in these constructions.

Date	Moldovanism	Romanianism
1812	Freedom from the Turks Autonomy and development	Russian occupation
1918	Romanian occupation	Reunification with Romanian motherland - progress
1940/ 1945	Freed from the Nazi/Romanian threat Developing Soviet Moldova – the ‘golden age’	Russian occupation Deportations, famine

Table 3.1 Key Dates according to Moldovanists and Romanianists

Furthermore, there is a generalised use of the ‘scientific’ argument when discussing Moldovan history, creating a dichotomist view of truth versus lies in regards to these representations. One such example is a conversation with the Romanianist director of the Military History Museum in Chişinău. Answering a question regarding the museums’ position in the national identity debate and its implications for the museum’s exhibits, he replied that ‘they’re historical objects, it’s the truth, you ca not

play with them' (EX5). Hence, the two national identity discourses attach opposite meanings to both their representations of the language spoken by the people of Moldova and their history.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter brings together both the literature on Moldovan nationalism and data collected in fieldwork in 2012 in order to offer a comprehensive analysis of the different elements that form the Moldovan national identity debate and to draw this discussion up to the current day. The analysis highlights the ways in which Romanianism and Moldovanism are re-textualised and adapted to the current day. This endeavour is taken further in Chapter 4, discussing their relationship with foreign policy. Moreover, so far constructions of national identity have shown a remarkable uniformity from the academic to the political, media and grassroots level, suggesting a pillarisation, a vertical division of Moldovan society. This is achieved through the complex webs of meanings created through each discourse, encompassing elements from language to external 'others'.

Both Moldovanism and Romanianism are focused around representations of language and national history. Meanwhile, their ethnic variants share a largely primordialist view of the nation, built around different portrayals of ethnogenesis. But more importantly, irrespective of their ethnic or hybrid, ethnic and civic, character, both discourses are built around the principle of historical continuity, but also the idea of '*neam*' [nation, kin] as a name for the nation. This mirrored view stands at the basis of the dichotomy between the two national identity discourses. The importance of

language, from glotonims (Moldovan or Romanian) to using terms such as 'liberation' or 'occupation' when discussing historical events, has underscored the relevance of discourse analysis, as a methodology focused on text and language, for this study.

Lastly, the two main national identity discourses comprise two opposing historical narratives organised around different interpretations of the same key events. Three of these have been detailed within the chapter, 1812, 1918 and 1940, emphasising the way in which they form the nodal points of the two discourses. A fourth one, 1991, is scrutinised in Chapter 4, as it represents the year Moldova has gained its independence; through this, it is essential in understanding contemporary representations of othering. In this context and moving beyond the literature on nationalism in Moldova, the narrative of survival through the ages and that of reunification have been underscored as the main foci of the Romanianist representation of history, whilst stateness plays the same function in Moldovanism's case. But for the multiplicity of historical articulations that can prove to be slightly contradictory, current day narratives show a remarkable amount of coherence, with the three key events and their consequences being usually portrayed as equivalent. A highly illustrative example is the fact that some Romanianists equate the Soviet (starting in 1940) and Tsarist (starting in 1812) occupations of Moldova, the two usually being merged into one 'Soviet Tsarist rule' (e.g. YL4, EX1). Nevertheless, the fact that the meanings attached to each date are linked inextricably with the other nodal points means that none of them can be modified without endangering the whole narrative; this leaves very little space for a compromise to be found in between the two national histories. Lastly, national identity, and history especially, are used as to

make sense of the world; for instance, they explain contemporary events, such as the Pisari case.

Additionally, the chapter has also stressed that Moldovanist civic constructions are important both through their role in Moldovanist articulations and for the way in which Romanianists portray Moldovanism. The civic strand is underscored through the Moldovanist focus on stateness and the avoidance of an ethnic focus in depictions of key historical dates. Despite their apparent contradiction with ethnic Moldovanism's attention to language, civic elements do not seem to challenge the ethnic construction, but strengthen it. This is achieved by offering different messages to different groups and at different occasions (see Danero Iglesias 2013a). But more importantly, both the civic and the ethnic strand of Moldovanism reproduce similar themes regarding external others in their depictions of the friendly Russian other and threatening Romania, feeding into the same representation of foreign affairs as discussed in Chapter 4. Furthermore, Moldovanism's focus on the Russian language, as a language of ethnic communication, thus to promote civic identity across Moldova, enables the Romanianists to strengthen the portrayal of the connection between the linguistic, internal others and external other, Russia.

Concluding, this chapter highlights the importance of equivalences and associations for national identity discourses in Moldova, especially in their mutual representations and hence, in their process of othering. In this context, both Romanianism and Moldovanism employ a negative linguistic (and national) identity as being different from the Russian and, respectively, Romanian languages. Linguistic identity is then associated with the creation of the internal other in a hierarchic construction, the national minorities for Romanianism and the Romanians for the

Moldovanists. Additionally, through the historical association, Moldovanism is linked to the agent who is perceived as having created it, Tsarist and then, Soviet Russia. Within this, Romanianist creates an equivalence between its discursive 'other', Moldovanism, and its external (historical) other, thus ensuring that the fight against Moldovanism is essentially a resistance against Russia. Similarly, in Moldovanism's case the equivalences are a lot more obvious, through the fact that they are in between what they perceive to be the Romanian minority, the Romanian language, the Romanianist project and the external 'other', Romania. Thus, the two Moldovan national identity discourses represent each other as built around a series of equivalences in between the threat to linguistic identity, internal and external others in a mirrored antagonistic structure; nevertheless, this is not a perfect reflection, as noted through the fact that it is not Moldovan, but Russian language that is the Romanianist linguistic 'other'. Moreover, through their resistance of the other project and the chains of equivalences created around them, especially with regard to their external 'other', both national identity discourses can be argued to be anti-imperial discourses. Drawing from this, the main theme for the next chapter is to bring this discussion to the level of representations of foreign affairs and argue that the national identity antagonism reproduces a East-West cleavage on the international scene. Thus, it underscores the reproduction of first criterion of the Moldovan's Cold War representation of foreign affairs.

A second conclusion stemming from this chapter is that current day Moldovanism and Romanianism are both moderate discourses. They are constructed on the idea of hierarchy and not necessarily of rejection of others. More importantly, radical articulations, such as unionism, are marginalised – only represented by extra-

parliamentary parties. This argument is taken further in Chapter 4. It highlights the nuanced approach to national identity taken by Moldovan political parties, especially by centrist ones such as the Democrats and Liberal Democrats. This illustrates the impact of holding office and the limitations created by the hegemonic character of the discourse of independence. Yet, Romanianism and Moldovanism's moderate character also hides more radical versions. Despite its absence in day to day articulations, a more conflictual discourse appears in moments of contestation. These can range from contradicting parliamentary debates, as underscored above when discussing the commemoration of 28 June or through street protests and, even, violence (Section 3.4.2).

4. Articulating the East-West Geopolitical cleavage

This chapter augments the findings of the previous, by turning its attention to representations of international relations. It argues that the antagonism between Romanianism and Moldovanism reproduces a view of the foreign affairs scene as divided between two cultural and normative spaces, the East and the West. The representation of the East-West cleavage is the first element in the wider argument of the thesis, that national identity discourses in Moldova promote a geopolitical view of external affairs. Chapter 5 augments this by arguing that the Moldovans represent their identity as passive, lacking agency. Thus, this chapter assesses how the external framework within which Moldovan foreign policy functions is articulated and reproduced (see Chapter 1, especially Section 1.4). It points out that the East-West opposition is an element in the conceptual treasury that foreign policy discourses feed from and which defines the limitations (e.g. to their consistency or credibility to the wider public) they have to work within.

For this purpose, the first section of the chapter (4.1) reiterates one of the conclusions of the previous analysis. Building on Way's (2002) acknowledgement that national identity is one of the sources for pluralism in Moldova, the section contents that political cleavage between left and right in Moldova is actually a national identity and foreign policy one. This is achieved through a brief evaluation of the self-representation of Moldovan parties, their policies and the way in which their opponents and wider society portrays them. The argument is then developed through the multitude of references to their statements and policies in both Chapter 3 and in this chapter. Then, the analysis returns to the content of the two main national identity discourses and argues that the chains of equivalences built around

Moldovanism and Romanianism (Chapter 2) can be strengthened and expanded to encompass elements of external otherness. I argue that both discourses are constructed in mirroring ways, comprising of threatening external other(s) linked to internal and conspiratorial others. These others are represented as threatening Moldovan independence and sovereignty; these themes enable the thesis to connect the contemporary discussion with historical narratives defined by the ideas of continuity and survival and underscore the consistency of these national identity discourses (Section 4.2). The representations of otherness are discussed in-depth, separately for Moldovanists and Romanianists in the sections titled accordingly, with examples being drawn from both political and societal sources. The last section, 'The East-West Geopolitical Divide' (3.4), rounds up the discussion by arguing that, through the importance awarded to external others in Romanianism and Moldovanism and their positioning at the centre of these geopolitical spaces, the national identity antagonism translates into a geopolitical and civilizational cleavage between the East and the West. This is highlighted through a series of dichotomies, including cultural, historical and normative elements, employed to differentiate the two spaces. Therefore, through these multitude of dichotomic layers and equivalences, the national identity antagonism produces and is reciprocally reproduced by, the political cleavage and the geopolitical East-West divide.

4.1. Political Cleavage

The purpose of this first section is to offer the basis for the argument that the national identity debate in Moldova expands from the academic to the political sphere, whilst

also stressing its role in the political cleavage in Chişinău. The bulk of the argument encompasses samples of their views on different elements of national identity, as highlighted throughout Chapters 3 and 4. Building on these, I highlight the role of national identity in the political cleavage in Moldova. Reciprocally, I also contend that the politicisation of national identity has led to a perpetuation of the divide between Romanianism and Moldovanism. Nevertheless, the political cleavage is not as clearly defined as the national identity one. Firstly, parties such as the Liberal Democrats and the Democrats offer a very moderate and, even, neutral construction of national identity; the later party could even be accused of having an 'empty' representation of Moldovan national identity (EX3), due to its avoidance of the topic. Similarly, the Communists' pro-European foreign policy discourse can be seen as a challenge to the dual construction around Romanianism and Moldovanism. All these will be discussed in the detailed presentation of each party and in the Conclusion. But more importantly, I argue that representations of the political scene are dualistic, ignoring these nuances and, as such, reproduce the duality between Romanianism and Moldovanism.

The very structure of the political system in Moldova is defined through this the national identity cleavage (see Comunistul 17.07.2011). A PNL member highlights this when asked about the national identity of Moldova as

the parties here, after achieving independence, separated into two camps: one communist, forces with origins in the Soviet period and have led us for so many years, and a democratic camp that wished to restore the truth that was stolen for so many years under Soviet occupation (PG1).

The interviewee hints at the link between Moldovan history, national identity and the political cleavage between the communists and the so called democratic camp. This way of presenting the Moldovan political scene, with the Moldovanists on the left of the political spectrum, whilst the Romanianists are on the right is a common theme in

my interviews with Moldovans (e.g. EX2, YL1, YL5, PG5). These etiquettes of left and right do not refer to party positions regarding the economy or individual freedoms, as the positions of the PCRM and PDLM can vary widely (Manifesto Project, n.). They are to a great extent national identity (and foreign policy) markers, i.e. right wing parties are largely Romanianist, whilst left wing ones are Moldovanist. The left-right dichotomy strengthens the cleavage between the two national identity discourses, especially since in past elections the two sides were broadly balanced in terms of votes.

The quote above refers in general terms to the political system in post-independence Moldova, but the Moldovan party system has been very fluid in its first two decades, parties being created and disappearing from one election to the next. For this reason, the thesis focuses only on the period between 2009 and 2014, with some references to the situation on the prior political scene, in order to put the discussion in context. Literature on the previous political circumstances has argued that ‘competition between political parties is founded on an identity discourse [...] identity becomes a political resource as these parties grapple for power’ (Zgureanu-Guragata 2008: 52). Drawing from this observation I argue that in the 2009-14 period national identity played a crucial role in the self-representation of political parties in Moldova, highlighting the way in which the political cleavage re-textualizes and reinforces this national identity divide (Figure 2).

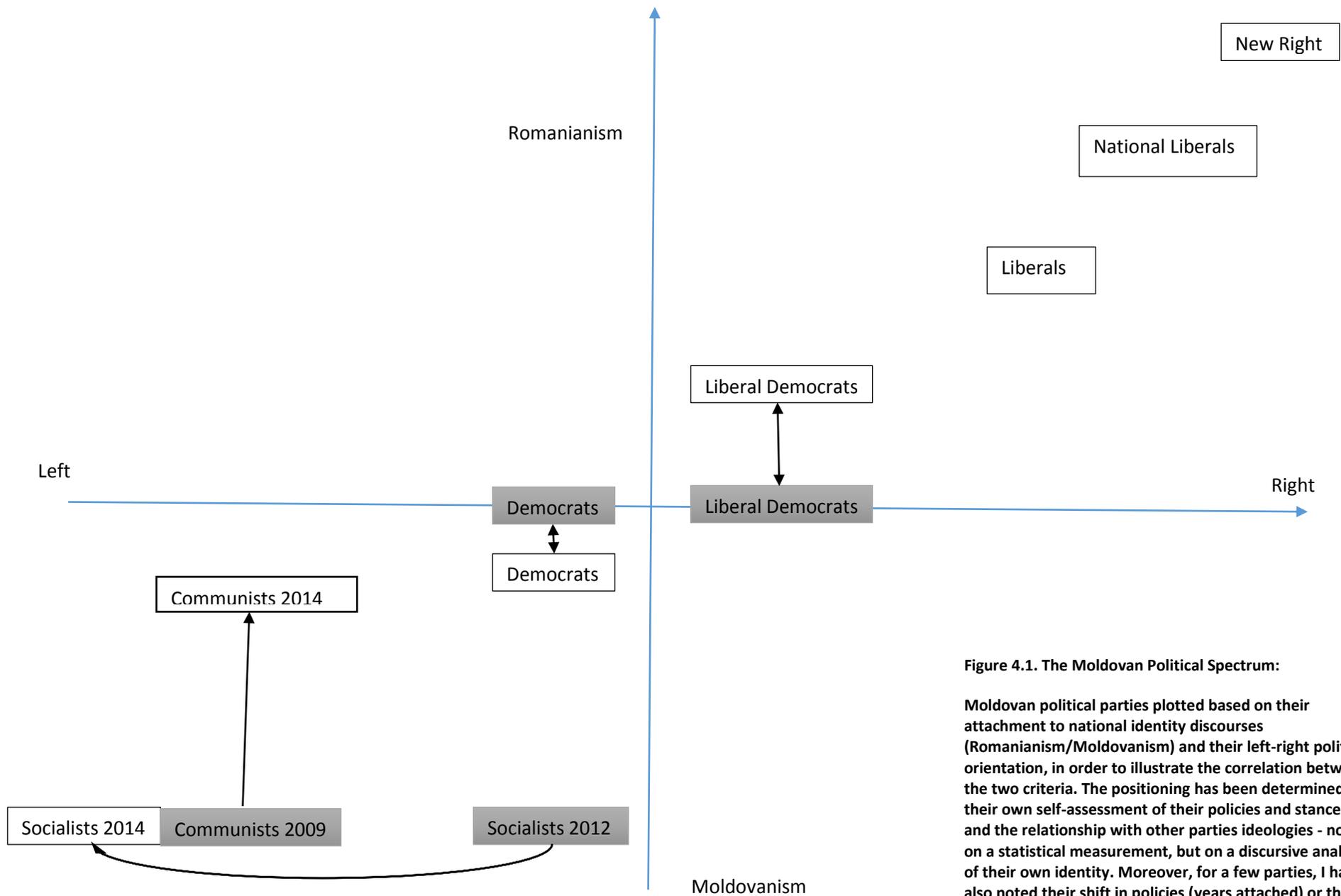


Figure 4.1. The Moldovan Political Spectrum:

Moldovan political parties plotted based on their attachment to national identity discourses (Romanianism/Moldovanism) and their left-right political orientation, in order to illustrate the correlation between the two criteria. The positioning has been determined by their own self-assessment of their policies and stance and the relationship with other parties ideologies - not on a statistical measurement, but on a discursive analysis of their own identity. Moreover, for a few parties, I have also noted their shift in policies (years attached) or their balancing act between two positions, where I have not made a mention of the years (e.g. Democrats and Liberal Democrats).

During this period the Moldovan political stage was occupied by four main parties, the Communists, Democrats, Liberals and Liberal Democrats. Nevertheless, other parties were also widely covered in the media and appeared across my interviews. The Socialists had some promising poll ratings across the period and got the most votes in the November 2014 parliamentary elections; conversely, the National Liberals have been extremely vocal across the media and by organising protests and marches through the Council of Unity (e.g Section 3.4). My analysis covers the national identity orientations of these parties, but also how they are represented by other political actors, in order to stress the essentialisation processes and dichotomous thinking existent across Moldova. Chapter 3 has already highlighted some of the parties' views regarding language and history in Moldova and this chapter takes this further, stressing their views regarding othering in national identity discourses and, implicitly, their foreign policy orientation.

Founded in 1993, the Communists were the main party of opposition 2009-2014, thus playing a key role in articulating ideas against the government in Chişinău. The party had electoral success with the 1998 election, being the party in power from 2001 to 2009. Officially, the Communists are part of the European Left, composed of left wing, communist and even some anti-capitalist leftist parties. Nevertheless, the party is not communist, but rooted in capitalism (March 2007), nor is it a left wing party, but amorphous in terms of its ideology (Manifesto Project n.). By and large, the literature on Moldova argues that the Communists' Party are essentially Moldovanists (March 2007; Danero Iglesias 2013a). Communist manifestoes since 2001 mention 'developing

the Moldovan nation' as one of their main priorities (PCRM Manifesto 2005, 2009, 2010); they specifically focus on the nation's multi-ethnic character (i.e. encompassing the Moldovan, Russian, Ukrainian, etc. minorities). March (2007) argues that the Communists are guided by the sole idea of Moldovan stateness. Nevertheless, the Communist articulation of national identity has not been limited to the civic representation suggested by the idea of stateness (and, for example, by their policy regarding the promotion of the Russian language); they also draw on ethnic elements. Zgureanu-Guragata (2008: 51) argues that the Communists' attention to Moldovan historical heritage moved the focus from Moldovan political nationalism to Moldovan cultural nationalism. Similarly, Danero Iglesias (2013a, 2013b) concludes that Communist representations are essentially exclusivist, thus fitting more within the frame of ethnic national identity than its civic form. Furthermore, the Communists are widely seen as representatives of Moldovanism across all my interviews, even those with the (Moldovanist) Socialists, stressing the fact that it is not only the Communists' self-representation, but also the way in which this is mirrored that highlights their association with this discourse. The Communists offer a fascinating case study for a future analysis of foreign policy articulations in Moldova. This is because their choice of foreign policy discourse. Their foreign policy whilst in opposition (2009-2014) oscillated between a balanced, multi-vector, policy and a pro-Eastern one; as such, it fits well within the wider framework of the national identity cleavage in Moldova. Nevertheless, from 2003 after the rejection of the Kozak Memorandum until 2009, Communist foreign policy was discursively pro-European and, thus, went against the natural orientation of Moldovanism towards the East. Hence, their foreign policy

arguments during this time challenged the societal representation of the link between national identity and foreign policy. Since an examination of official articulations of foreign policy lies outside of the scope of this thesis, I analyse this construction in the Conclusion and argue that the Communists detached Romania from the EU in their construction. In this way, they maintained their rejection of the Romanian other, whilst promoting a positive relationship with the EU. In this way, they manipulate and adapt the chains of equivalence and difference around the Moldovanist representation of the nation. Despite this nuance within the Communists' discourse, my interviewees represented their pro-European orientation as only formal. Meanwhile, their actual foreign policy is represented as 'standing still', compromising Moldova's European ideals and, even, pro-Russian in reality. In this way, through a process of essentialisation, the Communists are represented as pro-Russian Moldovanists notwithstanding the complexity of their discourse.

The Socialists have been active since 1991 in various forms, but have become visible on the Moldovan political scene in 2011, when three Communists MPs left for this party. The Socialists also promote a civic national identity; they argue that it has the potential to solve the ethnic conflict in Moldova, as highlighted by their promotion of the theme of Moldovan stateness (PG3, PG4). Nevertheless, just like the Communists, their representations have been riddled with ethnic elements and divisive issues. An example of the first is their focus on Moldovan language and the Moldovan *ethnie*, as the basis for the Moldovan nation (Socialistii 8.09.2014). The second is represented through the Socialists' 2014 electoral slogan 'Better with Russia' (whereas Moldovan society seems to be equally split regarding the country's foreign

policy orientation). Moreover, the Socialists are represented, especially by Romanianists, as being at one with the Communists, essentialising the Moldovanist parties. A series of my interviewees (e.g. PG5) have either used the expression 'socialists and communists' or as Tănase (12.04.2012) calls them, 'Dodoni' using the plural from Igor Dodon's (Socialist leader) surname, to conceptually merge the two. Others have identified them all within the 'patriots', thus also including the radical 'Patriots of Moldova' Party²³. This phenomenon illustrates the way in which left-wing parties are essentialised and represented as one. This mechanism is not unique to Moldova, but has complex implications in terms of national identity and foreign policy discourses in this country. Lastly, both of the two main Moldovanist parties articulate a mixed, civic and ethnic discourse of national identity, stressing the utility of the thesis' comprehensive conceptualisation of this discourse, as detailed in Chapter 3.

The third arguably Moldovanist party is the Moldovan Democrats. Building on the previous existence of a democrat party in Moldova, the current party is was formed through a merger between a splinter group of the Communists, led by former Communist Marian Lupu, and the Social Liberal Party in 2008. Their leader, president of the parliament Marian Lupu, argues for a

civic, political nation [...] Some see themselves as Romanian. The majority see themselves as Moldovan. We also have Ukrainians and Găgăuz and Bulgarians and Russians – and this is why I talk about a political nation. We treat those that consider themselves Romanian with respect, this is their right as citizens and their decision (Mihalache 18.04.2012).

²³ Radical Moldovanist and extra-parliamentary party in Moldova.

They have been more moderate on issues such as language, at times even arguing for a reference to the 'Moldovan (Romanian) language' in the constitution (Unimedia 25.9.2012). Nevertheless, most of their subsequent arguments have been for strictly for the 'Moldovan' language, highlighting a nuance of ethnic construction and drawing harsh criticism from Romanianist circles (Tănase 25.9.2012). On other occasions they have rejected any discussion on national identity, as was the case in the Parliamentary discussion on the events of 1940 discussed above; I have presented this in detail in Section 3.4.2 and highlighted both the lack of content in the Democrats representation and its rejection by both Romanianists and Moldovanists. Moreover, the Democrats are part of the Alliance for European Integration. As such, both the Democrats and AIE are usually essentialised as Romanianists and pro-European (e.g. PG3). For instance, Moldovanist newspaper *Comunistul* (17.06.2011) criticises Marian Lupu for claiming his party is pro-Russian whilst, they argue, supporting unionists and meeting with anti-Russian US Republican politician John McCain. Thus, despite their nuanced construction, the Democrats are neatly grouped together with the rest of the Alliance; this illustrates the problematic character of the Democrats' 'empty' (i.e. lacking content/avoiding any debate on national identity) middle ground representation on national identity in Moldova. On the opposite side of the spectrum from the Communists and Socialists there is the former Alliance for European Integration (2009-2014). This alliance is composed of three parties, with vaguely different political and national identity views, but united through their focus on European integration. In 2013, the Liberal Party was replaced with the Liberal Reformed Party, a faction of the Liberals that ultimately chose to support the AIE

government; nevertheless, due to their ideological similarities, especially in terms of national identity and foreign policy, they are analysed as one. Hence, the first of the AIE parties is the Liberals (conservative liberals). They are a moderate Romanianist party, unlike the extra-parliamentary National Liberal Party (PNL). Then, the main party in the AIE is the Liberal-Democratic Party, a conservative party. The Democratic Party is the third partner in the coalition and claims to represent a civic and centre ground Moldovan national identity. All three of these parties are relatively recent in terms of their electoral success and current political orientation, only appearing on the Moldovan political scene after 2005.

The Moldovan Liberal Party is arguably the most outspoken parliamentary Romanianist party. Their manifestoes are clear in arguing for the cultural, patrimonial, historical, language and traditions-wise unity between Moldova and Romania; they also note that this is the 'truth', an idea highlighted in Chapter 3 as a source of radicalisation vis-à-vis the Moldovanism-Romanianism cleavage (PL Manifesto 2009, 2010). Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats are a bit more vague, arguing only for the 'maintenance, development and promotion of [Moldova's] cultural identity' (PLDM Political Programme 2011), but never actually noting what that is. Just like all other parliamentary parties in Moldova, the Liberals and Liberal Democrats do not challenge the idea of Moldovan independence and as such they can be portrayed as Moldovanist, as they support the existence of the Moldovan state. Nevertheless, both from the point of view of their cultural representation and their construction of otherness, they are essentially Romanianist. Nevertheless, this nuance is lost on those who portray the PLDM as Romanianist; a common argument raised in my interviews

with Moldovans studying in Romania has been that Vlad Filat, the leader of the party, was at university in Romania and thus, must acknowledge that he is Romanian²⁴ (e.g. YL4). Moreover, the affiliation with the Romanianist national identity discourse is attributed to all in the AIE government, the Liberals, the Liberal-Democrats and even the Democrats, who claim to promote a Moldovan civic identity. For example, Communist Vladimir Voronin criticised the whole Moldovan government for its actions. For instance, a meeting with the Romanian government in March 2012 is depicted as proof of AIE's steps towards reunification with Romania and, hence, of their Romanianism (Adevărul 10.06.2012). This type of thinking is also present in the Socialists' discourse. For example, a high-ranking member of the party stressed that since the Democrats always vote together with the other Alliance parties, they are essentially the same as the PL (PG3). This essentialisation of the government in left-wing representations illustrates how political actors are framed as one or the other side in a dualistic representation of national identity; consequently, those with moderate views are pushed towards the margins of the political and national identity spectrum. More specifically, by ignoring the differences within the Alliance for European Integration, they also ignore a party such as the Moldovan Democrats (part of the AIE) who represent themselves as a civic Moldovanist party and, thus, are part of the middle ground. This phenomenon can be described as 'seeing the world in black

²⁴ There is a twofold argument supporting this idea. Firstly, there is the idea that all my interviewees who had studied in Romania were convinced there that they are essentially Romanian. Secondly, there is a purely bureaucratic argument, based on the fact that Romanian scholarships are aimed at ethnic Romanians abroad (YL4).

and white' and is essential in delegitimising any form of centrist thinking on the political scene in Moldova.

Additionally, the political cleavage is further deepened through the assignment of different meanings to a nodal point such as democracy. Each side of the political spectrum has specific representations for their discursive other and democratic-undemocratic is one of the main dichotomies employed. Democracy is a contested concept as commonly accepted criteria for it are weighted (or even accepted) differently by different parties (Connolly 1974). In Moldova, it plays a key role in constructing the antagonism between left and right-wing political parties. The Moldovanists, e.g. Communists' Party, usually portray democracy as equivalent to minority rights or the people's will, whilst Romanianists equate democracy with the practices linked to the European Union (EU) and different from those of the communist past (Cash 2008). Yet, most importantly, they use these multiple definitions of democracy to argue for their own side's democratic character and the other's lack thereof. For instance, the PCRM's argument against the closure of NIT²⁵, a communist supporting TV channel, in 2012 utilised a definition of democracy based on the criteria of freedom of speech and minority rights. Hence, they portrayed the government, widely seen as being the main actor in NIT's closure, as anti-democratic (24h.md 24.05.2012; Comunistul 19.10.2012). Lastly, the Communists do not hesitate to use terms such as 'Nazi' or 'fascist' in order to symbolise the lack of democratic character in the Romanianist side of politics (Șupac 2012; Unimedia 23.6.2012). Similarly, right

²⁵ Rarely mentioned using its full name, *Noile Idei Televizate* [New Televised Ideas].

wing parties widely employ the term 'democratic' when referring to themselves and their actions, as noted in Liberal Dorin Chirtoaca's speech on the 2012 commemoration of the Twitter Revolution in PMAN, Chişinău (OT). From this point of view, the mere name of the Communists' party is the obvious argument for their lack of democracy. The Romanianist/right-wing press (e.g. *Timpul*, *Adevărul*, *Jurnalul de Chişinău*) also reproduces a narrative of 'democrats versus the communists'. Thus, through the use of different definitions for democracy, the existing cleavage in the political system and the national identity divide help enforce and reinforce each other in creating an antagonistic construction.

Bringing these together, the national identity divide is translated into a political cleavage between the right and left wing politics. The very fact that these concepts of 'left' and 'right' have come to signify national identity orientations illustrates the crucial role played by national identity in Moldovan society. More importantly, the essentialisation of these actors as left or right-wing, glosses over the nuances in the Romanianist and Moldovanist groups. The next sections return to the discussion on national identity constructions, whilst also strengthening the argument regarding the opposition between the political left and right, Romanianism and Moldovanism, by adding extra layers of dichotomies. They analyse how national others are represented within societal and political discourse in Moldova. Contemporary articulations are not only a continuation of academic and historical national identity representations, but also re-textualise a great part of their discourses, from the external other to their focus on language. In this context, Section 4.2 reiterates the main themes of the historical narratives of Moldovanism and Romanianism, as presented in Section 3.4.

4.2. Continuity and anti-imperialism

The two main themes of Romanianist and Moldovanist historical constructions are ‘continuity’ and, respectively, ‘stateness’. The former is summed up through the representation of Romanian resistance on Bessarabian²⁶ territory, the continuity of their language and culture, as part of the Romanian one, irrespective of historical twists and turns. Similarly, the theme of stateness is focused around the continuity of the Moldovan state in its different forms, from the medieval Moldovan principality to post-1991 independence; it stresses the same idea of survival, but within the official borders of a political form of organisation. Both narratives revolve around a form of (arguably) primordialist view of the nation as withstanding the ages. Moldovan author Ion Druță makes a very passionate point regarding this idea when arguing that survival is the biggest enigma of Moldovan history (Druță 2006 [1987]). However, as post-structuralists argue regarding the dual nature of our thinking, continuity, survival and even stateness have no meaning but for the possibility of an alternative state; the rest of the chapter argues that this state, be it occupation or Russification, is defined in relation to Moldova’s external others.

This is illustrated in the analysis on key historical events. For instance, the events of 1812 (Section 3.4.2) are defined by assigning different meaning to the Russian other, its actions and their consequences, whilst 1918 (Section 3.4.2) is defined by two

²⁶ As illustrated in the Introduction, Bessarabia and Moldova are not equivalents, but this thesis uses the former as an equivalent in historical contexts.

opposing views regarding Romania's influence. Hence, Moldovan history can be seen as focused around the defiance of repeated occupations, as this land was always 'at the cross-roads of empires'(PG13). Thus, the two national identity historical narratives are constructed against an external other. Additionally, the language criterion within these articulations is also defined through a negative set of characteristics, as being different from the language perceived as imposed by the external other, Russian or Romanian. Drawing from these findings, I define anti-imperialism as a construction that represents the nation in opposition to an external other; this external other is defined through a historical relationship of power, a former occupier/national centre. Furthermore, anti-imperialism draws consequences to the current day.

The relationship with the external other is not limited to its role as a threat to the self. It also plays an important role in the mutual representation of the two main national identity discourses. Both Moldovanism and Romanianism are affected by the fact that they are to a certain extent imported concepts, especially when it comes to historiography (Ihrig 2006, 2008). Romanianism is contaminated through its link with Romanian 'occupation' and its promotion 1918-1940, whereas Moldovanism through Russian 'occupation' and a priori through its form (van Meurs 1998). In this way, Romanianism's anti-imperialist rejection of Russia translates into its opposition to Moldovanism and reciprocally. In this manner, external othering reproduces the radical opposition between the two discourses. But more importantly, the next section stresses that the anti-imperial character of the two national identity discourses is not only a historical construct but also present in contemporary representations.

The first note of anti-imperialism in current day discourses is its presence in the language used to represent the 'others'. The words 'empire' or 'imperial' are used extensively to define external actors in Moldova. A very common example is the way in which, voluntarily or not, people slip into talking about the Soviet Union as the 'Soviet Empire' (e.g. PG7). A PNL member described the plans for the Euro-Asian Union as Putin's 'empire' (PG2), as did a number of Moldovan journalists whilst discussing Russian politics in Moldova, from gas to cultural policy (e.g. Corai 27.09.2011; Damian 10.10.2011; Şela 2011). Similarly, former president Voronin called Romania 'the last empire in Europe' (12.10.2007), whilst in 2012 he accused the EU of imperialism (Voronin 23.05.2013). Chapter 4 takes this analysis a step further, studying how the relations between these empires, or Great Powers, define Moldovan fate.

Content-wise though, the historical theme of continuity is not really relevant to contemporary discourses. Hence, in order to bring the debate on 'otherness' up to date, the thesis focuses on how this idea translates to the current day concepts of sovereignty and independence and analyse their connection to the external other. Sovereignty and independence are analysed as equivalent throughout this section for a series of reasons, both theoretical and case-specific. Definitions used in the IR literature combine the two characteristics into one; for example, Cynthia Weber, in her study deconstructing sovereignty, argues that

generally, sovereignty is taken to mean the absolute authority a state holds over a territory and people as well as independence internationally and recognition by other sovereign states as a sovereign state (1994: 1).

Thus, independence is subsumed and studied within the overarching concept of sovereignty. The other argument for this amalgamation stems from the use of these concepts together within Moldovan discourses. This is apparent in official documents, such as the Moldovan Constitution (1994) that mentions 'sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity' always together (in articles 2, 41, 77, 108 and 142). This mirrors the theoretical literature on these concepts. Drawing from Benoist (1999: 118) I employ sovereignty to mean the supreme public power that has the 'capacity to impose its authority'. Alternately, Weber (1994) stresses that sovereignty is a constructed concept in an exercise of 'writing the state – with particular boundaries, competencies and legitimacies available to it' (1994: 3); she also acknowledges that sovereignty is defined in opposition to intervention and threat. Based on the idea that in Moldova the two national identity discourses are essentially writing the state as belonging to a nation, this thesis employs Weber's (1994) strategy of examining both sovereignty and the elements that threaten it.

The idea of independence dominated Moldovan political debate in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Soviet Union collapsed and also features heavily in contemporary debates. The most relevant use of the nodal point of sovereignty lies not in its content, but in the way in which it comes to be defined as 'sovereignty/independence from someone/thing', thus an important part in the anti-imperial discourse. Although officially Moldova is an independent state, most representations challenge this status. Thus, Sections 4.3 and 4.4 employ this conceptualisation of sovereignty/independence as defined against an 'other'. This is employed to argue that both Moldovanism and Romanianism are built around the

rejection of an external other, linked to an internal other and a conspiratorial one. This set of equivalences overlaps with the dual structure encompassing language and historical representations analysed in Chapter 3. In order to build this argument, the chapter discusses Moldovanist and Romanianist multi-layered construction of otherness separately.

4.3. Moldovanist representations of otherness

For Moldovanists, othering processes are organised around the nodal point of stateness. It is the central theme of historical discourses and ‘translates’ into the concepts of independence, together with sovereignty, as the main focus of contemporary debates.

Stateness Test

1. Protecting and affirming Moldovan stateness, territorial integrity and sovereignty.
2. Respecting Moldova neutrality and not accepting the integration of the country in any politico-military block, whilst not accepting any form of troop or military objective deployment on RM territory.
3. Respecting the constitutional norms in place and keeping the Constitution intact; not accepting the adoption of a new constitution.
4. Ensuring Moldova stays as a member of the CIS.
5. Maintaining a balance in political relations between East and West.
6. Keeping the Moldovan language as the ‘state language’ of the Republic of Moldova.
7. Ensuring civic peace rules in the country, by consolidating the Moldovan people and respecting ethnic minority rights in the Republic of Moldova.
8. Protecting the autochthonous moral values and traditions, in the Christian spirit, whilst respecting the Republic of Moldova’s laic character.
9. Keeping his political neutrality as a head of state, not becoming a member of any party; promoting political pluralism and acting as an arbiter in between the three main powers in the state and other political actors in Moldova.
10. Having only one citizenship, the Moldovan one.

(Socialistii 25.06.2013)

Stateness is defined as identification to the state. This stems from the definition of its opposite, the stateness problem, as the 'profound differences about the territorial boundaries of the political community's state and profound differences as to who has the right of citizenship in that state' (Stepan and Linz 1996: 16). Yet, this concept is studied here through the meanings attached to it in the Moldovan context. The theme of **stateness** has dominated political debates in Moldova since 2012 when Socialist Igor Dodon, used the 'Stateness Test' to decide whether his deputies would vote for Nicolae Timofti, the AIE candidate for the Moldovan presidency. This test consisted of ten ideas the future president must adhere to and contains a wide array of criteria, from ensuring Moldovan independence, sovereignty and neutrality, to keeping the Moldovan language as the 'state language' (Socialistii 25.06.2013). The association of stateness with territorial integrity and sovereignty (no. 1 above) is key in understanding the representation of threat and the processes of othering in Moldovanist discourse. For instance, the association between these concepts is present in a law project put forward by the Socialists in 2012, providing for a ban on unionists meetings and rallies, as they are threatening Moldovan 'sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity' (Dodon 29.03.2012).

These stateness criteria highlight the wide array of issues and actors that can be regarded as threatening Moldovan sovereignty, especially focused around the unnamed Romanian and Western influence. Building on these, the threat to stateness, sovereignty and/or independence functions on two levels, the external other and its internal 'agents'. In this context, the framework for analysing nationalism should be expanded to encompass not only an internal and external 'other', but also a

'conspiratorial' other. This type of internal other is a representative of the external other and its will, but within the country, essentially a 'fifth column'²⁷. This conspiratorial 'other' is one of the main elements threatening Moldovan representations of independence. With this in mind, the next sections analyse the way in which Romania (Section 4.3.1) and the West/EU (Section 4.3.2) threaten Moldovan sovereignty within Moldovanist representations.

4.3.1. The Romanian Threat

The first threat to Moldovan sovereignty is Romania, as an external other, and associated with it the Romanianists political and academic elite, as conspiratorial others. The most notable representations of this phenomenon appear on the occasion of historical commemorations. Lately, these occasions have been dominated by marches and protests, in the Romanianist case led by organisations such as *Actiunea 2012*, the Council of Unity and the Liberal Party (Section 3.4.2). The actors involved in these protests are accused of threatening Moldovan sovereignty, whilst also having Romanian support or representing Romanian interests. These accusations can take various forms, but even centrist, moderate actors such as the Democratic Party are known to articulate this type of discourse. For example, democrat leader, Marian Lupu argued that

²⁷ The concept of the 'fifth column' was first used during the Spanish Civil War, to define a group of people who undermine a larger group, a nation or a state, from inside.

I wouldn't exclude the idea that behind these [protests²⁸] there are extreme right parties, but also extreme left parties, as they only aid in polarising society [...] I could not exclude, and I have no arguments at hand, but simple logic tells me that, without an outside influence, they just don't happen (Ziarul de Iași 10.09.2012).

These protests are delegitimised through their association with extremism; more importantly, the unionists are portrayed as a 'conspiratorial' other, representing the wishes of the external other (the 'outside influence'), in this instance Romania. Additionally, Moldovanists represent the parties in government through the same frame (PG4; Saptamana 18.04.2011). These constructions are most obvious in moments of radicalisation, such as the 2009 Twitter Revolution (see Introduction). The then president, Vladimir Voronin transferred the blame for the riots in Chişinău from Moldovan citizens to the external actor, Romania (BBC 9.4.2014). In this context, he argues that it is Romania who both inspired and provoked these protests. He associates the Romanian 'other' with the revolutionary internal 'other', externalizing the threat of the protests and constructing it as a threat against Moldovan sovereignty and independence. He also portrays Romania's 'historical issue' vis-à-vis Moldova as a tendency that are 'both obsolete and anti-European', that other 'European states have long surpassed' (Voronin 15.04.2009). Hence, Romania is represented through a series of negative characteristics, such as its underdevelopment and lack of European character. Lastly, both these conflictual situations present a portrayal of the self, be it the Democrats or the Communists as the agents of stability, maintaining the sovereignty and independence of Moldova against the Romanian 'onslaught' (Stariş 26.07.2012). Communist deputy Grigore Petrenco summed-up this idea when he

²⁸ Unionist protest organised by *Actiunea 2012* in September 2012 in Chişinău.

declared that the 'unionist' protests in August 2012, controlled by the AIE government, are aimed at throwing Moldovan society into chaos, whilst the Communists function as a stabilising factor (Publika 5.08.2012). This last quote also highlights the way in which the AIE is essentialised together with the unionist parties/groups, emphasising the basic mechanism through which the radicalisation of the two discourses is achieved.

Additionally, the Romanian 'minority' is also connected with the Romanian external other. The Moldovanists associate to the point of overlapping the internal 'other', the Romanian minority, with the internal conspiratorial other and, hence, with the external other's agency. The link in between these is apparent in representations of the corruption of the Moldovan leadership. Moldovanist discourse on the Romanian minority focuses especially on this perceived link between the leadership and this group, even equating the two, as

We respect everyone, including the minorities. I appreciate ethnic minorities, but they need to be as minorities are in a democratic state, not try to rule everyone else, the majority. Here, the majority are Moldovans, not Romanian. There is a wide array of opinion polls, but the Romanians are about 10-12% and these 10-12% have no right to run the country (PG3).

The rejection of the Romanian minority's perceived superiority, as 'running the country' reiterates the idea of hierarchy; moreover, it reinforces my argument regarding the moderate character of national identity discourses in current day Moldova. A radical alternative to this construction is summed up in the expression 'Romanians, take your luggage to and go to Bucharest!'²⁹ (YL4), a Moldovanist invitation to all those who consider themselves Romanian to leave Moldova, thus

²⁹ The direct translation is 'Romanians, your luggage, Bucharest!' but I have adapted the expression in order to clarify its meaning to a foreign audience.

excluding them from the nation and the country. The focus on minorities and political leadership stresses a secondary dichotomy within this discourse, that between the political leadership and the people of Moldova; this representation stands at the basis of the 'democratic' argument. This contention sums up the idea that Moldovanism is the will of the people, as highlighted in the 1994 referendum³⁰, and opposed to the Romanianist elites. This dichotomy reproduces the cleavage in between the two national identity discourses, whilst also being mirrored within the Romanianist representation, as underlined below (Section 4.4.2).

Thus, another conspiratorial other, accused of having betrayed Moldova's independence are the actors that have the power to decide on Moldova's fate, i.e. the Moldovan government. The main focus of Moldovanist recriminations are the Romanianist parties, especially the Liberals, but also the Alliance for European Integration in its entirety. For example the AIE is accused not only of promoting Romanian values, e.g. language, but being more radical and, even, unionists. Igor Dodon explains this idea quite clearly, bringing forward the issue of history teaching in Moldova:

The governing alliance seems to be infected by the unionist bug. There is no other way of explaining why the pretend statist in AIE accept to apply propaganda instruments that threaten the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova. With their accord [...] 'Romanian history' [school textbook] now divides our people (Dodon 20.03.2012).

Hence, history is a criterion in constructions of independence. Moreover, the use of the word 'pretend' is an important cue for this research on the representation of the

³⁰ When the Moldovans voted in an overwhelming majority (98%) for Moldova to remain independent.

self and the other, as it illustrates the way in which reflections of identity may be radically different from the intentions of the discourse constructing said identity; the AIE leaders may represent themselves as statist, but according to Dodon, they are just pretending and are actually unionists. Romanianists tend to be portrayed as unionists, essentialising that group and linking it directly to the external other, Romania. This is achieved by ignoring any occurrence of more nuanced versions of Romanianism, e.g. people that may support the idea of the Romanian language and the Romanian nation, but believe in the existence of Moldova as a second Romanian state. This is apparent in Igor Dodon's argument that associates the AIE with unionism and ignores the nuanced Romanianism of the Liberal Democrats and the moderate Moldovanism of the Democrats. In this manner, essentialisation functions as the main mechanism in ensuring the radicalisation of the national identity debate, both by ignoring historical complexities within these discourses and by brushing over ideological/national identity differences between their supporters.

Communist deputy Inna Supac (2012) also accused the Alliance for European Integration of promoting Romanianism and reunification with Romania. One of the arguments she brings to support this point is the lack of reaction to Romanian president Traian Băsescu's praise for Marshal Antonescu's call to the Romanian armies to free Bessarabia in 1941. As a follow up to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia, Romanian leader Antonescu made a famous plea to his soldiers to free this territory at the beginning of the anti-Russian campaign in 1941 (Section 3.4.2). Hence, she positions herself both against the Romanian attitude regarding Antonescu and criticises the Moldovan government for not taking an anti-

imperial stance. Even more evident through the choice of imagery, i.e. the idea of a colony, Voronin (30.10.2012) argues that their party, the Communists, is 'the only one that fights for the country and the only who sees it among the other states of the world and not a colony of Romania'. The same views were articulated in an interview with a member of the Socialist party. He criticised Romania's attitude regarding Moldova, as to them

with regret, beginning with Iliescu and all the way to Băsescu, we are the second Romanian state, which isn't normal. Romania thinks and will think that Moldova is part of the Romanian space and this is not positive, progressive... (PG3).

Moreover, the issue of language is brought forward to reject the perceived colonial position of Romania. The Communists acknowledge their image of being 'anti-Romanian' and portray themselves as defenders of 'originality' and fighting against the imposition of Romanian linguistic standards (Voronin 2011). This highlights the rejection of Romanian superiority in terms of language and the power and hierarchical relationships intrinsic to these constructions. Additionally, Moldovan Ambassador to Bucharest, Iurie Reniță was threatened by the Communists with being recalled after he had stated in an interview that he speaks Romanian and is Romanian. PCRM members even went as far as hinting at a concerted action from the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote unionism (Unimedia 2.12.2011). Lastly, rounding up the discussion it is worth noting that these arguments also appear quite poignantly in the Socialists' stateness criteria, i.e. points 6 and 10 regarding the Moldovan language and the president's single citizenship.

4.3.2. The European Union as a secondary external other

Next to Romania, the EU is the second threat to Moldovan sovereignty in Moldovanist representations. The main focus of this articulation is the effect of EU integration on national characteristics. However, very few Moldovanists mentioned the transfer of part of the member states' powers to Brussels that would affect Moldovan sovereignty directly. Despite the somewhat improbable thesis of Moldova's EU membership in the short term (see Section 5.3.4 for more detail), this threat is presented as current, not linked to a future scenario. For example, this idea comes across in discussions regarding the Law on Equality of Opportunity in 2012³¹; the main arguments against the EU portrayed the law as undermining Moldovan traditions and Christian spirit as key elements of Moldovan national identity (Adevărul 28.05.2012). Hence, what could be considered as a foreign policy option is constructed around national identity ideas, highlighting the importance of identity in understanding contemporary politics in Moldova.

Another layer to this Moldovanist argument pinpoints the fact that it is not the EU directly, but the AIE government that implements the EU's wishes and functions as a conspiratorial other (Comunistul 13.02.2015). For example, the threat of the Law on Equality of Opportunity, a threat to Moldovan traditions, is attributed to both the EU

³¹ The Law on Equality of Opportunity, adopted in 2012 was perceived on the Moldovan political scene as a requirement of the European Union. More importantly, a clause regarding the equality of opportunity for people with different sexual orientations split the Moldovan society, with protests against what was perceived as a betrayal of Moldova's traditions.

and the Moldovan political leadership, the AIE (Unimedia 25.04.2012). Similarly, the link between the EU and the current government is also present in the legitimation awarded by Brussels to the AIE or, as the Socialists and Communists would see it, in their lack of criticism of the AIE government (Flux 20.01.2012). They argue that the breaches in democratic rules in Moldova take place because of Europe's choice to ignore the government's corruption together with the EU's unchallenged support for the AIE (Stati 12.11.2012; Voronin 7.5.2013). Within this discourse, the opposition is portrayed as resisting both threats to Moldova's Christian character and the current, AIE, government. The discussion regarding the 'corruption' of elites is taken further in Section 5.2, discussing in more depth the way in which the Moldovan leadership is portrayed as representing either the threatening or the friendly external other.

Additionally, a key criterion used by Igor Dodon to underscore the idea of stateness relates to Transnistria; according to him any form of secession on the part of the self-proclaimed republic would render Moldovan stateness null and void (Dodon 20.6.2013). Chişinău has not exercised sovereignty in Transnistria since the conflict in the early 1990s, but Moldovanist discourses are very strict in considering the territory as part of Moldova. The threat to Moldovan stateness comes, in this context, through a specific EU policy; the EU requested enhanced border controls on the Nistru River³². Through this, both the EU and the Moldovan government, as the actor that implemented this policy, are portrayed as a threat to Moldovan stateness. Dodon (20.06.2013) also argued that there is a general view in Chişinău, stemming from

³² Transnistria is across the Nistru River from Moldova, as the name states (except for the town of Bendery/Tighina) (see Introduction).

Romanian opinions, that the EU integration can only be achieved by 'leaving Transnistria behind'. The idea of giving up Transnistria was put forward in some of my interviews, e.g. with a Moldovan columnist and a lecturer at the Moldovan State University (M1, EX1), but never in the official Moldovan discourse, which is committed to reintegrating the country. These examples highlight the representation of the Moldovan government as a conspiratorial other, threatening Moldovan sovereignty, through their position as an agent of the EU or for the purpose of EU integration; the depiction of the government is thus imbued with the characteristics of the, so-called, extremist parties and groups. This augments the Moldovanist discourse regarding Transnistria, focused on the Romanian threat (King 2000) and, whilst underscoring their own role as key for the reintegration of the country.

Lastly, in the representation of external others, the EU and Romania are equated. This is achieved by transferring Romania's threat as a national 'other' to the EU as an actor and linking it to AIE's pro-European foreign policy orientation. The Communists emphasised this in a statement made at the end of Dirk Scheubel's, the EU representative in Moldova, mandate:

Scheubel has done a lot of things against Moldova's integrity. The fact that he has organised his farewell party at the Romanian embassy in Chişinău has showed everyone whose interests this politician actually promotes (Unimedia 12.07.2013).

The connection between the EU and Romania is not only achieved through the similitude in the threat it can pose to Moldovan sovereignty, but also through the direct contamination of EU officials with unionist thinking. The EU is represented as accepting Romania's pro-unionist actions, not contesting their incompatibility with

international norms and values. One such example was the EU's lack of reaction to Romanian Prime Minister's, Emil Boc, refusal to accept the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and, implicitly, its consequences; the agreement, signed 23 August 1939, defined Nazi Germany's and Soviet Russia's areas of influence, whilst also drawing the border between the two on the Prut River, between Romania and the current day Republic of Moldova (see Introduction). Thus, the rejection of this agreement is highly symbolic, being equated with a recognition of Moldovan independence, by recognising the partition of Moldova in the 1940s. This declaration, albeit not making any reference to the Romanian position towards the consequences of the Pact (i.e. Moldova's independence) was received by the Communists as no less than a threat to Moldovan sovereignty and independence (PCRM 29.09.2010; Stati 12.11.2012). Concluding, Moldovanists represent the EU as an actor which should defend values such as sovereignty and democracy, but fails to do so.

In the Moldovanist anti-imperial construction, the threat to Moldovan sovereignty is then multiple. It is represented firstly through external others, such as Romania and the EU, providing different challenges to the Moldovan nation and Moldovan sovereignty, but also amalgamated into a single menace. They are associated with internal and conspiratorial others, from the Romanianist cultural elites to the Moldovan government; these groups are accused of acting in the interest or as agents of these external others. In this way, Moldovanists weave a web of meanings that stress the multiplicity of threats and 'others' of the Moldovan nation; more importantly, these others are all equated with the discursive other, Romanianism, reproducing the cleavage between the two national identity articulations.

Furthermore, the multitude of examples utilised have illustrated the way in which stateness and, linked to it, sovereignty and independence, are fluid concepts. This is taken further in the next section by examining the way in which Romanianists represent sovereignty and independence. It argues that the Romanianist construction mirrors the Moldovanist representation of othering, whilst deepening the cleavage between the two discourses.

4.4. Romanianist representations of otherness

Romanianist constructions are very similar to the Moldovanist representation of otherness. It too focuses on the connection between the external other and the internal other as a representative of the external other's agency. Additionally, the Romanianist construction is focused on its historical external other, Russia, and re-textualises this discourse to explain contemporary events. This highlights the mirrored representations of the two discourses and offers the basis for the processes of essentialisation that inform the radical cleavage in between them.

As seen above, sovereignty and independence take different meanings within the different national identity and political party discourses. The Moldovanists defined sovereignty as mainly associated with territorial integrity and against the Romanian unionist threat. Meanwhile, the Romanianists equate it with values and the events of 1991, when the Republic of Moldova gained its independence from the Soviet Union. Moldovan Liberals represent independence as 'freedom' in the narrative of the

struggle for independence of the 1980-90s. In this manner, independence is defined as opposed to being 'occupied, subjugated [...] under the laws of other, Soviet, communist-totalitarian laws' (PL 27.08.2010); they also claim that independence is associated with the defence of national characteristics, even by military means (PL 17.12.2012). The Liberal-Democrat representation of independence is similar, also based on the historical moment of 1991 (PLDM 3.09.2012). However, 'independence' is not only defined in relationship to the events of 1991, but brought forward to the current day. In this context, a declaration by (then) interim president Mihai Ghimpu explains the current relationship between the external other and independence:

we voted for independence in order to break away from the Russian empire. We were under the tsarist and Soviet [*sic*], and now we are under the Russian democratic empire. They recognise our independence, but have occupied a third of our country (PL 5.08.2011).

The quote stresses the way in which at the linguistic and conceptual level, Russia is still portrayed as an imperial power, through its role in Transnistria. The role played by national identity in representations of sovereignty is highlighted through the reiteration of the historical narrative of Russian occupation. Unlike the Moldovanists, the Liberals focus on 'independence', not on sovereignty; yet they attach similar meanings to it, defining it as 'independence from the external other'. This may be just a difference of nuance, but it illustrates the way in which the same idea is conceptualised differently by the two sides. With that representation of independence in mind, the next two sections argue that Romanianists associate the external Russian other with three internal others: the 'separatist' territories (Section 4.4.1), the Russian minority (Section 4.4.2) and the pro-Russian leadership (Section 4.4.3). Then, the 'Russian Threat' sub-section (4.4.4) brings these together and highlights the nature of

the external 'othering' process, i.e. the representations of Russia in Romanianist discourses.

4.4.1. The Transnistrian other

The most obvious Romanianist threat to independence is the breakaway region of Transnistria. Whereas the very existence of Transnistria is a threat to Moldovan sovereignty over its whole territory, the representations of these circumstances are the focus of this analysis. I argue that the dominant representation of Transnistria is as an agent of Russian interests in Moldova, whilst have no agency or identity of its own. Thus, Transnistria is conceptualised as an internal other, whilst also being linked to the external other, Russia. Some of my interviewees portray it as 'a Russian lynchpin and Russia will keep it, not necessarily for evil intentions, but, you know, just in case' (OT6). In general terms, 45% of Moldovans think that both Moldovan and Transnistrian leaders follow external commands in regards to their relations (IIMD September 2014: 152). It is notable that across my interviews, most of my respondents focused on the connection between Transnistria and Russia and only a couple on the leadership in Tiraspol (the capital of Transnistria) or the Transnistrian people (EX1, YL3). It can be argued that, through an essentialising process, Transnistria is portrayed as a totality, from its government, the Russian presence there, all the way to its people³³. For

³³ A caveat must be made here, as there are certain discourses that represent the people of Transnistria through the people-government dichotomy (see Moldovanist representations – in this chapter), but under-represented both in the press and amongst my interviewees.

example Liberal/Reformed Liberal deputy Ana Guțu, in her report regarding Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Representative for Transnistria Dmitri Rogozin's³⁴ April 2012 visit to Tiraspol makes no mention of the Transnistrian's leadership or people's attitudes, focusing on the Russian agency and Transnistria as a whole (PL 26.04.2012).

For Romanianists, Transnistria functions as a conspiratorial other by influencing Moldovan politics, e.g. by keeping Moldova from its path towards the EU. More importantly, Transnistria is associated with the agency and the wishes of Russia, as explained by one of my interviewees, an entrepreneur in Chișinău

'[Russia] should recognise de facto the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Moldova over its whole territory, to withdraw its troops [...] but they're not doing this. Why not? Very simple, because through Transnistria they can influence the situation in Moldova, so this is what it should be and I don't know if this is possible' (OT3).

Furthermore, the representation of Russian agency as opposed to the EU illustrates the dichotomy between the two. These views are also reflected on the political level. The same Ana Guțu portrayed the Russian attitude towards Transnistria as a threat to Moldova's 'sovereignty, independence and a manifestation of Russia's continued imperial thinking' (PL 26.04.2012). This sentiment is not limited to nationalist political parties, also expanding into civil society in Moldova; for instance, human right organisation Promo-Lex representative, Ion Manole, argued that the 2013 Transnistrian civil society's request for independence was an orchestrated move from 'external actors' (RFE/EL 2.07.2013). Hence, there is an attempt to essentialise Transnistria, glossing over the multiplicity of opinions within the country and representing the self-

³⁴ He visits Moldova quite regularly, being quite a colourful presence. As a high ranking official, he has easily become a symbol of Russian foreign policy in Moldova for analysts in Chișinău.

proclaimed state is as a Russian agent. The representation of Transnistria as a conspiratorial other feeds into the negative portrayal of Russia. Moreover, the current issue of Transnistria enables the translation of the historical other into a 21st century issue:

Russia is the secular enemy of the freedom of the Romanian people. Maintaining our territories under Russian occupation, the Russian refusal to withdraw their troops and armament from our territory is proof (Pavlicenco 30.06.2013).

Thus, the very existence of Transnistria is portrayed as being nothing more than a Russian endeavour to continue its imperial rule in Moldova, whilst Transnistrian agency is ignored altogether. Nevertheless, an alternative to this essentialising discourse has been offered by a couple of my interviewees (YL3, EX1), who stressed the existence of a Romanian population in Transnistria. However, even with this nuance, their main concern would be to move this population back to the right bank of the Nistru and leave Transnistria to the Russians/Ukrainians. On a similar note, the Găgăuz Autonomous region³⁵ is also portrayed as denting Moldovan independence, through their rejection of some of Chişinău's decisions, such as language teaching or even foreign policy (e.g. PG5; Moldova Suverană 16.10.2014).

³⁵ As a reaction to the Găgăuz will for independence in the early 1990s, the Moldovan government organised their territory in the form of an autonomous region (see Introduction).

4.4.2. National minorities – the ‘internal’ other

The second internal other of the Romanianist discourses is represented by national minorities, as stressed in Chapter 3. These are essentialised, not only linguistically, but also by assuming their interests to be those of the Russian ‘other’. Additionally, the minorities are represented within a hierarchic construction and perceived as superior to the (Moldovan) Romanian ethnic group. The national minorities comprise of a series of ethnic groups, Russian, Ukrainian, Găgăuz, etc.³⁶, only slightly less than a third of Moldova’s overall population (Census 2004). By including the Găgăuz and to certain extent the inhabitants of Transnistria (roughly one third Moldovans, Russians and Ukrainians), they link the argument with the previous section. But more importantly, throughout my interviews with Romanianists and the Romanianist press, the term used to define all minorities is ‘Russian-speaking’, illustrating the perceived linguistic dichotomy between the Slavic and the Latin languages (see Section 3.3). Even more, these minorities are represented as

Very stubborn people, they believe themselves to be superior and for that reason they don’t learn our language, although they do understand. You go to the shop and they respond in Russian, you keep talking in Romanian, and he’s still speaking Russian. They should have learned in all the time they’ve been here, but they’re very stubborn and they think themselves as some form of superior race, or at least a on a superior step (OT5).

Thus, the linguistic otherness is augmented by the fact that these minorities refuse to learn the Romanian/Moldovan language, whilst the frustration presented above is stressed in the Moldovan representation of the self’s inferiority (see Ciscel 2007). The

³⁶ According to Moldovanists, they include the Romanian minority.

hierarchical representation of the ethnic minorities is augmented through their portrayal as dominating certain power structures. The Găgăuz are argued to be over-represented within the Moldovan Academy of Sciences (EX3, EX4), whilst the Russian speaking minorities are still running the Moldovan economy (YL2).

But more importantly, the main criticism attached to these ethnic groups is the fact that through their votes for the Communists and Socialists they undermine the 'majority' pro-Western foreign policy orientation. A youth leader in the Liberal Party explained this phenomenon very well

The minorities should support the majority or to ask for some of their rights, in virtue of their position as minority, but not to derailing the course the majority wants. With regret here, the minorities, the Găgăuz, the Russian sometimes try to derail the majority. That is why here, even after 20 years, there's still an ethnic vote, the majority still vote for the communists, seeing them as the only guarantee for their rights, but also their aspirations, to get closer to Russia (PG5).

This is easily challenged by an expert on minority issues in Moldova who argues that no party in Moldova is actually oriented towards catering for the national minorities.

Thus, their fear of other parties is the main reason why ethnic minorities turn to the Communists (EX8; see also Protsyk and Osoian 2010).

Thus, these two internal others, Transnistria and the Russian ethnic minorities are portrayed by the Romanianists as both a threat to the totality of the nation and as a perceived 'fifth column of Russia', an internal arm of the external other. Moreover, through the representations of their interests as belonging to Russia, they have no agency in themselves, being just an extension of the external 'other's agency. Romanianists also extend this association to the political sphere, especially to the

Moldovan leadership (2001-2009, the Communists were in power), presented in the next sub-section and also discussed within the wider setting of Moldova's 'inferiority complex' in Section 5.3.

4.4.3. Leadership, the conspiratorial other

In addition to national minorities, the Moldovanist leadership, as the actors that have the power to decide, are usually accused of having betrayed Moldova's independence. Mirroring the Moldovanist articulation, the Romanianist political other spans from the parliamentary Communists and Socialists to the more extreme organisations such as the Patriots of Moldova or the Social-Democrat Party. These parties are not only depicted as pro-Russian, but as Russian agents, representing Russian wishes in Moldova. For instance, the Communists' foreign policy for the eight years they were in power, 2001-2009, is summed up as 'they did what Moscow said, there was no foreign policy, they went to Moscow and got direct orders from there' (PG5). This portrayal as Russian agents extends to the wider group of Moldovanist parties and organisations, from the radical group the Patriots of Moldova and the *Voievod* Movement to the Communists and Socialists; this is highlighted in the representation of the Bălți protests³⁷ as Russian involvement in Moldova. Whilst Romanianist press covered this issue extensively, a brief conversation in Chişinău two months later illustrated this type of thinking very well:

³⁷ An unionist march, led by Actiunea 2012, was confronted with a left wing Communist and Social-democrat counter-march in Bălți, May 2012.

R2: The Moldovan Patriots [...] they didn't gather because they think in this way, they gathered there because there was a political order.

I: Whose order?

R: The communists', Russia's area of influence...

R2: The Russian secret services...

R: The communists are a form of Russian influence in Moldova. The Patriots of Moldova are the same, they've been created to counter-balance the unionist organisations (YL1).

Thus, all these Moldovanist actors are portrayed as representing Russian interests.

More importantly, protests organised by the Moldovanists are moments in which the left wing parties can easily be essentialised as one. For instance, in an editorial covering the January 2012 protests in Chişinău³⁸, Constantin Tănase (25.01.2012) does not even name the organisations and people taking part when he concludes that they are Moscow's agents. This highlights the press's reproduction of the representation of Russian power in Moldova. Furthermore, declarations made by political actors (from the same camp) are rarely questioned or assessed critically, being taken as 'truths' as shown in the excerpt from a *Timpul* editorial:

Something sounded very dark in Mihai Ghimpu's speech. The reference to Moscow: "We don't want offices. I knew I wasn't going to be speaker. Moscow doesn't want Ghimpu to be speaker. And the two, with Dodon, were in Moscow." It would seem that Moldovan independence is only on paper, that it is still a Russian *gubernya* [Russian region] and everything is decided in Moscow. Embarrassing and humiliating, as if we were a nation of slaves – Russian slaves (Vakulovski 15.02.2012).

The quote highlights the association between political decisions, anti-imperialism and the nation, not the state. But more importantly, it stresses an important element in the evaluation of left-wing parties as conspiratorial others – their visits to Moscow. A

³⁸ Romanianists groups were celebrating the day when in 1859 the Moldovan and Wallachian Principalities united to become Romania (see Introduction). The Moldovanists organised a counter protest.

Romanianist interviewee explained that 'every time an important decision needs to be taken [...] and this information isn't official, but there are people who know that two days before, they are in Moscow' (YL7). Special attention is awarded to this topic in newspapers, with *Timpul* covering both Igor Dodon's visits to Moscow (13.04.2012) and, rather mockingly, his visits to Brussels running the title 'Dodon tries to put horse shoes on dead Moldovan horses' (8.02.2012). Lastly, columnist Petru Bogatu (2.07.2013), does not hesitate to argue that the Socialists and the Social-Democrats 'seem' to be Moscow's agents, albeit admitting that there is little proof for it. Nevertheless, even whilst not having a clear argument, this type of presentation still reinforces the link between these political actors and the external other, Russia. All these internal others are represented as Russian 'fifth columns' in Moldova and thus, the Romanianists represent Russia as the actor they resist, as the actor that threatens their sovereignty. In this context, the next few paragraphs analyse the way in which Russia is portrayed in relation to the Moldovan state and nation.

4.4.4. The Russian Threat

Based on its historical othering (Section 3.4), Russia represents the main external 'other' of Romanianist discourses. Building on representations of key events in Moldovan history and their consequences, Russia is represented as a largely threatening other. The first explanation for this phenomenon is Russian national characteristics. A common theme in my interviews in Chişinău (PG5, PG13, YL6) is the representation of Russia as dominated by nationalism, also called *velikorusism* [big

Russian-ism]. *Velikorusism* is portrayed as a form of extremism focused solely on the advancement of the Russian nation and its historical position within the world system. Additionally, Romanianists fail to see any nuance in this essentialist representation and ignore the fact that a great part of Russia may not subscribe to these ideas. Relating this to the situation in Transnistria, the Russians are represented as

[Velikorussian] all of them are that. I was in Minsk where I met with a very colourful Russian group, representatives from different political parties: liberals, Zhirinovskiy's extremists, etc. And although they were so different we started talking about what's happening in Georgia, Moldova, Russian policies towards Europe, especially gas policy. And when it came to national interest they would not budge, not even on the level of mentality... they were convinced it was supposed to be as it is. They have horse glasses: How could we withdraw our troops? Who's going to protect these people?' But protect them from whom? That's how the Russians think, fixated on one idea... it's this feeling of *velikorusism* and not accepting Russia to be marginalised in any way (YL5).

This construction aims to totalise the Russian people and their government through the idea of *velikorusism*.

This representation pervades into the foreign policy domain in the portrayal of the Russian post-imperial complex; moreover, it also offers an explanation for Russia's actions in regards to Moldova. Declarations and actions within the Russian space are reflected quite well in the Moldovan media. One such example was the publishing in *Moskovskie novosti* [Moscow News] newspaper of a list of 'enemies of Russia', containing names from Mikhail Saakashvili, John McCain and Mitt Romney to Mihai Ghimpu, the leader of the Moldovan Liberals. Reports on this newspaper article in Moldovan media generalised this 'under siege' thinking to the whole Russian society, especially, to the Russian government (Bogatu 3.04.2012). Quite the opposite, Moscow News is not one of the biggest or most circulated newspapers in Russia, changing

format frequently in recent years, being reinvented by its different owners; thus, its ideas cannot really be generalised to the whole of Russia. This essentialised representation of the other creates a frame of thinking that legitimises the other's actions, but more importantly, legitimises the self's rejection of the threatening other and its contemporary anti-imperial discourse. Moreover, responsibility and blame is assigned to the Russian other, both historically and in contemporary issues.

Newspapers illustrates this tendency very well through headlines such as 'Russia is guilty of everything that happens in Transnistria' (Damian 22.10.2012) or 'Russia must ask for forgiveness to the whole Romanian nation' (Tănase 26.04.2012). More importantly, these negative characteristics are essentialised and responsibility is assigned to the entire Russian nation and its leaders. Thus, irrespective of who makes a statement regarding Moldova, whether official or marginal political representatives, it is represented as the will of the entire Russian nation. For example, a statement by Aleksandr Dugin regarding his analysis of Russia's willingness to react militarily in Transnistria was translated into an article entitled 'Russia is ready to invade Moldova, how will the government react?' (Timpul 18.06.2013), suggesting both the official character of this position and the generalisation to the whole of 'Russia'.

Moreover, Romanianist anti-imperialism is characterised by its resistance to a hierarchical view of the external other. In a post-colonial frame, this reflects the colony's voice attempting to challenge the centre's superiority and to achieve some form of equality. A very subtle example is former Moldovan president, Liberal and Romanianist Mihai Ghimpu's, appeal to the new Russian ambassador to Moldova, Farit Mukhametshin. Ghimpu asked Mukhametshin that Russia treats Moldova 'with

respect', thus criticising what he perceives as an imperial attitude on Russia's part (Unimedia 19.06.2012). This representation mirrors the hierarchical portrayal of ethnic minorities analysed in the previous chapter; in this way, it reinforces the argument regarding Romanianism's moderate character – its othering through a rejection of hierarchy. Similarly, in an interview with *Timpul* (Ghimpu 21.05.2012), the Liberal leader discusses the rest of the Alliance's opposition to declaring 16 May³⁹ as a day of national mourning, whilst stressing his own party's anti-imperialist stance. The expression he uses to describe the Moldovan attitude towards Russia, i.e. keeping 'your head down' was used repeatedly throughout my fieldwork and illustrates the perception of Moldovan submissiveness. Therefore, the Romanianist anti-imperialist representation draws from its historical narrative of Russia as its threatening other.

Concluding, in the Moldovan case, sovereignty, independence and stateness are largely equivalent, whilst also being articulated quite differently by the two national identity discourses and the political sides they represent. Sovereignty is threatened both by the external other and by the agency of the internal others. Yet, at the same time, the articulators of these discourses portray themselves as resisting these threats on sovereignty. Furthermore, in their representations the two national identity discourses both focus on the way in which their external others are associated with internal, conspiratorial others. Conspiratorial others are a version of the internal other. They are portrayed as having no agency of their own, but acting as agents of the external other. The actor criticised for representing the interests of the external other

³⁹ The Treaty of Bucharest (1812) which officialised Tsarist occupation of Bessarabia was signed on this date (see 1.2).

is usually the Moldovan government, the political party or alliance in power; this challenges the very centre of Moldovans agency, the existence of an independent executive Moldovan will. This idea is taken further in Chapter 5, arguing that the Moldovans represent themselves as lacking agency on the international scene. From this point of view, anti-imperialism is highlighted through either criticism of the other political actors as being the agents of an external 'other' or their policies as ensuring the country is under the control of said 'other'; thus anti-imperialism is articulated both against the external other and against the perceived corruption of the self/the political and discursive 'other'.

Romanianists represent Russia as their external other and, linked to it, the national minorities and autonomous regions and the left wing parties. Meanwhile the main Moldovanist external other is Romania, associated with right wing parties and cultural elites. Stemming from this, together with the left-right political cleavage, it becomes apparently that Romanianists are expected to have a pro-Romanian foreign policy, whilst Moldovanists a pro-Russian one. The parallelism between the two representations stresses the importance of the research focus on mirror images of the self and their role in the perpetuation of the cleavage between national identity discourses in Moldova. Additionally, within these representations, there are clear attempts to essentialise these elements and actors, from the portrayal of left or right wing parties as one to the generalisation of characteristics to the Russian nation.

Essentialisations together with the wide array of equivalences between internal and external others create a web of meaning that divides Moldovan discourses into

Moldovanist and Romanianist from their views on language, to their political orientation and all the way to their representations of national minorities and external others. This construction leaves very little space for any of the nodal points to move or reconstruct their identity, thus ensuring the radical opposition between the two discourses. The next section expands this set of equivalences by discussing the East and the West as geopolitical spaces.

4.5. The East – West Geopolitical Divide

The last section of this chapter analyses the way in which, through the existence of external others, the national identity antagonism translates to a geopolitical and civilizational cleavage between the East and the West. The argument brings together the findings of Chapters 3 and 4 and builds on the elements that form part of the national identity discourses. Its argument is, thus, based on the chains of equivalences and differences constructed by the two discourses around representation of 'otherness'; however, it also brings forward national identity elements such as language to define the two spaces. But more importantly, the fact that the Moldovans see the foreign affairs world divided between East and West is one of the two elements that feed into a geopolitical view of the world, the main argument of this thesis; the second, the representation of the Moldovan self as passive, lacking agency is discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

Moldovans' opinions regarding foreign policy, in general, and the East-West cleavage, in particular, highlight the importance of the themes analysed in this thesis. The high percentages of Moldovans with clear options regarding these issues highlights the importance of the topic, whilst the nature of survey questions underscores the means through which discourses regarding the opposition between the two spaces are reproduced. For instance, an IMAS (2012a: 128) poll asked the Moldovans whether they believed 'Moldova is a European state that should sooner or later be part of the EU' or that 'Moldova belongs to the Russian area of influence and should stay there'. The question suggest both the cultural/civilizational association with foreign policy, emphasising national identity's importance for foreign affairs, and the oppositional character of the two spaces, through the imposition of choice. A percentage of 44 of the sample surveyed chose Europe, 39% chose Russia and only 18% 'Do not know/Not answering'; these numbers highlight the high percentage of people interested and making a choice in between these two spaces. Statistics also stress that whereas the Moldovans may not be that concerned with national identity issues (e.g. King 2000; Section 2.1.1), the equivalences drawn all the way to foreign policy bring these themes to the forefront of Moldovans concerns, through their links to day-to-day developments.

On that note, Moldovan polls only very rarely frame questions regarding foreign policy to contain an option that is neutral or multi-vector, perpetuating the representation of the East-West cleavage. The opposition between the two spaces is also notable in other surveys, especially when discussing specific details of foreign policy. For instance, 52% of Moldovans think EU association will mean losing the

Russian market and 53% think it will mean losing the CIS market (IPP 2014: 80).

Similarly, the second most popular theme attached to the EU in IPP poll is 'worsening relations with Russia' (28%) and the fourth the EuroAsian Union was associated with is 'worse relations with the EU' (21%) (IPP 2013: 75, 84). This highlights the superficial reproduction of the cleavage through surveys. Meanwhile, the rest of this chapter focuses on the meanings attached to these spaces in order to understand the resilience of this construction.

The approach to analysing these two spaces must though first take into account their structure, as this determines the way they are employed conceptually within discourses. Thus, the next pages argue that the two spaces are both focused around Moldova's external others, each being connected to one of the national identity discourses, the East to Moldovanism, the West to Romanianism. Based on this, I provide an assessment of the criteria employed to define these spaces and argue that the historical, cultural and religious dichotomies together with the normative one deepen the cleavage between West and East and, implicitly, between Romanianism and Moldovanism.

The **Eastern** space is centred around Russia, being composed of 'Russia: Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan...' (PG3). Continued emphasis upon Russia illustrates the way in which this space is essentialised through its equivalence with Russia, as illustrated by the Socialist quote above. The Romanianists reproduce the same essentialisation process, casually referring to the space as 'the East' or 'the post-Soviet space' (EX6). Additionally, whereas Russia is the nodal point around which this

space is represented, equivalence is usually constructed through the interchangeability of the terms used to define it, such as: the East, the Community of Independent States, the Euro-Asian Union, etc. (e.g. OT1, OT5, PG11).

Meanwhile, the **Western space** is built around two nodal points: Romania and the EU. Hence, there are two essential dichotomies when talking about the East-West divide, one between Romania and Russia and one between the EU and Russia and how these are constructed is essential in understanding the way in which foreign policy is legitimised in Moldova. A third nodal point also appears within the representations of the Western space, the United States and NATO, albeit more rarely. A focus on the US as one of the poles of the Western space is usually centred on ideas of NATO membership, working on the perception that EU and NATO memberships are inextricably linked. Lastly, these two/three nodal points do not subsume three different representations of the West, but the same one, albeit prioritising different characteristics; for instance, a focus on Romania prioritises national identity, whereas concentrating on the EU focuses more on democracy and economic development. The Western space too is essentialised. A Moldovanist argument is that NATO and the EU are inextricably linked in terms of foreign policy; for them, it was inevitable that Moldova's EU membership would lead to NATO membership (PG4). Thus, Moldovanist representations of foreign policy present the Western space as unitary, ignoring the differences and divisions within it. Nevertheless, the thesis largely equates the West with Europe, as this fits with foreign policy discussions in Moldova. This is due to the fact that Moldova is marginal to the concerns of NATO and the US and, consequently, the Moldovans rarely mention these actors in their foreign policy representations. The

essentialisation of the Western space is also present across my fieldwork, especially in discussions with Romanianists. The recurrent idea that integration into the EU can be achieved by unifying Moldova to Romania augments the simple equivalence between Romania as an EU member and the Union; this is a common theme in my interviews with Romanianists and not only them. Romania also constructs equivalence between the Romanian and European space and within a 'mirrored' identity construction (Wendt 1999) this representation feeds into the Moldovan one. The Romanian ambassador in Chişinău, Marius Lazurca, argued in an interview that

anti-Romanianism is not only a (vaguely) masked form of racism, but also the most clear expression of anti-Europeanism. Let no one be fooled: the promoters of anti-Romanianism want an Asian Republic of Moldova, not a European one (Timpul 2.4.2012).

This excerpt highlights the way in which the Romanian official in Chişinău links a pro-Romanian stance with a pro-European one and argue that it is impossible to be pro-EU whilst by-passing Romania. But more importantly, the paragraph stresses the two self-excluding options for Moldova: Europe and Asia. Lastly, the use of the term 'racism' in a case which can only be deemed as xenophobia aids the condemnation of anti-Romanianism and the rejection of the Eastern, Asian space, by assigning it this reviled characteristic.

4.5.1. East and West: characteristics

This section delves into more detail regarding the way in which the two spaces are portrayed as both equal and opposing. The parity between the two is illustrated in the

way in which both spaces are commonly constructed, although not perfectly symmetrical, around the same pillars: a central actor (Romania/EU and, respectively, Russia) and an organisation (EU and, respectively CIS/the Eurasian Union). But more importantly, my interviewees illustrated this equivalence through an anecdote:

I: Do you believe Russia should be part of the EU?

R: You know, Putin said some time ago: Russian being part of the EU? Why – when will the EU be part of Russia? (OT4)

Thus, some Moldovans adhere to Putin's view that the two, Russia and the EU, are essentially equal, being interchangeable in a discussion regarding integration.

Furthermore, the East and the West are represented as equally valid options in terms of foreign policy orientation. This enables them to form the basis for the articulation of dichotomous constructions around them and start off on an equal footing in the foreign policy legitimisation game. This is apparent in the way in which survey questions regarding foreign policy are asked in Moldova, especially in questions such as 'Do you think Moldova should get closer to...' with the options Russia and the 'West (Europe)' (IMAS 2014). As already noted, these spaces are represented through their equivalence with the two external others and, through this, associated with the two main national identity discourses. This enables equivalences to be created all the way through Moldovan society, from language to party politics and geopolitical spaces. Moreover, the dichotomies analysed below change focus based on the nature of the criterion, some opposing the whole region, others focusing on their main actors. The multiplicity of foci of the West together with a diverse range of characteristics attached to it leads to multiple ways of constructing the East-West divide.

The first of such constructions is the historical one, based on medieval constructions of the Occident and the Orient. A few of my interviewees have used the same example for this representation: the legitimisation awarded by Western powers to different Romanian/Moldovan princes in the 15th-16th centuries. They iterated the case of Ștefan cel Mare (see Introduction and Section 3.4). According to them, he was recognised as a leading European figure through a letter from Pope Sixtus VI's calling him the 'true Champion of the Christian Faith'. He and other Romanian Medieval princes⁴⁰ are portrayed as protectors of Europe from the Ottoman Porte, whilst these lands stood 'at the gates' of Europe (e.g. OT1, OT7, EX11). Through the nature of these narratives, the West is constructed as Christian and opposed to the Muslim Turk. At first sight, this dichotomy of Christian – Muslim cannot be used to exclude the Russian other from the Occident, as Russia is majority Christian. Moreover, Moscow has long claimed to be the third Rome, a beacon of Christianity, here in its Orthodox form. Huntington's civilisational divide (1993, 1996) is not reiterated in the Moldovan case either, most likely because Moldova is Orthodox and part of the same civilisation as Russia, raising issues in terms of legitimising a pro-Western policy. Nevertheless, some Moldovans have brought the civilizational and religious argument into representations of the East-West dichotomy. The central point of this articulation is the power and the demographics of the Muslim minorities in the Russian Federation. More specifically Moldovans either stress the power of the Tatars, the higher birth rate of the Muslim

⁴⁰ 'Romanian' is a reference to the territorial positioning of their principalities, two examples being Iancu of Hunedoara and Vlad Tepes, princes of Transylvania and, respectively, Wallachia.

population in Russia or the perceived historical origins of the Russian people (i.e. the Mongol hordes). The excerpts below illustrate this sentiment very clearly

all the internal problems the Russians have [...] there's Tartarstan, the muslim are very strong and there are tartars even in the Russian government because they are the second nationality after the Russians (PG2)

The Russians have the nomadic spirit in their blood, even Engels said that if you scratch a Russian you'll find the Tartar inside (M2).

Moreover, the equivalence between being European and Christianity was repeatedly stressed, one interviewee remarking 'If we are not European, what are we? Do we belong to the Arabic or Islamic world?' (EX8). Thus, in the reiteration of a historical discourse, through the Tartar argument Russia becomes an epitome of Islam, of what is not European, characterised by its nomadic spirit and perceived violent character and non-Europeaness.

Linked to the idea of a common history is the **linguistic** definition of Europe constructing the two spaces as opposing – one represented by the Slavic languages and the other by, arguably, Latin ones. In this context, prime-minister Filat argued that

Moldova is the only country from the **Latin** areal that is outside of the European space. It has no alternative but European integration (quoted in Adevărul 25.04.2012).

Filat's construct clearly contradicts the reality of Europe, given the number of Germanic and other languages spoken across the continent and, even, within the EU. Nevertheless, this representation highlights the importance of a radical constructivist approach for this analysis. Another theme emerging from his statement is the assimilation between the EU and the European space or, to be more specific, Europe. This phenomenon is widely acknowledged all across discourses on the EU and

especially during my interviews, enabling the cultural portrayal of this space. Thus, speaking a Latin language is perceived as a cultural and linguistic characteristic of Europe. Similarly, a Moldovanist has employed the Slavic term to define the CIS as 'the Slavic world to the East' (PG3), highlighting the importance of the linguistic argument in defining the two spaces.

Moreover, the idea of speaking a Latin language intrinsically reiterates the **Romanianist** discourses of national identity. Romanianists, such as journalist and author Stela Popa (2010), argue that 'We are European and we speak an official language of the EU!' thus connecting language and (Romania's) belonging to Europe/EU. This approach takes for granted Romania's European character (e.g. OT1, YL7). Moreover, (Romanian and) Romanianist discourses hold that the Romanian people are a Latin nation surrounded and threatened by Slavs, highlighting the importance of the 'Slav' as the Romanians' 'other' (e.g. EX3, OT1, YL4) (Section 3.3). Through these equivalences and oppositions, the Romanianists represent the Western space, defined through language, as opposed to the Slavic, Russian space. Counter-discourses also exist on the cultural level - arguing for Russia's Europeaness. The East-West divide may be bridged through modern culture – 'arts, literature, music, theatre, architecture, through all these I believe Russia, at least its Western side, to be European' (EX4). Nevertheless, cultural, linguistic and historical differences are some of the sources of the dichotomy between the East and the West.

Lastly, the East and the West are also constructed through a normative, value based representation. Good governance and democracy are employed to stress the

cleavage between the two spaces. This representation, relatively independent from cultural nuances, is generalised across both national identity discourses in Moldova. The idea of the East (the Orient, the Ottoman Empire or Russia) as underdeveloped and undemocratic has been present in European writings since early modernity (Neumann 1999). These narratives have also been utilised throughout the 'return to Europe' discourse in the Baltics and Central and Eastern European States (Kuus 2007). Thus, in Moldova, the most common representation of Europe is as a **normative** space. From politicians to grassroots, everyone in Moldova mentions European values. These values ensure that 'the European culture and civilisation is net superior through its value system to all other continents' (YL2). This is congruent with a multitude of studies underscoring the EU's focus on a normative approach to foreign affairs (e.g. Manners 2002). In the Moldovan case 'European values' takes on a whole range of meanings, from democracy to development. For example, Moldova is represented as democratic and European all the way through its historical development, from the way in which in 1918 reunification was accomplished through a democratic vote to the way in which governments have changed peacefully in the past decades (PG5). References are made to 'the European value space' identified as one of 'pace, democracy and prosperity, [...] democracy, pluralism, a developed economy and free citizens' (Filat 2.11.2012). For Filat, the quest for European integration is one of modernising the country and this both emphasises the backwardness of Moldova and its transition towards Europe. Within that context, Romania is usually represented as more

democratic, as a member of the EU⁴¹. On the other end on the spectrum, Vitalie Ciobanu presents Russia's lack of democratic values and, through it, Moldova's problems with democracy. He states

the reality of Ghimpu's words describe the Euro-Asian world, to which Moscow is insistently inviting us together with satellites [...] Russia embraces us as we are – corrupt, underdeveloped, with a problematic democracy – because we're like her, with the same problems as the Russian state and society, where the disregard for the law and governments abuses have become 'trademarks' (4.07.2012).

The excerpt underlines the idea of Russia at the centre of the Eastern space, embracing its Euro-Asian neighbours in a space defined by corruption, underdevelopment and lack of democracy. Thus, European values can be subsumed within the general idea of democracy and good government, highlighting the differences in between the two spaces. Moreover, this construction stresses the way in which Moldova and, through it, the East itself can be represented as backward. Backwardness is illustrated both through concepts such as poverty (see below) and within a dichotomy of past versus future. This latter relates to the Romanianist narrative of Moldovan development, moving from East to West in the 'return to Europe' (Kundera 1984). Romanianists represent the Moldovan past as belonging to the East, from the Tsarist occupation to the Soviet regime, whilst the ambition of European integration places Moldova's future within the Western space. Thus, the democratic versus undemocratic dichotomy is augmented by a dichotomy organised around the idea of development,

⁴¹ Counter-discourses exist, the period in which I was doing interviews being one of tumult on the Romanian political scene and was presented in a few of my interviews as being just as bad as the situation in Chişinău. Interestingly enough, they also noted that the political 'mess' in Bucharest and Chişinău is further proof that the Romanians and the Moldovans were brother (e.g PG5, OT).

as presented in the next paragraphs, in order to support the opposition between the two spaces.

The argument of development builds on the historical representations in Moldovan society, as

R: To say Russia is European is forced. They tried to be European in the tsarist era and this was the whole idea with Saint Petersburg and European, German names. They tried because up until then they were just a nation, like many others in Asia.

I: And did they succeed?

R: No. Mentally, conceptually, in terms of civilisation ...no. And history confirms this: the greatest genocide ever committed was in the Soviet Union (M2).

This exposes how Russia's lack of Europeanness throughout its history impacts on current developments. Thus, a central point of the narrative is the equivalence between the Russian space and the Soviet regime with its horrors and repressions. The idea that Russia has never been historically European and, if it has, this was limited to the Russian leadership⁴² and thus does not share the cultural and value system of Europe is a recurrent theme in interviews (e.g. YL1, YL5). Similarly to the cultural arguments, counter-discourses rarely go all the way to consider Russia European from a normative points of view, but present it as an 'in-between', encompassing people who look⁴³ and think like the Europeans and people with 'purely Asiatic values', a transitional space (YL7). Thus, the cultural and civilizational divide discussed above translates into a values oriented dichotomy, with the Asian opposing the European. A very similar point also brings in the poverty of Russia, alcoholism and laziness in order

⁴² e.g Peter the Great's Europeanising reforms.

⁴³ There were hints at racial categorising in some of my interviews. I would argue it is an effect of the distinctiveness of the Tartars in this case. Nevertheless, the argument also appears in distinguishing between the Romanians and the Russian, the latter being described as having blue eyes (OT).

to argue for Russia's underdevelopment and lack of Europeaness. However, the main thread is, again, that of governance and the values that cause this phenomenon:

Russia is barbarian, it is not European. Their leaders' behaviour, their standard of living outside of Moscow and the great cities... It's a mess, alcohol, no money, under-fed, over-authoritarian...and this is not Europe. They don't really like working, just like any empire (YL3; see also Conțiu 29.01.2015).

My interviewees often blurred the borders in between different types of criteria in defining the Eastern space, as we can see above, merging the lack of democratic values within the political leadership with poverty and the negative characteristics of the population as a whole. This highlights the equivalence in between economic development, a good standard of living and good governance, as essential elements in the dichotomy in between East and West. Lastly, the West is represented as individualistic, as opposed to the collectivist Soviet mentality, an element common to Moldova and the rest of the post-Soviet states (e.g. PG10).

4.6. Conclusion

Through a set of equivalences around the external others of the two main national identity discourses, the Romanianism-Moldovanism antagonism translates into an East-West cleavage in foreign affairs representations. This is augmented through a series of dichotomies, ranging from democracy to civilisation and, even, racial origins. This argument builds on the assessment of the two national identity discourses as being built around a complex othering system. Both Romanianism and Moldovanism reject an external other, whilst associating it with internal and conspiratorial agents

within the country. More importantly, the Moldovan political system is divided not on ideological, but on national identity and foreign policy lines, adding an extra layer to the antagonistic construction of the two national identity discourses. This multi-layered set of equivalences and dichotomies reproduces a complex and wide-ranging cleavage across Moldovan discourses. Reciprocally, through the equivalences created, the cleavage between East and West, right and left, augment the divide between Romanianism and Moldovanism.

Thus, Moldovan national identity discourses reproduce a geopolitical East-West cleavage. This is the first part of the wider argument of the thesis, that national identity discourses in Moldova perpetuate a Cold War view of international affairs. Moreover, the two spaces are not only opposed through the dichotomies attached to them, but also through the fact that they are presented as in conflict over Moldova. The most obvious type of antagonism is the military one, a construction built around the Cold War scenario, including NATO. Yet, the conflict in between the two is also focused on an issue closer to home, Transnistria. This is illustrated in the way in which certain actors are represented as being critical to solving this issue:

We had, once more, a confirmation that the Transnistrian problem is a part of the Russia-West conflict and, thus, can only be solved with the involvement of NATO, the US and the EU (Cașu 24.04.2012).

This idea is analysed in more depth in Section 5.3, whilst discussing the basis for the Great Power Complex and the Moldovan representation of the self as inferior to its external others. The discussion of agency, as detailed in Chapters 4, supports the second part of the thesis' argument regarding the Moldovans' geopolitical representation of international affairs. It highlights the means through which the

Moldovans, from the individual to the state level, represent their identity as passive and lacking agency.

5. Problematizing Moldovan Agency

Moldova is in my opinion, like an orphan who has been abandoned by his family and has no sense of direction. He wants to do something positive, but in the end is left with his wish, but no concrete actions, because he is not sure where to go and is not ready to take responsibility for what he wants. (School essay quoted in Korosteleva 2010: 1285)

While Chapters 3 and 4 highlight the means through which national identity discourses reproduce the opposition between East and West, this last chapter shifts the focus to representations of agency. This chapter argues that Moldovan discourses portray both their leadership and their state, as an international actor, as passive and lacking agency. In contrast, this agency is awarded to external actors such as Romania, Russia and the EU. Thus, the analysis highlights the themes present in the quote above (Korosteleva 2010) from the lack of action to the expectation for someone else to ‘take responsibility’. In this endeavour, agency is defined as the capacity and willingness to act and attributed to both individuals, i.e. political leadership, and to states (Section 1.4).

Section 5.1 begins with an analysis of the ways in which Moldovan agency is problematized by historical representations. It argues that the Moldovans portray themselves as passive through the representation of victimhood as the main element of their historical narratives. It also acknowledges the importance of the structure formed through the interaction between different others, e.g. the relations between Germany and Russia. This structure is where Moldovan narratives place agency. Named the Great Power Complex, this phenomenon is not limited to historical articulations, but very common in contemporary understandings of international

affairs too. The last two sections of the chapter turn to representations of contemporary agency. The former (5.2) argues that Moldovan political leadership lacks agency in Moldovan societal constructions. This is achieved through a series of discursive mechanisms e.g. the perception that Moldova is just a territory and not a country and depictions of the Moldovan elite as corrupt. Lastly, Section 5.3, 'The agency of the other', argues that Romania, Russia and the EU are awarded agency and have the power to make decisions and act on the international stage. Moldovans transfer agency to them through the assignation of responsibility, both historical and geopolitical, and through the representation of the inferior Moldovan self.

This phenomenon is not limited to representations of history. In a related project I have argued that other Moldovan symbols, such as the ballad *Miorița*, also perpetuate Moldovan passivity (Humă 2015). *Miorița* is a ballad collected in Vrancea, the Southern part of the Romanian region of Moldova. The story revolves around an enchanted ewe who informs her shepherd that two of his colleagues are plotting his demise. The shepherd's response to the ewe's revelation is to accept his own death and as his testament to ask her to let his mother and his flock know he married a princess in a celestial wedding. Through the testament, the crime is translated into the main theme of forgiving and an ultimate understanding of the inevitability of death through the idea of communion with nature (Husar 1999). Nevertheless, the shepherd's testament represents his passive stance in relation to his attackers and resignation in the face of his destiny. This has inspired the association between the ballad and fatalism as a national characteristic of the Romanians (Michelet 1854).

Miorița is a central part of Moldovan identity. It lies outside of the opposition between Romanianism and Moldovanism, whilst also being adopted by supporters of both discourses. It is also a banal presence across Moldova and it is promoted by cultural elites such as novelist Ion Druta (Humă forthcoming). Miorița is also associated with religion and hospitality as other elements of Moldovan national identity (Cash 2011, 2013). Through this, the characteristics attached to Miorița, more specifically passivity, are generalised to the Moldovan nation (Humă 2015).

5.1. Agency in Historical Narratives

This section argues that the depiction of Moldovan victimhood across historical narrative(s) is the main resource for a representation of Moldova as devoid of agency. By definition victimhood involves a victim and a perpetrator, a passive agent, here the Moldovans, and an active one that is able to decide on Moldova's fate. Consequently, the Great Power Complex pin-points the agents that decide on Moldovan history and fate as the empires and states surrounding it and, to a great extent, the external 'others' identified in Sections 4.3 and 4.4. Lastly, the section brings these debates to the current day and argues that the Moldovans still employ these frames of understanding to argue for their lack of agency in the 21st century.

Most Moldovan discourses, as noted throughout my fieldwork, represent their history through a narrative of victimhood. The contention here is that in the case of Moldova we encounter a case of national victimhood. Studying East Asia, Lim (2010) has theorised that national victimhood is not only a generalisation of individual

victimhood to the whole nation, but also transcends through generations. Moreover, Renan notes that 'shared suffering unites people more than common joy, and mourning is better than victory for the national memory' (2002 [1882]: 81). This highlights the importance of representations of victimhood for nationalism in general and, I argue, for the Moldovan case, in particular.

For instance, museum exhibits, as part of an official historical narrative, encompass an important narrative of victimhood. Some exhibitions focus extensively on the Moldovans as victims of their destiny. The 1940s section at History and Anthropology Museum emphasises this. With very little explanation in the general notes regarding the room, all the objects exhibited are personal items that focus on the plight of the Moldovan Jews in concentration camps and, more generally, on the Moldovan plight during Soviet and Nazi occupation during the Second World War. This generalises individual experiences and suffering to the whole of the nation. Thus, instances of collaboration or any form of Moldovan agency during the Second World War are ignored altogether in a museum that is focused more on representations of Moldovan suffering and victimhood (Rabinovich 2012: 30-31).

Depictions of victimhood and its perpetrators differ depending on the external 'other' in each national identity construction. However, both Romanianist and Moldovanist narratives agree on the 'terrible' history of the Moldovans/Romanian on this territory. The idea of 'survival' (Section 4.2) is linked with 'victimhood' and the very idea of the nation is defined by these two themes. They are presented together, as

despite historical circumstances, political and ideological factors have negatively influenced the ethno-cultural development of the Moldovans [...] they have kept their ethnic sentiment, the consciousness that they are Moldovan and belong to this community, that Moldovan is their maternal language (Stepaniuc 2005: 262).

Both historians (e.g. Stepaniuc) and contemporary politicians and journalists employ the theme of victimhood extensively on both sides of the national identity cleavage.

The Moldovanist academic focus on Moldovan stateness leads to the neglect of other events of Moldovan history e.g. the Russian invasions of 1711 and 1739, but also on wider periods, such as 1918-1940 and 1944-1991 (Stepaniuc 2005). Nevertheless, the depiction of these eras, albeit succinct, is focused on Moldovan victimhood. For instance, Stati portrays the Moldovan situation in the 17-18th centuries through the anti-Moldovan policies of the Ottoman and Tsarist empires, the poverty of the Moldovan peasants and notes the 'terrible pains of the Moldovan people' (2002: 309-324, 395). Similarly, Stepaniuc argues that the decline of the medieval Moldovan principality was due to its

geopolitical situation – at the border between the Western and Eastern civilisations, between the Eastern side of the Roman [*sic*] world and the Slavic one – both threatened by the Ottoman empire in the 16th-18th centuries made the Moldovan [principality/]state pass through dark times, its existence being threatened (2005: 435-6).

Academic Romanianist examples that support the idea of Moldovan victimhood are also extensive. For instance, Gheorghe Ghimpu's monograph on Moldovan history describes

brutal Russification tendencies and denationalisation through colonisation and deportations, [...] great suffering at the hand of the Russian barbarism, the Romanian people in Bessarabia [were] enslaved by Russia (2002: 514).

He also quotes Alexei Mateevici's statement that 'Here in Bessarabia, you get goose bumps when you start the tale of our suffering' (Ghimpu 2002: 430). These are just a

few illustrative examples of articulations of victimhood across academic and historical studies.

The theme of victimhood is even stronger in my interviews, official declarations or newspaper articles where the space awarded to this theme relative to the length of the speech is larger. For instance, Communist former president Vladimir Voronin argued that 'We have a tumultuous history and throughout the centuries our fate has been painful' (15.4.2009) and, on another occasion, remarked that 'the era of Ottoman rule stopped Moldovan development [whilst writers] were recording, page by page, our terrible history' (30.1.2009). Adjectives such as 'terrible' and 'tumultuous' are employed as the main descriptors of the Moldovan experience. The same themes and, even, the same adjectives and expressions are used across the political (and national identity) spectrum. Liberal Mihai Ghimpu talks about the 'tumultuous, many times tragic destiny of this nation, its hunger for the truth and justice despite all the vicissitudes of time' (20.10.2009).

This construction is also generalised in day-to-day articulations and most of my interviewees noted the 'suffering of the Moldovan people' in their short summary of Moldovan history (e.g. YL3, PG5, PG7). One interviewee detailed: 'we've had a troubled history, we've been under Russian occupation and, then, Soviet occupation and the population had the misfortune to be subjected to an intensive Russification process' (PG1). Moreover, this interviewee assigns blame not only to Russia, but also to the Romanian 'other' as '[you] Romanians, you've given us up and we suffered and we struggled' (YL1). Similarly, the name Bessarabia and the whole period from 1812

onwards is associated with suffering (PG5). More importantly, interviewees employ the theme of victimhood to make sense of their current poverty and underdevelopment (e.g. YL3, OT6). Then, victimhood is also widely associated with the assignation of blame to another actor as

you go to the country side and the people, they keep looking for the source of the problem, for example: the state is guilty, and ... the problem is everyone is to blame but him and he only suffers (EX4).

Building on this representation of Moldovan passivity, Moldovans employ the Great Power Complex to assign agency to external actors. I define the Great Power Complex as the representation of, so-called, great powers as the central decision-makers in international affairs. This is corroborated with a depiction of Moldovan history as 'under the ages' and of Moldovan fates as determined by the empires and conquerors around them (Stati 2002: 12). Geographical positioning is portrayed as the source of this dramatic situation, as

our space is by definition defined by diabolical human experiments [...] from all sides. We are in a buffer zone and in the Soviet period the most terrible experiments were here, because we were a borderland and we needed to be the lesson in violence and purification (EX3).

Moldova's position as a borderland is associated with national victimhood and highlights the unlikelihood for the Moldovans to change their fate and, implicitly, to exert agency. Moreover, the representation of Moldova's position at the 'crossroads of empires' highlights the role of the 'empires' that took decisions among themselves about Moldova's destiny. A parliamentary deputy's assistant in Chisinau (PG13) argued

that 'we've been punished by fate, taken and passed around from one empire to another'. Another interviewee illustrates the historical Great Power Complex as

the great empires fought to conquest territories and to expand, and through this, they ended up fighting for this piece of land, either taken by the Ottoman Empire or by the Tsarist one. We've been at the borders of these empires who wanted to expand. And we've been unlucky because in between the wars between these empires, the Tsarists won and they split this land in two and then there was the creation of the Soviet Union [...] This is our history, we never had the choice to change anything (PG1).

The one point in history when the discussion on empires applies is the 1812 Treaty of Bucharest when, arguably, the territory of Bessarabia was transferred between the Ottoman and the Russian empires. All other key events in Moldovan history, as highlighted in Chapters 3 and 4, are defined by one 'empire', the Russians, and the Romanian state in its various forms. Nevertheless, this generalisation highlights the importance of the 'crossroads of empires' metaphor together with the constructed nature of Moldovan victimhood. The Great Power Complex is also illustrated in museums through the way in which next to a map of the Romanian lands there are maps of the 'Turkish' empire and of Russia (HAM); this framing emphasises the elements considered important by the museum's curators.

Similarly to the theme of victimhood, the Great Power Complex also transcends history and is employed to frame contemporary politics, e.g. in portrayals of Moldova as 'a battlefield between the great powers, between the US and Russia' (RFE/EL 23.12.2013). Moldova is not very high on the US's list of priorities, which underscores the constructed nature of Moldovan representations of foreign affairs. Moreover, the contemporary version of the Great Power Complex draws from the opposition between the two geopolitical spaces discussed in Chapter 4. A PLDM MP's assistant

argued that 'Moldova is defined by a clear confrontation between East and West [...] there are a lot of strings pulling Moldova in different sides, right or left, up or down' (PG13). Meanwhile, unionists acknowledge that 'Russia or someone else will decide Moldova's and Romania's fate. [...] The others, the governments that stand in the shadow, the great powers that will decide (PG2). Lastly, more than 50% of respondents in a 2010 Moldovan survey thought that Moldova is a pawn in international games (O'Loughlin *et al.* 2013: 251).

In this context, the great powers consist of Russia, the US, EU and its member states, as illustrated by a discussion with two foreign policy experts in Chisinau:

Besides the EU, there are Romania and Germany that are at play here. Romania comes here with clear geopolitical interests. The Germans have a series of agreements with the Russians and are interested in this area to satisfy their own interests [...] So, the Germans, the Romanians, the Americans are all here with their ears peeled, even the Poles who want to keep the Russians away (EX9, EX10).

Thus, a multiplicity of actors is part of the Great Power Complex. An important case study, both historically and contemporary in Moldova is the Russian-German friendship. Germany's interest in Moldova is somewhat limited; thus, the case-study highlights the disconnect between reality and Moldovan representation of foreign affairs. The key historical event defining this case study is the year 1939-40, when the territory of the Republic of Moldova became part of the Soviet Union, as a result of the 1939 Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement). My interviewees portrayed the agreement through the image of two external agents, Germany and Russia, deciding Moldova's fate (YL1, YL4). More importantly, the 'great power' theme is employed as a frame of understanding contemporary events:

In '99, there was the decision in Istanbul [to withdraw Russian troops from Transnistria] but Europe isn't interested in reminding Russia about it. Yet again the great powers, Germany, Russia are weaving their own [interests], because they have great economic interests (PG1).

This idea of a German-Russian agreement was a dominant theme in the first half of 2012, culminating with Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Chisinau in August 2012. Based on a problematic⁴⁴ Stratfor analysis (Unimedia 5.03.2012a), journalists and bloggers in Moldova developed a theory of conspiracy focused on the implications of a (possible) agreement between the two countries (RFE/EL 22.06.2012; Bogatu 24.08.2012). An important element in these representations was the idea that Germany, and implicitly, the EU, would agree to maintain Russian influence in Transnistria and sell out the Moldovan people, just as they had done in 1939 (EX1, EX11; RGN 1.06.2012). Additionally, some bloggers have even asked Angela Merkel to apologise for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and drew a parallel between Germany's actions then and now (Gandrabor 13.08.2012).

Hence, the idea of the 'great powers' as defining historical and contemporary Moldovan fate dominates Moldovan societal discourses, both on a general level and in more specific framings, such as the German-Russian relationship. This highlights the way in which national identity and historical representation of Moldova's lack of agency translate into contemporary arguments and position Moldova as a passive actor on the international stage.

⁴⁴ see Unimedia (5.03.2012b) for a critique regarding its veridicity and importance.

5.2. Representations of contemporary agency

Moving away from history, the rest of the chapter turns its attention to contemporary representation of Moldovan agency. It strengthens the main argument of the chapter, i.e. that external actors are portrayed as possessing agency in the detriment of the Moldovan self. The discussion starts off with a study of the ways in which Moldova, as a country and through its leadership, is portrayed in a passive way. This is achieved discursively through a series of mechanisms, from the direct construction of inaction and corruption to indecisiveness and the idea of a split leadership pulling into different directions. This is followed by a larger section (5.3) that attempts to resolve the question 'If not Moldova, then who is an agent?'. The answer stresses the importance of the external others, such as Romania, the EU and Russia, as saviours and emphasises the importance of historical and geopolitical narratives for their legitimisation in this role. The reality of the Moldovan state and its potential agency cannot be denied. The discourse of independence is almost hegemonic in Moldovan society and allows a certain power to act to the Moldovan self. This chapter stresses the challenges brought to this construction and offers a nuanced approach, focused on certain areas or events where agency is transferred to other actors.

The first argument supporting the representation of Moldova's lack of agency in foreign affairs holds that Moldova cannot have 'a proper foreign policy, because Moldova is not a country, but a territory' (YL2; Bulat quoted in Druta 2011). The idea that 'Moldova is not a natural state, there is no essence to it, so it has no direction' was noted across all my fieldwork (EX2). The ongoing conflict between the two

national identity discourses problematizes both the legitimation processes of the Moldovan state and the consistency of its foreign policy, since

You cannot have a foreign policy without an internal policy, there is no national ideal, no national project so what foreign policy can we even talk about. If you have a national ideal, a national project and a national idea you can go out into the world and find partners, supporters and you could have a foreign policy' (M1).

Moreover, the conflict between Romanianism and Moldovanism and, implicitly, the opposition between a pro-European and a pro-Russian orientation (Chapter 4) is the basis for the idea of a 'null vector' foreign policy. Romanianists employ the idea of 'multi-vector' as equated with 'no vector' to evaluate the Communists' foreign policy. The PCRM themselves stressed that their 2005-2009 foreign policy was aimed at cooperating with both the Eastern and Western spaces, an idea reiterated in 2014 (Unimedia 22.5.2014). Romanianists represent this orientation as standing still, not going anywhere or just going backwards, then forwards repeatedly (e.g. EX1, EX2, PG2, M3). The idea of 'standing still' clashes with the Moldovan view of foreign policy as a 'vector', which implies movement. In this way, this depiction of foreign policy as going nowhere is essentially a representation of no (action in regard to) foreign policy. Others are more moderate in their evaluation and note the extreme slowness of Moldova's foreign policy (e.g. PG13).

Furthermore, the challenges brought to the idea of Moldovan agency are augmented through three 'sins' of the Moldovan leadership: indecisiveness, foreign agency and corruption. The first is the portrayal of the Moldovans and the Moldovan leadership as indecisive, described as

I think we lack decisiveness, confidence. We are always waiting for approval from either left or right, up or down. There are things that are right, which we should do ... take the risk [and, in terms of foreign affairs, our leaders avoid] clear and univocal responsibility and taking a stand (EX1).

Furthermore, indecision is equated to someone else deciding on Moldovan fate, as

we Moldovans should [...] be more decisive in what we do, because we are very hesitating, we are a nation just waiting for others to come and solve our problems (RFE/EL 8.02.2014).

In this way, Moldovan indecisiveness is associated with lack of action and highlights how external help is presented as essential for Moldovan development and agency is awarded to external others.

Building on this last finding, the construction of Moldovan leadership as ‘conspiratorial others’, i.e. representing the will of the external other, is the second element employed to explain Moldova’s lack of agency. This is a dominant frame of thought in regards to external others and encompasses both the imperial and the friendly one(s), being independent of national identity orientation. A columnist in Chişinău argued that ‘the people here need someone to tell them what to do, be it Bucharest or Moscow’, whilst the New Right leader in Chişinău compared Moldova with a ‘whore that depends on who gives the most money, the Russians or the EU’ (M1, PG9). A slightly more moderate view is that

We [the Moldovans] are being led by some clans financed from outside. Even AIE, well, a part of it is influenced by Russia, another by Romania and the third get money from the EPP (European Popular Party) and they all need to have a common course, but they end up pulling in totally different directions (YL7).

The last element feeding into the representation of Moldovan agency is the corruption of the Moldovan political class (EX1, EX6). They are portrayed as only interested in money and their wealth is used to explain Moldova’s problems from

poverty to lack of action in international affairs (EX2). This view of Moldovan leadership is generalised across the Moldovan population, with 84% of Moldovans noting that corruption is widespread in their government (Gallup 2013). This is presented as betrayal (Saptamana 12.12.2011), whilst the Moldovan leadership is hypocritical, both in their relationship with the people and in foreign affairs, and duplicitous in their positions in Brussels and Moscow (PG5, YL2; Comunistul 19.07.2012). Concluding, Moldovan agency is challenged through a problematisation of Moldova as a state and the perception of foreign policy as going nowhere. Moreover, the Moldovan leadership is portrayed as equivocal and corrupt and is accused of representing foreign interest.

5.3. The Agency of the 'Other'

The last part of this chapter argues that contemporary Moldovan agency is not only 'lacking', but is transferred to Moldova's external others that act as saviours, 'big brothers' or teachers. The section stresses the means through which Romania, Russia and the EU are represented as Moldovan saviours. I highlight two main articulations that inform their portrayal: the representation of Moldovan inferiority and the geopolitical representation of foreign affairs. Moreover, this depiction of external others builds on a construction of the Moldovan self as lacking agency and draws from Moldovans' current feelings of victimisation and unhappiness, as highlighted above (in 'Representations of contemporary agency').

Sections 4.3 and 4.4 examined the way in which Moldovan thinking depicts the external other as superior, through a construction that echoes post-colonial thinking. The superiority of Russia, Romania and the EU impacts on Moldovan agency on two levels. This is achieved, firstly, through the continuation of their historical imperialism (i.e. 'ordering Moldova around') and secondly, through the representation of Moldovan elites as conspiratorial others, representing the external other's will. Through these two mechanisms, agency within national identity constructions is awarded to the external other. Chapter 4's analysis is limited to the 'threatening' external other, but othering processes also encompass positive others, be they internal or external, in mutually useful relations or supporters of the 'self's ambitions (see Petersoo 2007; Therborn 1995). Additionally, a national identity argument against an 'other' can be seen as an argument for another 'other' (e.g. Reicher and Hopkins 2001: 84). This is precisely the case in Moldova, as through the mirrored image between Romanianism and Moldovanism, one discourse's friendly other (e.g. Romania for Romanianism) is the other's threatening other. Thus, the existence of a saviour is apparent in the very structure of Moldovan historical narratives, with one power as the occupier and the other, as a liberator (Section 3.4). For instance, Romanianists see Romania as a saviour based on their perception of the radical change between the poverty and persecution of the 19th century and the joy of reunification in 1918, whilst Moldovanists portray Russia in this position based on their common experience of friendship within the Soviet Union (1944-1991) (see Ihrig 2007). Hence, the idea of Romania or Russia as 'game-changers' is, to a certain extent, inspired by the representation of these historical shifts in terms of Moldova's fate. Drawing from these

historical narratives, the Moldovans reiterate the idea of the saviour, teacher or helper in contemporary discourses.

From the point of view of relations with external others, agency is conceptualised in two ways. Firstly, it is defined as the power to choose and the possibility to act on that choice and secondly as the responsibility to do so. In this way, a transfer of agency translates as Moldova allowing or, more commonly, demanding or expecting an external other to act. Both processes are based on the 'inferiority complex' the Moldovans have in relation to their external other(s). The inferiority complex leads to the acceptance of help or of an external narrative of development. This problematizes Moldovan choice and, through it, Moldova's agency in certain areas. Moreover, Moldovan inferiority legitimises discourses that allow and even, asks, the external other to act in order to solve Moldova's problems; thus, it enables a portrayal of the external other as a saviour, responsible for Moldova's wellbeing or for Moldova as a geopolitical buffer zone. More importantly, a part of these representations are not Romanianism or Moldovanism specific, but more generalised within Moldovan thought, as is the case with the Great Power Complex. This is stressed through the way in which respondents relate in the same way to all external others, especially to both those belonging to the Eastern and Western spaces.

5.3.1. The myth of the saviour

The myth of the saviour plays a crucial role in the Moldovan narrative regarding its lack of agency. The concept of myth is a simplification mechanism: a naturalised story that provides guidance for Moldovan thought and actions (Section 1.2). The saviour is represented by another state/nation or through the portrayal of their political leaders, e.g. Romanian president Traian Băsescu or Russian PM/president Vladimir Putin. This latter conceptualisation builds on the work of Girardet (1986) on the myth of the saviour as an individual in French history and politics. The Moldovan myth of the saviour draws from the representation of the self as passive, 'lazy, and expecting gifts from other places. Even now with the European Community, we all expect... [...] many don't understand that movement must start here' (RFE/EL 23.12.2013). The importance of the myth of the saviour is emphasised in an interview with an anthropologist at the Natural History and Ethnography Museum:

[it's all explained by] the myth of the saviour ... someone must save us, we can't have it any other way. We work, but we have nothing, we labour but we are poor. Someone will one day come and make things right for us. It's the saviour myth ... someone has to come, the Americans, the Romanians or Moscow to help us (EX3).

The narrative of victimhood is directly linked to the representation of an 'other' that plays the role of the saviour and is not limited to Romanianism and Moldovanism. In this way Moldovan development is portrayed as dependent on other countries, as 'All roads are built from borrowed money. Foreign countries build them' (RFE/EL 18.01.2014). In this way, the saviour is represented not as a Messiah, but an almost indispensable helper or model that takes responsibility for Moldova's future and has sole agency in certain areas.

The idea of the saviour resonates with the Moldovan hopes for a better future and disappointment with their current circumstances (see Figure 5.1, IPP 2015).

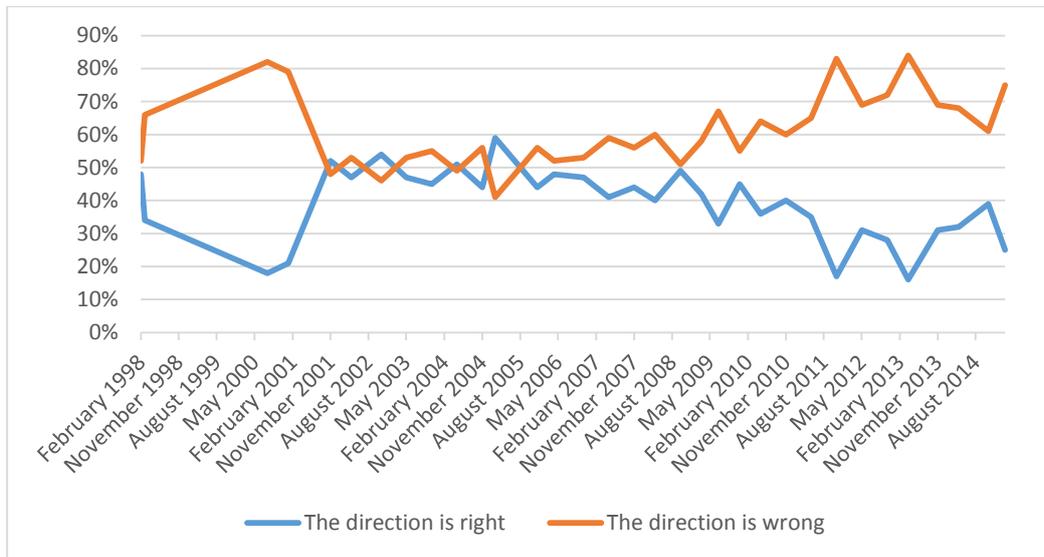


Figure 5.1. Responses to the survey question ‘Do you think Moldova is headed in the right/wrong direction?’ 1998-2015

The perpetuation of the theme of the saviour is also achieved through the way in which political parties promote their own foreign policy orientations as the solution to ‘all evils’. In these representations at least part of this solution lies outside of the country, not within the agency of the state or its political leadership. One such example is the Socialist plan to have a referendum in 2014 based on the question ‘Do you think integration in the customs union [the predecessor to the EuroAsian Union] space would solve your socio-economic problems?’ (JC 10.02.204). Through its ubiquity in mottos or party symbols, this myth of the saviour has the potential to have an impact on grassroots. Accordingly, the portrayal of foreign policy as the solution to Moldovan problems stresses the impossibility of the Moldovans themselves to achieve these objectives and offers a problematic view of Moldovan agency. Moreover, these articulations overlap with the national identity discourses regarding positive and

negative others and augment their discursive power. Analyst Doru Petruți explains Moldovans' attitude towards foreign policy as

most respondents want Moldova to be part of an union, either the EU or the Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan Union. It's important to be somewhere, to belong to someone, doesn't really matter to whom (RFE/EL 29.12.2011; see also Ciornei 12.09.2012).

Iurie Rosca (18.11.2011) underscores this point, in a critique of the current Moldovan political class and their dependence on external solutions. Mihai Conțiu (1.06.2015), writing for *Moldova Suverană*, argues that '[the Moldovans] are always in search of "elder brothers" and help, without being able to help themselves!'. Building on this, the next sections look in more depth at the mechanisms through which the myth of the saviour is articulated and focuses separately on each of the external others, Romania, Russia and the EU.

5.3.2. Romania

The dominant position of the saviour is occupied by Romania. Romania is depicted through the metaphor of the saviour both historically, in events such as the 1918 unification, and in contemporary representations. Firstly, through the construction of historical debt, Romania is portrayed as responsible for Moldova and the Moldovans. This phenomenon is summarised in the depiction of Romanian citizenship policy for the Moldovans. Secondly, Romania, in itself and as a member of the EU, is depicted as superior to Moldova. This inferiority complex feeds into the Moldovan transfer of their agency to their Western neighbour and its leadership. Lastly, this section focuses on

the way in which all these ideas come together in the portrayal of the Romanian president, Traian Băsescu.

Moldovans represent Romania as key to ensuring that they become European, not through EU integration, but by becoming Romanian citizens. Romania offers citizenship to any Moldovan who can prove their ancestors were Romanian citizens (from 1918-1940). Romanian citizenship and passports are presented as an open door to the West and, symbolically, as a rejection of the Moldovan situation and Moldovan poverty. Through this policy, the Romanian other is responsible for Moldovan welfare and is portrayed like a saviour (EX2, YL3, YL4). The main element in this depiction is the transfer of responsibility for the Moldovans' welfare to the Romanian other based on a representation of historical debt. This debt is constructed around the historical experience of the 1940s and 1990s. The reference to the 1940s relates to Romania's lack of action after the Russian occupation on 1940 and the developments of the Second World War that led to Moldova becoming a Soviet republic. Meanwhile, the 1990s refer to Romania's recognition of Moldovan independence, but with very little support (or interest) offered afterwards (Chapter 3). Both are represented as moments when the Romanians have 'left' the Moldovan people behind, as highlighted by a PNL member:

Romania will have us, that isn't the issue, because we are its citizens. My parents were born Romanian citizens and are asking themselves why we were left in 1940 to two bandits, Hitler and Stalin [...] and then in the 1990s we were abandoned again (PG2).

Another interviewee described the events of 1940 as

You... with Greater Romania gave us up and we suffered and were tormented, whilst you moved forward and advanced and now you don't want us? I hate this type of thinking (PG5).

Based on these arguments the Moldovans stress their right to their 'lost' citizenship and the Romanian responsibility to help. Agency is, then, associated with the allocation of historical blame to the Romanian 'other'. Moreover, Romania's representation as a saviour is directly linked to its past inaction. Additionally, Romania's 'historical debt' towards Moldova is presented as a 'duty', 'sacred thing' or something that belongs to the 'conscience' (YL3, YL6, EX3, EX6, PG1).

The second argument for the transfer of power and responsibility to act to Romania is the self-representation of the Moldovans as inferior to their neighbour. Inferiority is built on two main bases: national identity characteristics and Romania's membership of the EU. As a neighbour, the Romanian case is special through the constant contact between the people on both sides of the Prut River (i.e. the border between the two states). Through this, the perceived Romanian superiority is felt on an individual level and draws from day-to-day national identity elements such as spoken language. The most common difference between Romanians and Moldovans noticed by my interviewees is the linguistic (see Ciscel 2006). Section 3.3 highlighted a series of distinctions between Romanian and the language spoken in Moldova in terms of vocabulary (Deletant 1996, Dyer 1996). Interviewees argued that this difference is achieved through a contamination of their language with Russian terms and expressions or, to be more specific, with elements that belong to the national other, the Russian/Slav. The Moldovans translate this Russian influence as 'incorrectness'. They argue that they 'have a different dialect, [we] speak like a Moldovan, not

correctly Romanian with all the notions and correct expressions' (PG1). This construction appeared all across my fieldwork through comparisons with the language I speak, a rather accent-free Romanian. Most interviewees picked this up as foreign and argued that 'we [the Moldovans] speak a more Russified dialect, whereas you [the author] speak a polished/beautiful Romanian' (e.g. PG6). These circumstances mirror the direct contact Moldovans have with Romanians once they cross the border. Additionally, even those that argue their language is Moldovan make a note of its inferiority:

we call ourselves Moldovan because we speak Moldovan, which isn't as cultivated as Romanian language. We think Romanian is something above, more beautiful, more special (OT).

This is one of the ways in which the Moldovanist discourse takes root at grassroots level, through a conceptualisation of Moldovan as incorrect Romanian. But more importantly, it highlights how the Moldovans, Romanianists or Moldovanists, portray themselves as inferior to Romania through the medium of language representations.

Inferiority also extends to other cultural endeavours. Romanianists criticise the Moldovan consumption of 'entertainment' in Russian and from Russian sources (YL3). This is perceived as inferior to the Romanian one, and associated with negative behaviour, e.g. explaining violence as a consequence of Russian TV shows (YL4). Furthermore, Russia's role in Moldova's inferiority complex is also direct, through the elimination of a generation of intellectuals in the 1950s. This has created a sense of marginalisation, periphery and inferiority (to both Romania and Russia) which continues to affect Moldovan cultural creations to this day (M3; Conțiu 4.02.2013, 4.03.2013). Hence, the Moldovan cultural scene portrays itself as inferior to its

Romanian counterpart as an effect of the Soviet policies on this territory. Soviet influence is not limited to the cultural domain, the persecution of the Soviet years is also blamed for the current lack of a competent political elite (YL1).

Based on this representation, Romania is portrayed as enabling the Moldovans to overcome their deficiencies/inferiority. In particular, Romania aids the Romanianists to become (more) Romanian and, thus, European. But more importantly, this transfer of agency is represented as Romania's responsibility and through the expectation that Romania will solve these problems. In terms of language, Moldovans articulate expectations from Romania to provide programmes to teach Moldovans and, especially Moldovan teachers to speak 'proper' Romanian (M1); this sentiment is not limited to Romanianists (M3). Moreover, constructions of responsibility go hand in hand with blame in this case; according to Moldovans, the current situation in Moldova is due to the lack of proper Romanian policies in Moldova since 1991 (EX2, M2). Consequently, Romania is expected to act, whereas the Moldovan people are the space 'being acted upon' and lack agency even in terms of language correctness and reform. Some of these representations, especially the cultural ones, are limited to the Romanianists in Moldova. Nevertheless, the sense of inferiority, especially in relation to language, is more widespread.

Nevertheless, the Romanian obligation is not limited to cultural or citizenship policies. There is also a more general view that expects Romania to solve Moldovan problems, mentioned in almost all of my interviewees. One of them explained that

The Romanians have their own problems and then we come with ours. And what can they say: do we need the Moldovans with their issues? We must solve them ourselves, not ask others, it's not good (PG5).

Symbolically, the very fact that the Romanian flag flew above the Moldovan Parliament in the 7 April 2009 street protests (see Introduction) highlights the role awarded to Romania as a supporter of the 'revolution' and saviour of the Moldovans. Romania's is also linked to Moldova's European aspirations. In this context, they represent the Moldovan-Romanian relationship as

[should be] brotherly, as we've had the situation when Romania wanted to integrate in NATO and the EU and then, its relationship with Moldova was not a priority. And Moldova should be a priority for Romania, there should be a mechanism to promote investment, because of economic ties [Why would Romania do that?] It's only natural, we had a common past so it's normal for these bonds to exist in the present and to create some sort of perspective (EX1).

Similarly, a MP's assistant (PG13) argued that Romania 'should' develop policies ranging from support in the EU to the promotion of economic ties with Moldova, based on the existence of a common past (see also RFE/EL 21.02.2014). Hence, there is a certain expectation on the part of Romania to aid Moldova on its European path. Based on this expectation for help, the Moldovans transfer at least part of their agency to their Romanian 'other' in certain areas, as highlighted in the quote above.

This argument is focused on the portrayal of Romania as European, democratic and, accordingly, superior to Moldova. From this position, Romania takes the role of a teacher, of an older brother who is more experienced and knowledgeable. As opposed to Moldova, Romania is represented as a state with a historical experience and maturity that should act as an arbiter of Moldova's EU integration and a teacher that can help overcome the problems of the Moldovan political elite (PG1, PG2, PG4). The

problems that plague Romanian leadership and politics, especially the second referendum to dismiss president Traian Băsescu⁴⁵ (summer 2012) highlight the constructed and idealised nature of this Moldovan representation and the usefulness of a constructivist approach for this analysis. Based on this construction, Moldovans argue for a 'stronger rapprochement with Romania and the transfer of Romania's experience vis-à-vis integration, a better collaboration' (YL4). Some interviewees argued that the EU itself should recognise Romania's role and use it as a middle man in communications with Chişinău (YL5, EX6). This ensures Moldovan agency (and elites) are removed in their entirety from the process. Through this construction, Romania's lobby would help Moldova become a member of the EU before its ENP colleagues, e.g. Ukraine (PG7). More importantly, the diversity of sources for this data stresses the widespread representation of Romania as a helper, even relevant amongst Communists. This articulation is a reflection of the Romanian discourses of hubris regarding Moldova, their pride for help they give Moldova on its European path (RO1, RO2, RO3). Bringing together the idea of the 'teacher', as determined by Romania's 'European' character, with the national identity argument, I conclude that the portrayal of Romania in Moldovan thought can easily be described through the metaphor of the 'elder brother', more knowledgeable but also responsible for its younger sibling.

⁴⁵ A referendum on the impeachment of president Traian Basescu was held in Romania in July 2012. Despite an overwhelming majority voting for his suspension (88%), the referendum was declared invalid by the Romanian Constitutional Court; this was due to the turnout not reaching 50%, as required by Romanian referendum laws. These events divided the Romanian political class, leading to harsh accusation of anti-democratic behaviour across the political spectrum.

Thus, Romania is represented as a benefactor. Additionally, there is a representation of Romania providing Moldova's 'salvation'; this stresses the indispensable character of its help and the complete removal of agency from the Moldovan self on certain issues. For instance, an interviewee in Chişinău described Moldova's ideal foreign policy as:

We must be closer with Romania, only with Romania, this is our future. We must do our best so that relations between Moldova and Romania are the best because in case something happens Romania will help Moldova (PG5).

This sentiment is even more relevant in discourses of reunification with Romania, presented as a fast-track solution to a perceived long-term European integration process (Publika 26.11.2013). Nevertheless, most interviewees, especially moderate Romanianists, argue unification 'would be very good, but it's not going to happen' (OT). Thus, unification is deemed to be the 'ideal' solution, as opposed to the realist ones (M3; Conţiu 4.09.2014). This is the most relevant case of the myth of the saviour being tempered down through a series of mechanisms and discursive articulations. The first is the tendency across my interviews to only discuss Moldova's short-term future, almost as an acknowledgement of the volatility of the current political consensus⁴⁶. Secondly, unification is a marginalised option in Moldova discursively through the dominance of the independence discourses and through the economic and political realities it faces. This issue is highlighted through the Great Power Complex, as 'we won't be united and you know why? Because the great powers' interests are too great in this area' (PG12, YL4). There is some truth in this statement, but there are also

⁴⁶ political and foreign policy orientations have shifted repeatedly since 2000, for example in the Communists pro-European shift or the protests of 2009 (Section I.2)

alternative discursive articulations that underscore the constructed nature of these arguments. For instance, certain unionists argue that Romania should follow the example of its agency in the unification of the Romanian principalities in 1859⁴⁷. The press also portrays Romania as a solution to all Moldovan problems, from poverty to the democratic deficit (Publika 26.11.2013).

More importantly, the idea of unification (e.g. Lulea 14.11.2013) discursively challenges the ability of the Moldovan government to achieve the ultimate outcome of European integration. This feeds into the lack of trust the Moldovans have in their political leadership and their actions. Moreover, agency in the process of unification is awarded to Romania. For example, the idea that Romania should change its constitution in order to mirror the German situation of the early 1990s is further evidence of a disjuncture between reality and perceptions of it:

If Romania would introduce in their constitution a point that would suggest it wants reunification, things would move a lot faster [...] they started off on the wrong foot with the idea of promoting Moldova's integration in Brussels, Moldova will take at least 15-20 years to be in the EU and we cannot afford that, we may end up in Putin's Euro-Asian Empire in the meantime (PG2).

Then, agency is attributed to the Romanian leadership, considered responsible for unification by a plurality of Moldovans (CRSS 2014: 5). Thus, the Moldovan wider public articulates a view of unification that goes beyond the rational arguments, a representation that strengthens Romania's portrayal as a saviour.

⁴⁷ Arguably, in 1859 the so-called great powers did not consent, but through the support of the French leader, left an open door for the Moldovan and Wallachian principalities to unite. This was achieved by electing the same prince, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, by taking advantage of the fact that the Treaty of Paris (1856) did not forbid this.

Furthermore, drawing from the historical representations of their national identity articulation, Romanianists stress Romania's position as a saviour of Moldova on a wider scale. For instance, Lulea (31.05.2013) argues that Romania has repeatedly saved Moldova in the past years, from its scholarship programme for Moldovan students to its support for a pro-Western government in Chisinau. This type of 'saving' is based on the Romanian Europeanisation of Moldova and, implicitly, on Romania's superiority from this point of view. Lastly, Romania does tend to have an almost mystical symbolism attached to it, an ideal, similar to a heaven long lost for Romanianists. Moldovan national poet Grigore Vieru's words 'If some wished to go into space, all I wanted all my life was to cross the Prut' are illustrative from this point of view; some of my interviewees also described the Moldovans' longing to see Romania at least once (OT5). Based on this idealised version of Romania, the greatest wish of Romanianists is to (re)become Romanian.

Concluding, Romania is seen as a saviour, as taking responsibility for Moldova, a phenomenon even more poignant in radical national identity discourses. Shifting the focus to individual agency, Romanian president, Traian Basescu, is also represented as a saviour of the Moldovan people. This is due to his role in easing citizenship procedures for Moldovans during the late 2000s (OT5). This depiction of Basescu as a saviour of the Moldovans (i.e. giving them the opportunity to travel and work in Romania and Europe) is reiterated throughout my interviews (e.g. OT5, YL5, YL6). One noted that 'Basescu made me a Romanian with proper documents' (OT4), whilst others named him 'the president of the Romanians [not Romania]' (YL1). As of November 2014 the Moldovans were allowed to travel, but not work, in the EU without visas.

Thus, Romania's policy of citizenship for Moldovans still offers more than any Moldovan agreement with the EU has obtained in terms of free movement of people; this stresses the tangible base for Romania's portrayal as a saviour which challenges both the agency and the very utility of the Moldovan leadership. Bănescu's representation extends to other endeavours, from the donation of a wooden church to the town of Sorooca to the promised 100 million euros⁴⁸ of aid from the Romanian budget (Turcanu 17.07.2013). Additionally, Bănescu declared that he would apply for Moldovan citizenship once his presidential mandate in Bucharest finished. Some Moldovans reacted along the lines of: 'Come, Mr Bănescu, you can take us to Europe!' (ProTV.md 17.07.2013), as he was president in 2007 when Romania became a member of the EU (OT4). Consequently, as a nation and through its leader, Romania is seen as the saviour through the idea of reunification, but also as a teacher and elder brother that helps Moldova and solves its problems. The imagery of the saviour is present in both extremist, pro-reunification discourses, and more moderate ones.

5.3.3. Russia

Then, the Russian other is also presented as a saviour, though based on different criteria. I argue that Vladimir Putin is represented as a solution to Moldovan political instability and Russia is portrayed through its contemporary aid for Moldova and the memory of the Soviet 'golden age'. The Communists even portraying it as essential for

⁴⁸ Only part of which had materialised by 2014.

the 'modernisation of our country in principle' (Comunistul 24.06.2011), but Russia's appeal is widespread across Moldovan society. This is highlighted through the presence of this theme all across my data, mainly collected in right-bank Moldova. This is likely to be an effect of positive Soviet memories that colour Moldovans' perceptions to this day (O'Loughlin *et al.* 2013).

Firstly, Russian leader Vladimir Putin is portrayed as a saviour; he is credited with the power to solve the issue of instability and corruption across Moldova. This stresses the recognition of solutions to Moldova's problems outside of the country itself. Putin is represented as a saviour in contrast to Moldova's political chaos:

[Do you think the Russian example would be a solution for Moldova?] I think it would be, 100%. A Putin for Moldova would change the whole situation, for long term, 8-10-12 years. It may be dictatorship, but it would be better and he would hold the country together from every point of view (OT6).

More than 80% of Moldovans want a Putin-type leader (Geopol 2012: 12). In November 2013 Putin had 55% of Moldovans' trust, whereas the highest ranking Moldovan politician, Vladimir Voronin, barely got 43% (IPP 2013). Additionally, Putin's support is widespread across all ethnic groups in Moldova, as 77% of the Moldovan/Romanian ethnic group and 85% of the Russian ethnic group have a positive view of him (IMAS 2012a: 68). In this way, the Moldovans recognise another country's 'path' of development, attempt to copy it and hence, remove their freedom of choice and agency in the matter. But more importantly, the existence of an external solution through the image of Putin challenges the effectiveness of the current Moldovan leadership and the potential Moldova has to produce a leader such as him. Lastly, Putin is also portrayed as an 'acting' agent and as a friend of Moldova; for instance,

Moldovans residing in Russia voted for him with the hope that he would enhance Russian-Moldovan relations (RFE/EL 5.03.2012).

However, 'democratic stability' is not the only element where Russia is perceived as superior and, therefore, able to aid Moldova. Interviewees have mentioned areas, from technological development to financial aid, where Russia can play a direct helping role. The first was presented by a Moldovanist, who argued that

We can do a lot with Russian help [...] we have had cultural and scientific exchanges. It is clear that from a scientific point of view our possibilities of working with Russia are incomparable and through previous and current experience our perspective is huge. I'll give you a great example very few people know about: there is a state program called Moldovan Satellite. This program was initiated some time ago, but not currently functioning. Not all EU countries are able to develop and produce space satellites. We basically have done this with our domestic possibilities: workers, engineers, scientists, including programming. Yet, the problem is simple but costly as one must have a rocket to launch it. And there are two options: European Cosmic Agency or the same agency from Russia. In the first case you pay a lot of money, but in the second Russia gives us the opportunity to use their rockets for free. And we think about it: would it be better with Russia or Europe? What sort of stupidity is this... (PG3).

Previous 'cultural and scientific exchanges' stand at the basis of current and future relations; thus, historical experience and national identity narratives are employed to portray the relationship with the Russian 'other'. Moreover, the constructed nature of the argument is highlighted in a press statement noting that the European Space Agency may launch the satellite for free, as it would be on a research mission (Yupi n.).

More importantly, Russian aid is represented as indispensable and a part of the Russian responsibility towards Moldova. Similarly to the portrayal of Romania, this representation is based on the construction of historical responsibility. The articulation of historical arguments emphasises the importance of national identity constructions

for the contemporary portrayals of the other and how past experience dictates contemporary actions. This idea is reflected in 2001 Communist electoral campaign focused on the 'friendship of peoples' and the '[Soviet] golden age' (Suhan 2006). Reiterating some of these themes, a Communist local councillor argued in a 2012 interview

All we have here has been built with Russian support or contribution [...] They built 'Thriving Moldova' and brought in wagons of concentrates, grains, wheat, barley, peas, and here they built many animal farms, the workforce, everyone had work. Moreover, they sent specialists because we had none, they sent 20.000 specialists from Russia who came here and organised us (PG7).

The myths of the 'golden age' and of the 'friendship of peoples' are based on the memory of Russian aid for Moldova; moreover, they support the idea of agency transfer to this external other. Thus, even as the Communists portray themselves as the saviours in the 2001 electoral campaign, the in-depth narrative stresses the crucial role of the Russian other as the main agent. Communist leader Vladimir Voronin also highlights Russia's role as a helper in 2010; this argument is also based on an articulation of Moldovan history, but going back to the Middle Ages. He contends that Moldova's relations with Russia

are historic. There have been no cases, from Ștefan cel Mare and Dimitrie Cantemir and to the present day, that Moldova didn't benefit from the assistance and support of Russia (Comunistul 21.05.2010).

This is essential for understanding the Communists discourse vis-à-vis Russia's financial aid to Moldova. For instance, the aid Vladimir Putin put aside for repairs to the Moldovan Parliament building after the violence of April 2009 was represented as crucial for Moldovan development. This was achieved by linking the aid with the symbolic importance of the Parliament. More importantly, the Communists subtly

suggested that the Moldovans could not have fixed the damage themselves in a critique of AIE1's failure to capitalise on the aid after they came to power in late 2009 (PCRM 25.06.2009; 6.07.2009). Building on the historical experience of cooperation in the Soviet Union, the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakstan and the EuroAsian Union are also portrayed as a solution and salvation for Moldova by Moldovanist parties (Voronin 5.07.2012; Dodon 16.6.2014). The former is presented as a positive other, an anti-crisis option (Comunistul 27.05.2014). Meanwhile, Communist Mark Tkaciuk (27.12.2012) argues that the EuroAsian Union is 'Moldova's only chance to survive the crisis'. He sees it as crucial for the consolidation of Moldovan society by overcoming the perceived geopolitical polarisation of society. Thus the theme of Russia as a helper extends into a representation of the EuroAsian Union (and the Customs Union) are essential for Moldova's development.

5.3.4. The European Union

The last case-study with regard to 'the transferal of Moldovan agency' is the EU. Due to its absence in historical narratives, the nature of the EU's portrayal is somewhat different from those of Romania and Russia. The EU functions as an external other which can take the form of an indispensable aid or a saviour based on its superiority and on its geopolitical position. Moldova's representation of the West is not unique, mirroring articulations present all across central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Kuus 2007). The representation of the EU as a helper and saviour is mirrored in surveys, with more

than 46% of Moldovans associating the EU with the sentiment of 'hope' (Opinia 2013: 11).

Moldovans reproduce a somewhat naïve discourse regarding their chances of becoming members of the EU in the short term. This articulation is perpetuated through official discourses, such as the Moldovan government's political promises of EU membership by 2020 (Adevărul 17.10.2014). But more importantly, this wishful thinking is reflected in grassroots opinions, as 32% of 2012 respondents think Moldovan would become part of the EU within the next decade in 2012 and 46% in 2011 (IMAS 2012b: 132; 2011: 17). In this way, the representation of Moldova's European aspirations and hopes contradicts the reality of the process. This is due both to the length and the multiplicity of criteria Moldova would have to comply with and the EU leaders' hesitation in regards to the very process; up until late 2014 they had not presented Moldova with the prospect of membership. This disconnect highlights the importance of a constructivist approach for this analysis and the power political discourse, coupled with hope, has in reproducing the image of a saviour.

The inferiority complex towards the EU is based on the Moldovan depictions of the West as superior to the East and its own position as in-between the two spaces. The Moldovans employ two main characteristics to portray the European space: values and development (Section 4.5.1). Based on this superiority, the EU is represented as a teacher and an aid. More than 70% of Moldovans believe they can learn a lot from the EU on issues such as democracy, good governance, economy, security, etc. (Opinia

2013). They also think the EU perceives them as friendly (90%), peaceful (86%), but also laggard (75%) and weak (82%) (Opinia 2013: 8), stressing their own deficiency.

The EU's superiority is transferred to its member states, as illustrated in the representations of Romania as European. The Moldovans portray themselves as inferior not only to the 'big brother', but also to other post-communist countries in Eastern Europe, especially the Baltics. This leads to Moldova's acceptance of these countries' paths of development (e.g. EX2, YL2). The existence of these states and their success stories forms the basis for Moldova's adoption of their paths and creates the sense of inevitability, thus removing choice and, therefore, agency from the Moldovan self. The most obvious example is the rapprochement with Romania in order to promote EU integration. Yet, this acceptance challenges the idea that reforms should stem from the needs of the state and becomes problematic when certain decisions are contested by the Moldovan population. This was the case with the equality of rights law, which was widely rejected across Moldovan society, due to its mention of sexual minorities. Nevertheless the government argued that Moldova should be in line with other European countries, whilst the opposition stresses that Christian Orthodox members of the EU such as Greece and Bulgaria have not implemented such a rule (PG3).

The EU's superiority legitimises the transferal of agency to the Union through a series of mechanisms, from the recognition of Europe's development and legitimacy to impose these rules to an image of Europe that dictates to Moldova's leadership. The former is a teacher-pupil relationship, very similar to that with Romania, whilst the

latter was covered extensively in Section 4.3.1, in the discussion external and conspiratorial others. In the former case, Moldova is portrayed as a 'child of Europe, although not the most loved one' (PG5); this reiterates the family metaphor used to describe Moldova's relation with Romania. Korosteleva (2010: 1283-4) also highlights the Moldovan sentiment of inferiority and, linked to it, the representation of an unbalanced relationship within the European Neighbourhood Program. Another interviewee was a lot more specific in terms of his ideal EU policy towards Moldova:

I am a pro-European so I think their policy should be something along the lines of: come to us and in a year we'll solve all of your problems, you're only 3 million [Moldova's population] anyway and next to all of the EU's population. 33.000 square kilometres, three million people, in one year you will have motorways, jobs, you can live decently (YL7).

The argument of Moldova's smallness and, implicitly, the ease with which the EU could solve Moldova's problems either through aid or by making it an outright member of the EU (and then 'pouring money into it') appeared in a few of my interviews (M1, M3, EX1). A *vox populi* contribution also described the EU as 'these 28 countries are like a family. In hard times, they help each other, they support each other financially. Moldova needs something like this' (Unimedia 7.11.2014). Moreover, the EU's help is presented as truly indispensable, not only for Moldova's European aspirations, but also for its survival, as

the EU has the right policy through the aid it's giving us, keeping Moldova afloat. Without it, Moldova would be bankrupt. [...] So we have this support and ... I don't think there is an alternative (EX2).

ence, the EU's role is essential to Moldova's development, partially inspired by its superiority and through its resources (Mihail 9.04.2012).

Lastly, the image of the EU and its leadership as a helper and aid is augmented through the representation of the EU as a geopolitical saviour, within the representation of the East-West cleavage (Section 4.5). Similarly to Russia, the EU is portrayed as interested in its own area of influence. In this articulation the

EU wants to extend its influence [...] It's already lost the Ukraine, as there are Russian military bases in Sevastopol, they've already signed a contract for decades. The EU is interested to extend its own space, its area of stability in the east (PG13).

Across surveys, Moldovans consider that the three main reasons for the EU's actions in Moldova are to enhance the populations' living standards, expand the EU's territory and increase the EU's influence in the area (Opinia 2013: 7); the first reason links into the depiction of the EU as a saviour, whilst the latter two stress the representation of the EU as a geopolitical actor. In this manner, both the EU and Russia are represented as thinking in geopolitical terms, which strengthens the representation of their opposition (Section 3.5). More importantly, this offers the basis for a portrayal of their role as saving Moldova from the threat of the geopolitical 'other'. Through the very nature of the geopolitical conflict and the interests of each side to expand their area of influence, this help is a *sine qua non* action - a 'must' for Moldova that has the 'fortunate' position in between the two spaces. With this in mind, the EU is repeatedly criticised for its lack of involvement in Moldova on a whole range of issues regarding Russia. A columnist highlighted this in an interview:

I think that the EU should be involved more actively in solving the Transnistrian conflict, not only as an observer, but as a mediator [...] It should oppose Russian power in this area, but it's not very successful at it right now, although it should be (M3).

Accordingly, the EU has the potential to be represented as geopolitical saviour, albeit on a more limited scale; additionally the repeated use of the modal 'should' [*ar trebui*] suggests obligation as well as expectation. One practical example is the case of Moldova's gas resources. In this context, the EU's power as a geopolitical actor is stressed in terms of its power to negotiate directly with Russia on certain issues as

We cannot have relations of equality with such a big partner like Russia, only as part of the EU would we be able to have more proportional relations. [...] We can't negotiate with Russia in terms of energy security because we don't count [...] they won't give us what we ask for, because they are in the dominant position. But the EU could shift the balance... (YL6)

Thus, the same perception of Moldova as a small, insignificant country feeds into a representation that gives the EU the power to decide over Moldovan issues, such as gas prices. This depiction draws from the anti-imperialist narrative described in Section 4.2 and it denies any power to the Moldovan elite who negotiate on energy issues with Moscow. Contrary to this discourse, the Moldovan government has even managed to ensure gas prices went down in previous years (e.g. Adevărul 5.09.2011).

This example strengthens the importance of a more nuanced representation of the saviour, as a helper not a messiah. It enables Moldova to retain a certain amount of agency, but also fall into the trap of giving up some or all of it in certain situation. However, the more extreme portrayal of the saviour as indispensable is still present amongst certain groups, e.g. unionists. PNL leader Vitalia Pavlicenco (21.06.2013), despite using the term 'aid', sees no hope for Moldova to stand its ground in face of Russian threats without Western help. This illustrates how receiving/asking for 'help' actually represents this aid as indispensable and paints a picture in which Moldova has

no agency whatsoever; this offers a different take on what was perceived before as a nuanced myth of the saviour.

5.4. Conclusion

This chapter argues that the Moldovans construct themselves as lacking agency and award agency to their external others. In contemporary articulations, representations of agency are challenged through portrayals such as the high level corruption of political elites or the depiction of Moldovans as generally indecisive. In addition my interviewees also brought forward the idea of Moldova as a 'non-natural' state and, drawing from that, concluded that it cannot have a foreign policy. Meanwhile, the representations of external others as agents on the international stage is focused around the legitimising power of history. This is achieved through the reiteration of historical themes such as the Great Power Complex and historical debt; these enable the Moldovans to transfer responsibility and the power to act to external others. Yet, the geopolitical divide (Chapter 4) also plays a crucial role in the representation of the external other as a saviour in Moldovan consciousness and, thus, in the transfer of agency to them.

Lastly, as noted in the chapter, some representations have tangible bases, but most are essentialisations of the current situation. One example of the former is the fact that Romanian citizenship policy can be far more valuable to the Moldovan citizen than their own government's attempts to move closer to Europe. Nevertheless, the way in which Romania is framed as a saviour illustrates a deeper need in Moldovan

society for someone to take this role and augments the reality of the Romanian-Moldova relationship. At the opposite end of the spectrum, constructions, such the prospect of EU membership for Moldova either as an independent state or as a result of unification with Romania are in stark contradiction to the current Moldovan reality. They illustrate the power of political discourse and grassroots representations to perpetuate an illusory representation of foreign affairs.

Moreover, the chapter also highlights the far-reaching influence of national identity articulations in Moldovan society. Even as the analysis seems to have moved away from national identity discourses, most of its arguments still employed them extensively. The very few that could not be strictly related to them (e.g. leadership corruption) are studied in order to offer a comprehensive analysis of the context within which national identity discourses function and the other constructions they interact with. Hence, the analyses of historical narratives and external others are based on the national identity structures that define these. Furthermore, national identity also creeps in other arguments, from the idea of indecision as part of the national character to the legitimation of Romanian and Russian policies through the representation of a community of identity.

The analysis of constructions of agency is crucial for the discernment of the way in which the Moldovans depict international affairs through a Cold War lens. The first two chapters of the thesis focused on the way in which the Moldovans see the world as divided on geopolitical lines, between East and West. This chapter sets the basis for understanding the portrayal of the Moldovan state as a country that does not have a

say on the international stage, a state that cannot or will not act. Consequently, the Moldovans represent themselves as passive through a whole range of mechanisms and involving both internal and external characteristics. This portrayal acts as a discursive constraint that limits the discursive possibilities and credibility of dissonant foreign policy representation. For instance, it problematizes the credibility of foreign policy discourses that argue for Moldovan action and not for external solutions. This offers an explanation for the multitude of references to external others in electoral campaign, from the Socialists' banners with Putin to the PLDM's slogan 'Forward, towards a European Future!' (see Section C.2 for a more in-depth discussion). Therefore, the construction of the external saviour, be it Romania, Russia or the EU, functions as a discursive resource for foreign policy articulations to build on.

Conclusion

The main finding of this thesis is that in the Moldovan case, national identity discourses produce and reproduce a representation of international affairs through a Cold War lens. This construction is defined by two main elements, the representation of the civilizational and geopolitical cleavage between East and West and the lack of agency awarded to the Moldovan self (state or leadership). These discourses are the means through which the Moldovans rationalise the world; they act as a filter for understanding contemporary events, from the Ukraine crisis to Moldovan poverty. Due to the geopolitical construction's widespread usage in political, media and elite discourses, it becomes very hard to think outside it. By reiterating these constructions, the Moldovans help perpetuate the idea of their own passivity and lack of agency together with the East-West cleavage. Through its focus on representations of foreign affairs, this geopolitical representation functions as both a resource and a constraint for foreign policy discourses in Moldova and their legitimisation process.

The thesis also draws a series of conclusions vis-à-vis the national identity debate in Moldova. Chapters 3 and 4 highlight that Moldovanism, as a corroboration between a civic and an ethnic discourse, functions in very similar ways to ethnic Romanianism, almost mirroring it. This sheds light on the fact that despite the perceived theoretical differences between ethnic and civic identities, Moldovan national identity discourses are organised on the same matrix. In order to cater to the same discursive needs of society and offer a comprehensive alternative to each other, Romanianism and Moldovanism mirror each other in content. Moreover, these two constructions of

national identity are articulated consistently across Moldova. The same themes are presented uniformly from the academic to the political, media and grassroots levels; this suggests that the national identity cleavage has led to a pillarization, a vertical division, of Moldovan society.

Additionally, the thesis stresses that the dichotomy between Romanianism and Moldovanism is not necessarily black and white. In most cases this dichotomy is a nuanced construction. For instance, whereas a radicalised Moldovanist discourse excludes the Romanianists entirely from the Moldovan polity, most current articulations focus on a rejection of the power relationship that portrays the Romanians as somehow superior or in charge of Moldova. I contend that the main promoters of Moldovanism and Romanianism have adapted the discourses to take a more moderate stance in contemporary Moldova. These constructions do however become radicalised in situations of conflict, such as the accusations of coup and extremism raised during the Twitter Revolution (BBC 9.4.2009).

C.1. Original contribution and Importance of Study

This thesis contributes to existing scholarship in two main ways: to the literature on Moldovan national identity and to the analyses of Moldovan foreign affairs. **Firstly**, it augments the literature on Moldovan national identity by bringing the debate up to the current day. This is achieved through the data collection process which covers 2009-2014. Moreover, the unique focus of the analysis has also led to a broadening of the data collection process to encompass topics previously under-researched. In this

manner, the first two chapters build on the existing literature; they enhance it in terms of their analysis and they also bring it up to date, i.e. 2009-2014. More importantly, this thesis also opens up new areas of research through its focus. For instance, Chapter 5 brings a new perspective to studies of Moldovan national identity through the analysis of agency in historical and contemporary representations; it highlights the importance of ideas such as the Great Power Complex for elucidating Moldovan history and the Moldovans as a nation. This stresses the importance of a different research focus in order to obtain original conclusions for the thesis.

The thesis' **second** contribution to knowledge is achieved through its post-structuralist, discursive approach to the issue of Moldovan nationalism. Although not strictly post-structuralist, the literature on Moldovan national identity has touched upon the idea of discourse. Yet, these research pieces are somewhat limited in their focus. For instance Cash (2009) concentrates on the meanings attached to the idea of Europe, whilst Danero Iglesias (2013a) pinpoints the inconsistencies of the Moldovanist historical discourse. This thesis takes this further and provides a comprehensive analysis of Romanianism and Moldovanism, their basis and main arguments. It systematises the main tenets of the two discourses and highlights the importance of equivalence and difference in their construction. In this way, it develops the existing literature, such as the historical analyses of Danero Iglesias (2013a), Ihrig (2006, 2007) and sociological ones such as (Protsyk 2006b). Hence, the thesis underscores the discursive connections between the different aspects of national identity constructions and the way in which they reinforce each other and ensure Romanianism and Moldovanism's dominance across Moldovan society.

Nevertheless, the main contribution of the thesis is through its **post-structuralist perspective** on representations of foreign affairs in Moldova. This discursive approach enables the thesis to link national identity to foreign policy discourses and conclude that national identity helps perpetuate the view of international affairs through a Cold War lens. Most of the existing research on Moldova's foreign relations, especially by Moldovan and Romanian authors, focuses on a geopolitical understanding of the world, in general, and the region, in particular (Dungaciu 2005, 2009 etc.). This thesis is the first study that applies a critical approach to the analysis of Moldovan foreign affairs. This approach offered me the opportunity to study the assumptions and 'common knowledge' at the basis of representations of international relations. The thesis highlights the means through which the Cold War view of the world is reproduced in Moldovan discourses and offers a different way to conceptualise Moldova's foreign relations.

This research also fulfils the purpose of critical theory and offers alternatives in thought and action. By stressing the discursive constructs that limit present patterns of thinking, the thesis highlights the means through which these can be changed and their bases challenged. This is especially relevant in the chapter on agency (5), which stress the means through which inaction is legitimated in Moldova. This part of the analysis comes as a response to a dominant view among laymen and columnists that the Moldovans should do more by themselves and for themselves. This underscores the nature of this part of the research as a response to current concerns within Moldova. Thus, the thesis not only brings a new approach to the analysis of foreign

policy representations in Moldova but, more importantly, it challenges the dominant, geopolitical view of international affairs and offers avenues to dismantle it.

It also offers an explanation for the persistence (to the point of obsession) of the idea of **geopolitics** in Moldova. The term is very common and it appears in almost all of my interviews. The idea of geopolitics is also widespread across the media (newspapers and online blogs). It is a sort of 'go-to' explanation, widely employed to make sense of Moldovan foreign affairs both in academic circles and across Moldovan society. Geopolitics' ubiquity is also reflected in Moldovan bookshops: a central one in Chişinău had a dedicated display shelf with books on this topic; these comprise of titles from geopolitical analyses and studies of the idea of Occident and Orient to national identity and historical studies, stressing the links between these themes (Appendix 2). Reinforcing their importance, a good part of my interviewees mentioned reading some of the books on geopolitics from the shelves (e.g. Dan Dungaciu's *Moldova ante portas*, 2005) (YL1, YL3). Thus, the importance of the study stems from both its relevance to current affairs, through the way in which the analysis extends all the way up to the Moldovan elections of November 2014 and for its usefulness in making sense of day-to-day elements of Moldovan life, such as the contents of a book shop window.

From a practical point of view, the study offers a perspective on the means through which foreign policy articulations are legitimised beyond economic and instrumentalist reasons. It stresses the importance of national identity, as a discourse that can be more **resilient** in defining people's attitudes in the face of changing economic circumstances. This is relevant with the shift in Moldovan economic

relations with Russia and the EU in the recent decade and, especially, the Euro Crisis. Ultimately, the analysis offers a perspective for the Moldovan government and elites to attempt and change these views across society. It can aid the pro-European supporters to promote their ideas and stresses the limitations they face both in terms of discursive continuity, consistency and the persistence of geopolitical patterns of thought.

Additionally, the Moldovan case offers insight into the narratives of other **post-communist countries**, for instance Ukraine. For example, the myth of ‘two Ukraines’ mirrors the national identity cleavage in Moldova. Mykola Ryabchuk (1992) defined the idea of the ‘two Ukraines’ as the cleavage between the Western, nationalist and pro-liberal, and the minority Eastern, Russian-speaking population. Recent political discourses in the Ukraine have also articulated ideas similar to those analysed in this thesis, e.g. associating the conspiratorial and external Russian others. Moreover, just like in Moldova, ‘the two Ukraines’ is an essentialisation, as the realities on the ground are a lot more complex. This is very important and should warrant further research, especially as a comparison between Moldova and the Ukraine would shed light on the importance (or lack thereof) of the ‘small country’ theme in these articulations. Furthermore, the current interest in the Ukraine has also increased the importance of this research and highlights its relevance to understanding the mechanics of national identity in the region.

The Ukrainian comparison emphasizes the commonalities in terms of national identity constructions and their consequences. For instance, the myth of the ‘two

Ukraines' can be employed as a mechanism to legitimise failure. This is the failure of the Kiev government to appeal to the Eastern, Russian-speaking, part of the country, which is explained through cultural, national and ultimately, civilizational arguments. Thus, its very perpetuation helps reproduce the idea of a divided country. In the same way, in Moldova, the Russian-speaking minorities are portrayed as uncooperative, as Russian agents and as bad citizens (Chapters 3 and 4). This legitimises Chişinău's failure to engage these groups into the wider polity and create a common Moldovan identity. Moreover, the Huntingtonian divide that overlaps with this essentialised view of national identity in Ukraine is very similar to the representation of the East-West cleavage in Moldova. This illustrates the means through which a narrative such as Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' has been applied to fit Moldova, despite its inconsistency with the case study (religiously, Moldova belongs entirely to Huntington's Eastern space). Thus, such representations across the post-communist world are to a great extent constructed and this underscores the importance of a poststructuralist approach to analyse them as discourses, together with their discursive sources.

C.2. Consequences for Foreign Policy

The importance of this analysis stems from the implication of its conclusions for the study of foreign policy in the Moldovan case. The scope of the thesis is a comprehensive analysis of the societal system of symbols and narratives that offer the framework for official foreign policy discourses. In order to stress the impact of this

framework, this section is an exploratory study of the means through which geopolitical discourses are reproduced and challenged on the official level and some of the consequences stemming from these patterns of thought for the Moldovan public; it brings together the points made throughout the thesis regarding foreign policy articulations and gathers further evidence to emphasise the importance of societal geopolitical representations in Moldova. Three main types of national identity influences are noted throughout: the direct usage of national identity narratives, the reproduction of the East-West divide (Chapter 4) and the representation of Moldovan agency (Chapter 5). The importance of the societal discourses analysed across the thesis is marked on two levels. Firstly, they are almost ubiquitous across articulations of foreign policy and are employed to augment instrumentalist or economic arguments, but also trump them in certain situations. Secondly, national identity based arguments are more resilient than economic and instrumentalist ones as they are imbedded in the national consciousness of Moldovans.

C.2.1. National Identity

Even as Moldovan foreign policy has been repeatedly argued to be pragmatic and multi-vector, balanced in its relations with the Western or Eastern geopolitical and civilisational spaces (e.g. King 2003), the link between national identity and foreign policy is pertinent. Foreign policy in Moldova reproduces at least discursively elements of national identity, especially Romanianism/Moldovanism's interest for one geopolitical space over the other.

The first element pin-pointing the influence national identity discourses have on foreign policy articulation is the reproduction of the cultural and linguistic tenets of the two national identity constructions. For instance, the Communists have argued that their pro-Russian foreign policy is based on the historical experience of Ștefan cel Mare (Introduction), whilst Vlad Filat's argument vis-à-vis Moldova's Europeaness is based on the country's Latinity (Section 3.3). This idea is reiterated across 2009 to 2014. One of the latest examples of this argument is Prime Minister Iurie Leanca's statement to Frederica Mogherini (EU High Commissioner for Foreign Policy) in September 2014. He stressed Filat's idea of Latin origins as a reason for stronger ties between Moldova and Italy and to legitimise Moldova's European aspirations (Unimedia 1.09.2014). The association between being Latin and European, raises questions over the linguistic definition of a continent that comprises of a wide array of linguistic families (Section 4.5.1). Nevertheless, my interviewees suggested that the linguistic cleavage in Moldova, between Romanian/Moldovan as a Latin language, and Russian, as a Slavic one, reproduces the border of Europe and, implicitly, the cleavage between East and West (Chapter 4).

Additionally, other parties have also articulated elements of national identity that go beyond the two main discourses, such as religion. The religious argument was at the centre of the Socialists' rejection of the European Union, with the support of the Moldovan Orthodox Church leaders. It was focused on the opposition between the cultural and religious characteristics of the Moldovan people and the liberal (and, even, immoral) European Union; this was due to the EU's requirement for Moldova to adopt the equality of rights law, a measure that includes references to 'sexual

minorities' (Section 5.3.4). Thus, the theme of identity, traditions and religion was employed to reject the European Union. This construction is based on the Moldovan identification with its religion (Cash 2011). Moreover, across Moldova religion is widely linked to national characteristics such as '*bunatate*' [kindness] and hospitality (OT). The Socialists' ambition was, through this discourse, to unite the whole of Moldova against the government. However, this attempt led to further divisions within Moldovan society; e.g. in response to a protest organised by these groups, one of my interviewees outright rejected this identity and the political action associated with it (EX4). Thus, radicalisation can lead to different levels of engagement and, even, to the rejection of a 'Moldovan' identity, Christian Orthodox religion in this case. In this way, the politicisation of national identity produces and perpetuates, in a vicious circle, societal cleavages.

C.2.2. East and West

The second element that has the potential to be translated into foreign policy discourse is the **opposition between East and West**. This is achieved through a choice for one and against the other of these spaces, e.g. pro-EU, against Russia. The idea is stressed through the very way in which foreign policy in Moldova (2009-2014) is represented as a 'vector', which suggests some sort of movement in a singular direction (Section 5.2). This conceptualisation is employed by leaders across the Moldovan political spectrum. Democrat Marian Lupu discussed the Moldovan 'vector of European Integration' (RFE/EL 18.05.2013) and similar ideas were put across by the

former Communist Minister of Foreign Affairs (2004-9), Andrei Stratan (RFE/EL 18.03.2013) and former PLDM MP, Ion Ciontoloi (RFE/EL 8.02.2014). Moreover, foreign policy is depicted as single vector, or for this period, as pro-European, as the name of the governing coalition, 'Alliance for European integration', suggests. Romanianist parliamentary parties take this even further when they stress this element in their visual representations. For instance, the Liberal Party has a map of Europe on its website header, with arrows from Chişinău to Brussels, whilst the Liberal Reformists have chosen an eagle that is 'headed towards Europe' as their emblem (Publika 14.09.2013). This theme is even more relevant in electoral campaigns, where messages tend to be short and where one side is clearly chosen over the other. For instance the PLDM's 2014 slogan was 'PLDM for Europe' and they were committed to fight for 'A European future for Moldova'. These discursive mechanisms promote the representation of foreign policy as leading somewhere, towards one and only one of these spaces, i.e. East and West. This construction perpetuates the incompatibility between East and West and highlights the incongruences of a multi-vector policy.

Moreover, the reproduction of the East-West dichotomy is not limited to these communicational strategies; it is also present in the discursive constructions of the opposition. For instance, an interview with a Socialist party leader highlighted this perception of East-West relations as a zero-sum game in 2012 (PG3). He argued that the government's EU aspirations have severely damaged Moldova's relations with what described as a crucial and strategic partner, Russia. The Communists' echoed this construction in an appeal to Moldovan president Nicolae Timofti and described the 2009-2014 period

The previous path of internal reform and European modernisation was changed to one defined by the imposition of a Romanian protectorate on our country, with limited sovereignty, a bankrupt economy, villages destroyed and an aggressive anti-Russian policy (PCRM 14.05.2014).

Through their criticism, the opposition parties perpetuate the idea that it is impossible for the government to have good relations with both Eastern and Western actors and thus strengthen the societal representation of the East-West dichotomy.

The very name of the AIE suggests the preferred foreign policy orientation of the government. Yet, their discourse is a lot more docile, very similar to a multi-vector foreign policy at times. The Moldovan government has managed to bring the pro-Western and pro-Eastern orientations together by employing a series of mechanisms. The approach the Democrat party, a member of the AIE, but a promoter of good foreign relations with Russia, has taken is to differentiate between foreign policy and internal modernization. They portray foreign policy as cooperation and good diplomatic and economic relations with countries all over the world; in this way, they challenge the East-West divide through the focus on specific countries and not geopolitical spaces. More specifically, Marian Lupu (3.11.2013), the Democrat Party leader argued that

we don't want to be isolated from the rest of the world. Our country will be a strong bridge between East and West. We are and we will be in good relations with Ukraine and Romania, with Russia and Germany, with Belarus and Italy, with China and the US. Moldova is an open house!

Meanwhile, internal modernization is represented as the process of Moldovan reform through the application of European norms and values; Lupu defines these as 'a system of political, democratic, economic and social values and human rights [...] associated with Moldova's future' (RFE/EL 18.05.2013). Thus, the two concepts are

constructed around the difference between values and economic interests, somewhat between idealism and pragmatism. This enables the Democrat foreign policy articulation to reproduce the normative cleavage between East and West and maintain a pragmatic (and untainted by values, norms or national identity predispositions) relation with Russia. This differentiation between foreign policy and internal modernisation also enables analysts to evaluate the two 'foreign affairs' endeavours separately, through different criteria; this ensures that a multi-vector foreign policy would be free of any national identity, historical or 'otherness' based criticisms.

A very similar case is that of the Communist government's 2005-9 foreign policy. Despite their pro-European slogans in the 2005 election, Communist foreign policy shifted in between pro-European articulations and one of balancing East and West. According to the Communist leadership, a 'balanced' foreign policy draws benefits from both the Eastern and Western spaces, like a good calf milking two cows. Despite their ambiguous foreign policy, the Communists implemented a moderate Moldovanist project throughout the period. They promoted Moldovanist policies and positioned leading Moldovanists in the party and official structures (March 2007). Hence, on a superficial level, their declared pro-European foreign policy (strand) clashed discursively with their national identity views. This mismatch was solved by disrupting the discursive link between Romania and the European Union; more specifically, the Communists promoted good relations with Europe, whilst maintaining the Moldovanist dismissal of the Romanian other. Romania is portrayed not necessarily as the enemy (until the events of April 2009, as discussed below), but through a rejection of hierarchy. Former Moldovan president Vladimir Voronin, explained this as

We can't talk about our relations with Romania in epithets – a brotherly or privileged relations, but about bilateral relations in between two states [...] We cannot accept neither elder brothers nor sisters. As long as Bucharest does not understand this, we cannot talk about relations (Adevărul 21.12.2006)

Additionally, he argues that Chişinău can have a relationship with Brussels without Romania as either an intermediary or helper; this stresses the rejection of a hierarchical construction of the Romanian external other (Chapters 3, 4 and 5). Thus, by disconnecting the European and Romanian others, the Communists have both reproduced the Moldovanist discourse vis-à-vis the representation of external otherness and legitimised a pro-European foreign policy. Hence, the current and last government in Moldova highlight two mechanisms employed within official foreign policy discourses to work around the national identity determined societal construction of foreign affairs. The first is a different conceptualisation of foreign policy and the second consists of breaking some of the links within the network of equivalences created around Moldovanism. This stresses both the power of these discourses in Moldovan society, their adaptability, the means through which chains of equivalences can be built and reorganised in order to be taken into account in official foreign policy articulations.

Nevertheless, there is a significant difference between the official and the opposition foreign policy arguments in Moldova. This difference lies in the level of radicalisation of othering processes within these discourses and, implicitly, the degree to which they retextualise national identity constructions. The opposition's freedom to articulate more radical discourses (2009-2014) is partially due to them not being subject to diplomatic rules of engagement or other official constraints. Additionally,

the political cleavage between left and right is an important factor in the creation of these radicalised representations. This adds an extra layer in the opposition-government comparison; the former does (or should) not have a politicised view, in contrast with the opposition who 'live to criticise' the government. Thus, a wide array of criteria differentiates the official, i.e. government (president, prime minister or minister of foreign affairs) from other political articulations, but these require further research. Stemming from this notable difference, the main focus of additional research is a comprehensive analysis of the content of foreign policy articulations across Moldova, especially focused on a comparison in between electoral promises and 'in government' discourse. This would enable us to grasp which additional elements need to be taken into consideration within a wider analysis of foreign policy. One of these is the limitations set by the diplomatic rules (or the fears of actual repercussions) or democratic legitimacy (i.e. voting behaviour).

Thus, societal discourses are to a great extent tempered within political and especially official (i.e. the parties in power and government officials) articulations. The very fact that some national identity elements still come across even in these circumstances is proof of their power in Moldovan society. The importance of these discourses also becomes apparent with the radicalisation of articulations in situations of crisis. For instance, whilst the Communist discourse regarding Romania was somewhat tame during its 'pro-European' years (2005-9). However, the Communists radicalised their representation of the Romanian other during the 2009 Twitter Revolution; this was achieved through claims of espionage, violations of Moldovan sovereignty and independence and accusation of organising a coup d'état. Thus,

national identity articulations form the matrix of resources employed to make sense of different situations, especially those of crisis, in a more or less radical ways.

Lastly, the discussion on national identity and foreign policy discourses suggests that the idea of a multi-vector foreign policy has limited popularity amongst national identity supporters, as it clashes with their representations of otherness. For instance, the credibility of the Communists' pro-European foreign policy is problematic for a Romanianist. A range of my Romanianist interviewees noted retrospectively that Moldova's foreign policy between 2005 and 2009 was not even remotely pro-European (e.g. OT3, EX1, YL4, YL5). This view is strengthened by constructions such as those of the Liberals, who argue that a 'multi-vector' foreign policy is the same as no foreign policy and represented by its critics as standing still (Section 5.2). This was illustrated across interviews in Moldova, but also in newspaper columns, e.g. 'during the Communist regime, we weren't going anywhere' (PG5, YL2). Moreover, Moldovans portray the current government as betraying the European ambition of the Moldovans, by cooperating with Russia. A particular case of this was the concession of the Chişinău airport to a Russian agent in 2013, presented in Jurnal de Chişinău (8.10.2013) as the government and Moldova being at Moscow's 'mercy'. Moreover, the oppositional representation between East and West and the need for Moldovan parties to make a choice between the two became very poignant for the Communists in the 2014 parliamentary elections. A series of analyses conducted after they slumped from being the biggest party in Moldova to third have blamed for this failure (amongst other reasons) the Communists' lack of a staunch pro-Russian position in the electoral campaign, somewhat wavering between East and West (RFE/EL 1.12.2014; Infotag

1.12.2014). Taking this into account, the ultimate problem is that a Moldovan government can find it somewhat hard to legitimate its 'all appeasing' foreign policy. This leads to lack of confidence in the government and the Moldovan political leadership amongst certain groups and, ultimately, a lack of interest and trust in politics.

C.2.3. Agency

The thesis concludes that Moldovan societal discourses represent Moldovan identity as passive. The Moldovan lack of agency is not one of the discourses that permeates to the official level, as it would challenge the very relevance of the Moldovan government, as part of the political structure of the state. Quite the opposite, one of the discursive mechanisms the governments since 2009 have employed to challenge the representation of Moldova's lack of agency is based on the EU principle of 'more for more'. Through this, the government measured its effectiveness through the external evaluation and the rewards the European Union awards it. This stresses the importance of the external actor for the representation of Moldovan foreign affairs. More importantly, this 'step-by-step' approach enables to Moldovan government to break up the comprehensive ideal of 'European integration' and avoid general criticism regarding its European reforms. Most importantly, the use of this articulation allows the Moldovan government to assert its own achievements in terms of reform, thus portraying it as an actor in terms of both internal and external affairs.

Therefore, the wider discourse on Moldova's lack of agency is limited to Moldovan society; this is also largely due to the alternative sources of these discourses such as the lack of trust in the Moldovan political leadership (Section 5.2).

Nevertheless, certain elements of the passive representation are reiterated by some of Moldova's leaders. The theme of external help is one of the most common topics that appear in these articulations. Such an example is the statement made by Moldovan president Nicolae Timofti during US secretary of State, John Kerry's, visit to Chişinău in late 2013. On this occasion he asked the US Secretary of State 'to pay very close attention to Moldova's problems', especially any form of provocation from Transnistria (Unimedia 4.12.2013). Similarly, Minister for Youth and Sport, Octavian Ticu, argued that Moldova needs the European Union 'in order to obtain a viable and functional state' (RFE/EL 15.12.2013). Another layer to this construction is the expectation for external actors, especially the EU, to promote their own values and take decisions regarding Moldova's path of reforms, the laws that need to be adopted and implemented. This representation draws to a certain extent on the societal representation of the saviour, but more importantly from the sentiment of inferiority in contrast with the external other. In the literature, Korosteleva (2010) noted that her interviews with both analysts, political and official elites illustrated a sentiment of inferiority towards the European Union and, linked to it, an over-reliance on EU orders and directives. This challenges the principle of partnership that stands at the basis of the EU's approach in Moldova and problematizes Moldovan agency and long term foreign policy ambitions. In this way, the thesis strengthens Korosteleva's (2010)

argument and also goes into more depth by illustrating some of the mechanisms behind this type of thinking.

Lastly, the passive representation legitimises a situation whereby Moldovan officials do not take responsibility for their actions or the future. This is due to the fact that a lack of agency is something society may expect of them and also because they have the means to pass blame onto external actors such as Russia and the EU (see Chapters 3 and 4). This phenomenon is not limited to Moldova, as the current events in Ukraine highlight the same behaviour in Kiev. Leonard (2014) stresses the courage of the Ukrainian protesters and *Maidan* leaders and contrasts it with the leadership, who 'have built an entire political and foreign policy machine to avoid' responsibility. He also notes that the elites tend to load this responsibility and blame for the country's issues onto either Brussels or Moscow and play the two geopolitical actors against each other (Leonard 2014; Holland and Friedman 2014). His argument is very similar to the Moldovan case, where high level corruption played an important role in the termination of the first pro-European coalition, AIE1. Meanwhile, both national identity supporters (Romanianists and Moldovanists) and other officials have repeatedly attributed blame to external actors, historically and in contemporary circumstances. This illustrates the impact of a national identity inspired discourse on elite articulations. Hence, a passive identity can lead to a lack of responsibility on the international stage, e.g. expecting help and/or direction from an external other. But more importantly, the presence of this type of thinking at societal and elite level and within official discourse raises questions from foreign actors vis-à-vis Moldova's commitment to its European aspirations or other foreign policy endeavours.

Then, the lack of continuity and consistence between the government's multi-vector foreign policy and societal constructions can lead to the delegitimation of the Moldovan leadership, problematizing the trust the Moldovans have in them (Section 5.2). This is also stressed through the representation of the external 'helper'. More specifically, this government propensity to ask for help and, in some cases, subservience towards external actors damages their credibility in the eyes of the public; this leads to a vicious circle in which this representation of passivity is enforced and reinforced. Moreover, in order to stress their achievements and agency, the Moldovan government responds by issuing bigger promises. For example, they have pledged Moldova will be a member of the EU by 2020 and such (unachievable) promises reinitiate the vicious circle of disappointment and lack of agency in foreign affairs. In this way, the government's attempt to portray itself as efficient reproduces the problematic lack of confidence in the Moldovan official institutions and their representatives. Thus, beyond the implications for foreign policy, the problematic alignment between government and societal discourses also has an impact on the trust in political leadership in Moldova. Lastly, this phenomenon can even challenge the very legitimacy of the Moldovan state and its institutions.

C.3. Further research

The scope of this research is to analyse the influence of national identity on societal conceptualisations of foreign policy. Nevertheless, beyond this main focus, it has also touched upon a series of other topics, which in turn have highlighted more gaps in the

literature and avenues for further research. The first was the analysis of official foreign policy discourses, which was touched upon in the exploratory analysis above. Then, the discussion on national identity emphasised the practical importance of an all-encompassing identity in Moldova, one that could bring together all of its ethnic groups in their allegiance to the Moldovan state. Thus, given the focus of the thesis, on Romanianism and Moldovanism, a point for further research is the comprehensive study on the possibility of a civic, middle ground national identity discourse in Moldova.

Another element that would require further research is the popular appeal of these national identity discourses and of the different foreign policy articulations. The thesis has built on the recent research of Eleanor Knott (2014) on grassroots attitudes in Moldova; yet, I have also circumvented this issue by analysing data that has the potential to have an impact on the Moldovan citizen, due to the authority of those articulating it. For this reason the main data employed in the thesis consist of official declarations and interviews with high-ranking party members, statements from academic and intellectual elites and columns in the most read newspapers in Moldova (Section 2.1.2). Additionally, the thesis has captured a glimpse of this phenomenon, through a relatively small set of layman interviews, largely in order to test the presence of media and official discourses at this level. Nevertheless, further research on this topic would shed light on the popularity of these ideas and illuminate us whether the reason for official engagement with these discourses is as a response to their popularity amongst the Moldovan masses or an act of elite national identity promotion.

Moreover, these discourses, both at society level and official articulations, do not exist in isolation; they are created in relation to Russian, Romanian and EU articulations. In this way, identities are created through a dialogical process (Wendt 1993). Russia, the EU and Romania are some of the most important actors who have articulated ideas vis-à-vis the relationship between East and West and should be studied further. These discourses have the potential to both strengthen and challenge Moldovan representations. This is even more relevant with the shifts within the EU's and Russian discourses, from a zero-sum game to cooperation, based on the circumstance. For instance the EU's discourse was one of cooperation with Russia and a rejection of the zero-sum game thinking up until 2012 and 2013. In 2012, Commissioner Stefan Fule articulated a series of radical criticisms of Russia's commercial bans against some of the post-Soviet countries. Russia's discourse too has shifted, albeit somewhat more radically, from a non-zero-sum game situation before 2012 to a radical articulation in late 2013 and 2014. But more importantly, an analysis of Romania, Russia and the EU's discourses can highlight the differences in between the different conceptualisations of foreign affairs and stress their constructed character.

Appendix 1: Banal Nationalism



Figure A1.1 Chişinău 1 (5th April 2012 - photo taken by the author: Love your language! Love your country!)



Figure A1.2 Chişinău 2 ('Moldova is Romania!' written and then covered on a wall in Chişinău, July 2012 – photo taken by the author)



Figure A1.3 Chişinău 3 (*Moldova Suverană* Lobby, str. Puşkin, 22, Casa Presei, et.3 - photo taken by the author, July 2012: Stickers with 'This is Romania!' on the sign for a former Communist and Moldovanist newspaper, tellingly titled 'Sovereign Moldova')

Appendix 2: Geopolitics Shelves



Figure A2.1 Libraria din Centru 1, Chișinău, June 2012; Some of the books in the shelf are Frederic Encel's Geopolitical Horizons, Oleg Serebrian's About Geopolitics, Politics and Geopolitics and, The Geopolitics of the Pontic Space and Geopolitical Dictionary)



Figure A2.2. Libraria din Centru 2, Chișinău, June 2012; Valeriu Pasat – The Moldova SSR in the Stalinist Era, Jean-Sylvestre Mongrenegier – Does Russia Threaten the Occident, Ion Turcanu – The Description of Bessarabia and Dan Dungaciú’s Bessarabia is Romania?)

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