

# **The Moldovan and Latvian Path towards Democratic Market Society - a Focus on Identity Politics**

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## Abstract

This thesis is aimed at exploring the interplay of identity and citizenship politics in Latvia and Moldova and to investigate its influence on the initial economic reforms pursued by these two countries. It is argued that citizenship policies are determined by the specific of the national identity of the titular nation. Consequently, the variation in the citizenship policies has led to a variation in the path of development of these two countries. Latvia is one of the post-Soviet countries not to offer citizenship to its Russian minority immediately after independence and Moldova is one of the Soviet successor states to have practiced liberal citizenship policies. Hence, Latvia chose to exclude a good part of its Russian minorities from the decision-making process and to distance itself from Russia. By contrast, Moldova chose to enfranchise its Slavic minorities and to join the Commonwealth of Independent States thus strengthening its links with Russia. The empirical studies on these two countries have been carried out in line with Rogers Brubaker's triadic relation between the nationalizing state, the national minority and the influence of the national motherland that explains the politics of citizenship in the Soviet successor states. The hypothesis which stated that "the inclusion of the new national minorities in Moldova was determined by the specific of the Moldovan national identity. That decision influenced the early post-independence foreign and economic policies of Moldova" has been proven right.

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## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework for the Study on Ethnicity and Citizenship in Latvia and Moldova .....	7
Chapter 2 Latvian and Moldovan Nation-Building. A Historical Perspective with a Focus on National Identity.....	15
2.1 The Latvian Independence and Nation-Building.....	18
2.2 The Moldovan Independence and Nation-Building.....	24
Chapter 3 The Effect of National Identity and Nationalist Politics on Economic Reforms in Latvia and Moldova .....	41
3.1 A common post-Soviet Background versus divergent initial choices .....	42
3.2 Latvian reforms as determined by identity politics.....	43
3.3 Moldovan reforms as determined by identity politics.....	46
Conclusion .....	52
Appendix .....	55
Table A Language-Related Policy Agendas in Estonia and Latvia.....	55
Table B Language Competence of Titular Nations and Russian Minorities in the Baltic States (According to the 1989 Census) .....	55
Table C Republic of Moldova, Export structure by countries (in % if not indicated otherwise) .....	56
Table D Republic of Moldova, Import structure by countries (in % if not indicated otherwise) .....	56
References: .....	57

## Introduction

In the past decades an extensive literature has emerged on the transition of the newly independent states from a socialist to a market society. Some political economists argue that the economic ideology of the elite in control of the newly independent states determined the choice of membership in international institutions.<sup>1</sup> Others also state that the political decisions concerning the new regimes in the Visegrad and the Baltic States have been motivated both by the legacies of the past and their perception as either threats or assets from the viewpoint of national sovereignty and economic independence.<sup>2</sup> This thesis aims to contribute with a comparative study on the Moldovan and Latvian path of development from a socialist to a democratic and market society, however with a focus on identity politics.

In order to understand why Moldova lags behind Latvia in terms of democratic and economic development, I intend to look at the Moldovan state building and development path after the 1991 independence and compare it to that of Latvia. I have chosen the Latvian case as a reference point since it has emerged from the former USSR, as has Moldova and has had similar legacies that can be perceived as threats rather than assets for development. Even though Latvia is not an absolute success story, it has advanced as far as joining the European Union (EU). Moldova, on the other hand, is not even regarded by the EU as a potential candidate for EU accession negotiations, which is an indicator of the fact that it has not yet achieved the economic, democratic and social preconditions for being considered as such.

After independence, the Soviet successor states had to implement a series of liberal democratic reforms. These reforms were aimed at bringing these countries in line

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<sup>1</sup> Keith A. Darden “*Economic Ideas and Institutional Choice among the post-Soviet States*”, Working Paper, Yale University, 2001, p. 6

<sup>2</sup> Dorothee Bohle and Bela Greskovits “*Neoliberalism, Embedded Neoliberalism and Neocorporatism: Paths towards Transnational Capitalism in Central-Eastern Europe*” (2007, May. Forthcoming), p. 1

with the mainstream. Nonetheless, Estonia and Latvia pursued restrictive policies towards their new national minorities inherited from the old regime. That, however, did not hinder their European integration. Hence, this thesis seeks to understand what threats or assets determined the Latvian refusal to grant citizenship to its Russian minority immediately after independence and vice versa, the Moldovan inclusion of the latter. The understanding of the former choice will help to see how that decision influenced the Latvian and Moldovan variety of democracy and further translated into these two countries' economic path of development. From a historic as well as an evolutionary point of view, it is important to understand what where the factors that have determined the initial elite choices in these two countries and shaped their domestic and foreign policies which have further influenced their economic development. Hence, I intend to look at the interplay of the Latvian and Moldovan identity and citizenship politics and their influence on the economic policies that these countries pursued.

The term "identity" was introduced by Erik Erikson in the late 1950s. Initially "identity" referred to the "individual sense of self".<sup>3</sup> John R. Gillis states that identity and memory are mutually interdependent and that both have their own politics.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Gillis agrees with Hobsbawm and Ranger on the fact that national identities are "like everything historical, constructed and reconstructed".<sup>5</sup> In the present thesis I shall therefore refer to the difference in the national identities of the Latvian and Moldovan people, as well as the process of its construction and reconstruction during the Soviet period.

I claim that one of the major factors that has left Moldova lagging behind Latvia is that the former looked to the East (Russia) and the latter to the West (the European

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<sup>3</sup> Phillip Gleason "Identifying Identity: A Semantic History", *Journal of American History*, vol. 69, no. 4, 1983, p. 913 In: John R. Gillis "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship" In: John R. Gillis (ed.) *Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 3

<sup>4</sup> John R. Gillis "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship" In: John R. Gillis (ed.) *Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 3

Union). Consequently, Moldova chose to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), thus maintaining its strong link with the former Center – Russia whereas Latvia has totally cut itself from the latter and oriented towards Western Europe. These initial elite choices were partly defined by the perception of the threats and assets of the post-communist legacies. Furthermore, these perceptions were determined by the strength of the national identity of the titular nations of these countries. These factors have further determined the path of their nation-building.

The two countries were left with unfavorable legacies from the Soviet regime. One of these was (a) the economic dependence on the former Soviet market. After the collapse of the latter, Latvia's electronic and automotive industry was not competitive on the international market.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the Moldovan industrial enterprises were part of the military industrial complex of the former USSR. Hence, after the fall of the USSR the Moldovan industry became redundant.<sup>7</sup> Another circumstance that Latvia perceived as a threat for its nation-building was (b) the large Russian minority residing within its territory – by the late 1980s it reached 34 percent.<sup>8</sup> However, in Moldova in the late 1980s the Russian minority reached 13 percent, the Ukrainian minority 13.8 percent, the Gagauz 3.5 percent, Bulgarians 2.0 percent, Jews 1.5 percent, Roma 0.3 percent and Romanians 0.06 percent. Hence, all in all the non-titular population residing within Moldovan boundaries amounted to 34.16 percent.<sup>9</sup>

According to the literature on nationalism studies, the process of ethnic transformation in the Baltic States was characterized by a perpetual wavering between civic and ethnic strands of Baltic nationalism. This characteristic of ethnic transformation

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, (eds.) "The Invention of Tradition", Cambridge University Press, 1983 In: John R. Gillis, op. cit., p. 4

<sup>6</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, 2007, Country Profile, [www.eiu.com](http://www.eiu.com), p. 22

<sup>7</sup> Good Governance and Human Development. National Human Development Report. Republic of Moldova, 2003. p. 30 On: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

<sup>8</sup> Arunas Juska "Ethno-Political transformation in the states of the former USSR", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 22, Number 3, May 1999, p. 531

can be partly explained by the bipolar ethnic stratification (Latvians and Russians in our case) of the region. Because the Russian communities were larger in Estonia and Latvia, they went through much wider “ethnic hegemony – civic hegemony” movements than Lithuania.<sup>10</sup> The liberalization of the Soviet political system (1987-1989) initiated by Gorbachev led to the rapid rise of ethnic nationalism in the region. I claim that the discrepancy in the policies applied by these two countries in the process of accommodation of their new ethnic minorities was determined by the specificity of the national identity of these nationalizing states.

Attempts to subordinate the Russian segments of the Latvian population are explained, first and foremost, as a common defensive reaction of the small Baltic nations to the policies of Russification and demographic imperialism which had threatened their ethnic survival.<sup>11</sup> According to Sedaitis and Butterfield,<sup>12</sup> Misiunas and Taagepera,<sup>13</sup> the rapid grass-roots mobilization in the wake of independence was also fostered by the strong ethnic identities of the Baltic people, their “cultural traditions and historic grievances” which included lost statehood, and mass terror following the end of World War Two.<sup>14</sup>

The national identity of the Romanians from Moldova is somewhat different. Moldova (a) does not have a tradition as an independent modern state because in 1812, the territory situated between the rivers Prut and Dniester was annexed to the Russian Empire,<sup>15</sup> thus becoming a Russian Gubernia, in 1918 it united with Greater Romania, and in 1940 it became part of the USSR. Despite the nationalist swings that took place in

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<sup>9</sup> Charles King “*The Moldovans: Romania, Russian and the Politics of Culture*”, Stanford University, 2000, p. 97 Table 5.

<sup>10</sup> See Arunas Juska op. cit., p. 524 - 526

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem

<sup>12</sup> Judith B. Sedaitis and John Butterfield (eds.) “*Perestroika From Below: Social Movements in the Soviet Union*” Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991

<sup>13</sup> See Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, “*The Baltic States, Years of Dependence, 1940-1990*” Berkeley, CA; University of California Press, 1993

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem

Moldova in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the majority of the Moldovans, unlike the Latvians, did not perceive the Slavic minority as a threat to their nation-building. However, as Charles Taylor suggests, the process of nation building inescapably privileges members of the majority culture.<sup>16</sup> To investigate that, I shall look at the differences of the post-independence history of these two countries.

In order to carry out the study, the compared method has been chosen. The most suitable method for our case-studies is the “method of difference”.<sup>17</sup> The method of difference requires that the researcher selects “cases with similar general characteristics and different values on the study variable”.<sup>18</sup>

The starting points of these two countries were similar: both were part of the former Soviet block, the industrial production of both countries was part of the former Soviet Union labor division, both underwent similar nationalist movements for independence, both experienced deindustrialization after the collapse of the USSR, both had to build their nation-states, both had to go through transition from a socialist to a market economy and last but not least both inherited a large number of new national minorities. Given that the initial conditions when the reforms started were similar, one would assume that the outcome would be fairly similar as well. Nonetheless, the actual state of affairs of Latvia and Moldova vary, namely: they built various types of democracies, achieved different economic development and integrated into different international institutions and structures. Hence, the hypothesis to be tested is: “the inclusion of the new national minorities in Moldova was determined by the specific of the

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<sup>15</sup> See Iulian Fruntasu “*O Istorie Etnopolitica a Basarabiei (1812-2002)*” [„A Ethno-political History of Basarabia (1812-2002)“], Cartier, 2002, 27

<sup>16</sup> Charles Taylor 1997:34 In: Will Kymlicka “*Can liberal pluralism be exported?: Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*”, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 22

<sup>17</sup> John Stuart Mill “A System of Logic”, In: J.M. Robson (ed.) “Of the Four Methods of Experimental Inquiry”, University of Toronto Press, 1973, In: Stephen Van Evera “*Guide to Methods for Students of Political Research*”, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1997, p. 57

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem

Moldovan national identity. That decision influenced the early post-independence foreign and economic policies of Moldova”.

This research is carried out with a consultation of primary sources which include the national legislation of the Republic of Moldova related to minority rights. The secondary sources applied for this research include analyses and comments to the Latvian and Moldovan legislation and policies as well as relevant works in the field of nationalism studies and political economy. I shall use Brubaker’s triadic relation between the nationalizing state, the national minority and the influence of the national motherland that explains the politics of citizenship in the Soviet successor states.<sup>19</sup> Hence, I intend to show how the interaction of these three factors determined the initial elite choices of Latvia and Moldova with regard to the citizenship issue.

The first Chapter of this thesis refers to the theoretical approaches to the rights of national minorities, the definition of citizenship and identity with a focus on the new minorities of the Soviet Successor States. The second Chapter relates the pre-Soviet history of both countries, along with the Soviet and post-Soviet period history with an emphasis on identity politics. I shall look at the Soviet history of these two countries in order to see (a) how did the policies of Russification develop in Latvia and Moldova. Another key aspect that I shall look at is the (b) post Soviet movements and the role of the national elites in each of these two countries, namely how did they perceive Russia and the presence of the Russian or Slavic minority within their territories. The third Chapter of this thesis will illustrate the interplay of the initial elite choices along with the identity politics and their influence on the economic policies that Latvia and Moldova have pursued.

# Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework for the Study on Ethnicity and Citizenship in Latvia and Moldova

In this chapter I shall refer to the theoretical approaches to the rights of the national minorities, the definition of citizenship and identity with a focus on the new minorities of the Soviet Successor States.

In the context of majority nation-building, Will Kymlicka defines the national minorities as groups that shaped “complete and functioning societies on their historic homeland prior to being incorporated into a larger state”.<sup>20</sup> Kymlicka explains that the incorporation of minorities could have been carried out through conquest or forceful annexation of territories through treaties.<sup>21</sup> The latter is valid in the case of the former Soviet Republics discussed in this thesis: Latvia and Moldova. Furthermore, the national minorities have, as a rule, reacted to majority-nation-building by requiring more autonomy, which they use in order to employ their own contending nation-building, in order to protect and disseminate their communal culture throughout their traditional territory. To this end, national minorities apply the same means as the majority culture. Those means are the control over the language of schooling and of government employment, the prerequisites of immigration and naturalization and the establishment of internal boundaries.<sup>22</sup> This was the case of the Slavic population in Transnistria and that of the Turkish minority in Gagauzia, the former seceded from the Republic of Moldova and the latter was granted autonomy. The claims brought up by both regions were ethnically and identity based.

Kymlicka emphasizes that historically, in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, liberal democracies attempted to control minority nationalism in order to

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<sup>19</sup> Rogers Brubaker “*Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood the National Question in the New Europe*”, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 44

<sup>20</sup> Will Kymlicka “*Can liberal pluralism be exported?: Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*”, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 23

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem

eliminate any sense of possession of a distinct ethnic identity. The means employed in order to control minority nationalism included interdiction of the minority language in schools or publications, prohibition of political associations that promoted minority nationalism, imposition of literacy tests that complicated minorities' access to elections. Those actions were justified on grounds of minorities being potentially disloyal and secessionist.<sup>23</sup> This discourse, however, can be found nowadays in Latvia's position as regarding its exclusionary policy towards its Russian minority. In an analysis of the situation of the Russian Diaspora in the Baltic States, Graham Smith emphasizes that the Latvian exclusionary stance is based on the grounds that Russian minorities tend to be politically disloyal and hence cannot be trusted.<sup>24</sup>

In the past decade the debate on minority rights has shifted from a justice-based one which was rather focusing on identity and culture to a citizenship based one. The latter is focusing on the way the general tendency towards minority rights threatens to erode the types of civic virtues and citizenship practices that maintain a liberal democracy.<sup>25</sup> William Galston argues that in a flourishing democracy responsible citizenship needs four types of civic virtues. The (a) general virtues encompass courage, law-abidingness and loyalty. The (b) social virtues comprise independence and open-mindedness. The (c) economic virtues are about work ethic, capacity to delay self-gratification, adaptability to economic and technological change. The (d) political virtues provide for the capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, the willingness to engage in public discourse.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Will Kymlicka, op. cit. 2001, p. 24-25

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem

<sup>24</sup> See Graham Smith "Transnational politics and the Russian Diaspora", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 22, Number 3, May, 1999, p. 511

<sup>25</sup> See Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman (eds.) "*Citizenship in Diverse Societies*", Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 5

<sup>26</sup> William Galston "Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Duties in the Liberal State", Cambridge University Press, 1991, In: Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman (eds.), op. cit., 2000, p. 7

Patrick Weil identifies three factors that according to him have led to more liberalized citizenship policies in Western Europe. These are: (a) past immigration, (b) secured borders and the lack of incomplete nation-building fears which reduce the ethnic-based discriminations, and (c) liberal-democratic values.<sup>27</sup> Christian Joppke however argues that the weakness of Weil's analysis stems in the fact that it is "functionalist and teleological". Hence Joppke argues that "contemporary reforms of citizenship can be either de-ethnicizing or re-ethnicizing".<sup>28</sup> That choice depends on the "ideological orientation of the government, liberal-leftist or conservative, respectively".<sup>29</sup> As a continuation to this debate, Mark Morje Howard argues that it is not the ideological orientation of the government that matters that much, but the presence of an extreme right party that is able to mobilize a persistently xenophobic civic body.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Joppke agrees with Weil on the fact that "there is no causal link between national identity and nationality laws".<sup>31</sup> However, that statement can be contradicted. It is not valid in the Latvian and Moldovan cases, as I shall show further in the case studies. In short, the Latvian exclusionary citizenship policy has been based on the strong nationalistic stance of the government. The strong nationalistic position however, is based on the strong Latvian national identity and its interwar independence tradition. Conversely, the Moldovan inclusionary democracy can be explained by its weak national identity and the lack of a tradition as an independent state.

Nonetheless, Kymlicka argues that nowadays the approach of liberal democracies towards ethnic minorities has changed. Liberal-democracies are founded on the

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<sup>27</sup> Patrick Weil, "Access to Citizenship", In: A. Aleinikov and D. Klusmeyer, (eds.) "Citizenship Today". Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001 In: Christian Joppke "Comparative Citizenship: A Restrictive Turn in Europe?", American University of Paris, 2006, p. 2

<sup>28</sup> Christian Joppke "Citizenship between De- and Re-Ethnicization", Archives europeennes de sociologies [European Sociological Archives], 44(3), 2003 In: Christian Joppke, op. cit. 2006, p. 2

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem

<sup>30</sup> Mark Morje Howard "Variation in Dual Citizenship Policies in the Countries of the EU", *International Migration Review*, 39(3), 2005, In: Ibidem

<sup>31</sup> Patrick Weil, op. cit, p. 34 In: Christian Joppke, op. cit., 2006

“principle of respect for individual civil and political rights”.<sup>32</sup> Hence, Kymlicka theorizes that both the titular that is the majority population as well as the minority populations have to be subject to the same liberal limitations. The latter employ two groups of rights: the first are the rights of a group against its own members, which he calls “internal restrictions”, these guarantee representatives of a group the right not to practice certain traditional practices. The second implies the rights of a group against the larger society also called by Kymlicka “external protections”. The latter are aimed at protecting the group from external pressures. Hence, Kymlicka claims that minority rights conform to liberal pluralism if they meet two prerequisites: they protect the freedom of individuals within the group; and they promote relations of equality (non-dominance) between groups.<sup>33</sup>

Kymlicka argues that majority nation-building in a liberal democracy is lawful under certain conditions: hence, no exclusion is allowed. That implies that no long-term residents of a country are to be refused the right to gain citizenship. Furthermore, linguistic and institutional integration are to be accomplished without pressure, thus leaving space for accommodation of the minority’s national identity. Hence, national minorities are to be allowed to maintain their distinctiveness as a societal group.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, when minority rights are being discussed, one of the most debated issues is the right on citizenship.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union the newly emerged states aimed at becoming liberal democracies. As a result, they had to carefully tackle nation-building along with the citizenship issue. Moreover, not all democratizing states were ready to grant citizenship to their new national minorities, therefore they had to balance their nation-building aspirations with the principles of contemporary liberal democracies.

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<sup>32</sup> Will Kymlicka, op. cit. 2000, p. 27

<sup>33</sup> Will Kymlicka, op. cit. 2000, p. 28

<sup>34</sup> See Will Kymlicka, op. cit. 2000, p. 48

Rogers Brubaker explores the politics of citizenship in Soviet successor states. Brubaker argues that the legacy of the Soviet twofold institutional crystallization of nationhood and nationality passed to the successor states.<sup>35</sup> In order to explain the above mentioned transfer, Brubaker uses the triadic relation between (a) incipient national – and nationalizing states; (b) the national minorities in the new states; and (c) the external “homeland” states to which the minorities “belong” by ethnonational affiliation but not legal citizenship. Brubaker applies this triadic framework to the newly independent states, which due to their previous incorporation into the Soviet Union became multiethnic.<sup>36</sup>

I find Brubaker’s triadic relationship of major relevance for explaining the cases of the Latvian and Moldovan new national minorities discussed in the present thesis. In the next chapter I shall use it in order to show how the interplay of these three factors has influenced the initial elite choices of Latvia and Moldova in regard to the citizenship issue, namely the exclusion of minorities in the case of the former and their inclusion in the case of the latter.

Brubaker argues that the Soviet regime institutionalized the territorial-political and personal-ethnocultural models of nationhood alike, along with the tensions between them. The former has formed the republics as national polities, however, they were granted limited political autonomy. Therefore, with the collapse of the Soviet Union the successor states could use their political powers to “nationalize” their states. The nationalizing policies and programs varied, although they were rather strong in the Baltic States<sup>37</sup> as well as in Moldova. In the latter though, the nationalizing policies have been given up on quite early in the 1990s due to a strong opposition on behalf of Moldova’s national minorities and the armed conflict that arouse allegedly on ethnic grounds. Moreover, that conflict took place with Russian influence. Hence, as Brubaker argues, the

<sup>35</sup> See W. Rogers Brubaker “Citizenship Struggles in Soviet Successor States”, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Special Issue: The New Europe and International Migration, 1992, p. 273

<sup>36</sup> Rogers Brubaker, op. cit., 1996, p. 44

military powerful Russia is more likely to get involved in a military conflict with its neighbors. That can be caused by the decline in status experienced by new Russian minorities who became such as a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and by Russian elites in Russia who make the “revisionist Russia” a potentially greater threat to other successor states.<sup>38</sup>

Anatoly Khazanov argues that in terms of growing nationalism, Russia has lagged behind its neighbors with three years. Hence, Khazanov posits, in the mid 1990s, Russia was in a period of intensifying nationalism and feelings of a great-power. Hence, under the pretext of protecting the ethnic kin, Russian politicians from Russia engaged in conflicts aimed at protecting their co-nationals, thus playing the nationalistic card.<sup>39</sup> So, despite the secessionist tendencies of the Russian minorities in the successor states, most of them desired to retain Russian citizenship or acquire the citizenship of the newly independent states that they resided in. Therefore, the successor states, while building their nation-states in line with the principles of liberal democracies had to resort to certain policies of accommodating their national minorities.

As regarding the definition of citizenship which further defines the types of naturalizing policies adopted by countries in general, Rogers Brubaker refers to four possible choices. He states that theoretically citizenry could be defined territorially but would not be entirely inclusive. Hence, the first possibility of defining citizenship would be by (a) including in the initial body of citizens all persons born within the territory, but excluding immigrants. A second way to define citizenship would be (b) including all persons residing in the territory for a certain minimum length of time. A third option would be (c) including only residents knowing the state language. A fourth alternative for defining citizenship would be (d) on territorially inclusive terms, that is granting

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<sup>37</sup> See Rogers Brubaker, *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 46-47

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*

citizenship to the initial body of citizens who had their initial citizenship based on residence in the territory of which the newly independent state has emerged. The fourth option is the most preferred by the Soviet successor states.<sup>40</sup>

Republic of Moldova is one of those newly independent states which have chosen the territorially inclusive definition of citizenship as its norm. The Baltic States however, have taken a different position. Brubaker suggests that the Baltic nationalists may argue that, in legal terms, the Baltic States are not new states and for that reason do not need new citizens. Therefore, Latvia adopted the continuity thesis stance, which is that “citizenship continued to exist not *de jure* but *de facto*”, consequently it is the successor of the interwar republic not of the Soviet Union to which it has been forcefully annexed.<sup>41</sup> Accordingly, Latvia’s position is that it needs to reinstate citizenship to its legal holders and to confirm the citizenship status of interwar citizens and their descendants rather than to produce a new citizenry. Hence, the persons who do not belong to either group are to become citizens through naturalization and citizenship is not to be granted automatically.<sup>42</sup>

Brubaker proposes three models of citizenship. The first one is (a) the new-state citizenship model. The new-state has to delineate an initial body of citizens, which as a rule is accomplished in a territorially inclusive manner. The second is (b) the restored-state citizenship model. That has to confirm the status of an already existing civic body and to reinstate citizenship and statehood to real effectiveness.<sup>43</sup> Hence, persons not falling within the category of the already existent citizenry are to be defined as foreigners. The third citizenship model is (c) a conciliation of the previous two models. The state has to confirm the status of the existing citizenry but the reinstated citizenry is not regarded

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<sup>39</sup> See Anatoly M. Khazanov “*After the USSR. Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States*”, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995, p. 84-88

<sup>40</sup> W. Rogers Brubaker, op. cit., 1992, p. 278

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem

<sup>43</sup> W. Rogers Brubaker, op. cit., 1992, p. 279

as an amply inclusive civic body for the restored state. That is because the restored state is a new state in many relevant respects; hence, it needs a new initial definition of citizenship. The reinstated citizenry will include the biggest part of the newly defined citizenry; however, the other parts of the population will be included as well.<sup>44</sup>

In line with Brubaker, Moldova is a new state, it lacks a continuous tradition of an independent state, for that reason the politics of citizenship takes the new-state model.<sup>45</sup> However, given the Moldovan disputed national identity, one can also argue that as a newly established state it was more prone to including its national minorities into its civic body rather than regarding them as a potentially disloyal group and therefore a threat to its nation-building. In the Latvian case, its interwar independence and its internationally recognized forceful annexation to the Soviet Union enabled the radical nationalist factions to put forward the restored-state model of citizenship. Others though, may rightfully posit that citizenship must be both restored – as required by the continuity thesis; and newly created – in line with the democratic norms of citizenship.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibidem

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem

<sup>46</sup> See W. Rogers Brubaker, *op. cit.*, 1992, p. 279

## Chapter 2 Latvian and Moldovan Nation-Building. A Historical Perspective with a Focus on National Identity.

In this chapter I shall attempt to elucidate the historical factors that have led to the present Latvian and Moldovan state of affairs. I shall apply Brubaker's triadic relation between the incipient national – and nationalizing states, the national minorities in the new states and the external “homeland” states to which the minorities “belong” by ethnonational affiliation but not legal citizenship<sup>47</sup> in order to explain why Latvia chose to exclude a large part of its Russian minority from political rights by refusing to grant citizenship as opposed to Moldova. In line with Arunas Juska,<sup>48</sup> I argue that the Latvian choice was partly determined by the strong Latvian ethnic identity and strong nationalist considerations. On the other hand, the Moldovan ethnic identity is “divided” between a Romanian and Moldovan one, the latter feature is also confirmed by Charles King<sup>49</sup> and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the Moldovan identity problem is a consequence of the Soviet policies of assimilation and Russification.

Graham Smith emphasizes that in the early 1990s, the Latvian exclusionary discourse stated that not only “Russians should be denied the right to automatic citizenship but also that they cannot be trusted to carry out those obligations and duties expected of the homeland-citizens, because they are politically disloyal”.<sup>51</sup> That line of thought has been also traced in the Moldovan nationalist political discourse of the early 1990s; however, it has been abandoned in mid 1990s. Furthermore, Juska argues that the efforts made by the Baltic States to “subordinate” the Russian minority must be understood as a “defensive response of the Baltic nations to the policies of Russification

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<sup>47</sup> Rogers Brubaker op. cit., 1996, p. 44

<sup>48</sup> See Arunas Juska, op. cit., p 531

<sup>49</sup> See Charles King, op. cit., 2000, p. 2-7

<sup>50</sup> See Alina Mungiu-Pippidi “*Disputed Identity as Inescapable Pluralism: Moldova's Ambiguous Transition*”, FPRI Project on Democratic Transitions Working Paper, February 8, 2007, p. 7

and demographic imperialism which had threatened their ethnic survival”.<sup>52</sup> In Moldova however, an opposite reaction happened, the Slavic population regarded Moldova’s aspirations to reunite with Romania as a threat to their national, political and economic survival.<sup>53</sup> As a result, the Slavic minorities in Transnistria decided to secede from Moldova in 1990, allegedly on inter-ethnic conflict grounds. In 1992, this secession led to an open armed conflict which is still unsettled. I shall refer to this conflict later in this chapter. Bound to confront with an armed conflict and having a weaker national identity, Moldova’s efforts to impose “ethnic hegemony” of Moldovans were disregarded and in its place, “liberal nationality policies were promoted”.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, the populations of the non-Russian territories of the USSR underwent two periods of major change: adaptation to the Russian dominance within the Soviet Union and the abandonment of the latter. According to Arunas Juska, the interaction of structural along with strategic factors can be used to explain the changes in the ethno-political order in the national republics of the former USSR.<sup>55</sup> So, according to Juska, the structural factors refer to the nature of ethnic stratification as it came forward across the periphery of the USSR by the early 1980s. In line with Juska, the variety of patterns of ethnic stratification evolved as a result of territorial inclusion and conquest, and social and cultural policies practiced by Moscow in the national republics of the USSR. The strategic dimension on the other hand, refers to the actions taken by groups and individuals involved in the dispute of the old ethnic rules and negotiation over the new ethnic order.<sup>56</sup> The recent history shows that the developments that the Baltic States and Moldova have undergone structural and strategic

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<sup>51</sup> Graham Smith “Transnational politics and the Russian Diaspora”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 22, Number 3, May, 1999, p. 511

<sup>52</sup> Arunas Juska, op. cit., p. 534

<sup>53</sup> Ganelin, A. ‘Buket Moldovy [Knot of Problems in Moldova]’, *Komsomolskaja Pravda*, 25 October, 1990 and Romanova, A. 1992 ‘Proschanie s Moldovoi [Farewell to Moldova]’, *Druzhiba Narodov*, no. 5–6, pp. 195–201 In: Arunas Juska op.cit., p. 537

<sup>54</sup> Arunas Juska, op. cit., p. 546

<sup>55</sup> Arunas Juska op. cit., p. 524

factors. Those started with the forceful annexation to the former USSR along with the forced Russification and continued with national-revival movements aimed at regaining independence in the Latvian case and acquiring it in the Moldovan case. Moreover, both countries have pursued a certain set of reforms on their way to democracy.

In the late 1980s, when the national-revival was taking place, Latvia and Moldova chose rather similar policies. Both countries enacted language laws thereby offering to the languages of the titular populations the status of official language. According to Priit Järve, language is a collective enterprise, both public and personal; it is part of the identity of the people who use it.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, he notes that frequently, language is the most significant pillar of a people's culture and a major indicator of its political universe. Natalia Chirtoaca also emphasizes the importance of language. She suggests that "linguistic identity is the test of a centuries-long common life and indicates a resemblance and rapprochement between individuals".<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, Järve argues that it has not been accidental that in new or restored states of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), including the ones of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and some members of the Russian Federation, the language of the titular population has been granted the status of "official" or "state language" by law. This language legislation has been the cause of an intense public debate, particularly in the context of minority-majority relations.<sup>59</sup>

The language issue has been strongly connected with the citizenship one. Often the test of state language proficiency has been used as a precondition for receiving citizenship. The Latvian law on citizenship followed that principle and has met a lot of

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<sup>56</sup> Arunas Juska op. cit, p. 524 - 526

<sup>57</sup> Priit Järve "Language Battles in the Baltic States: 1989 to 2002", In: Farimah Daftary and Francois Grin (eds.) *"Nation Building, Ethnicity and Language Politics in Transition Countries"*, European Center for Minority Issues, 2003, p. 75

<sup>58</sup> Natalia Chirtoaca, "Juridical Study of the Documents Signed in the course of the negotiations process on the Transnistrian conflict settlement" In: Arcadie Barbarosie and Oazu Nantoi (eds.) *"Aspects of the Transnistrian Conflict"*, Institute for Public Policy, 2004, Chisinau, p. 35

<sup>59</sup> Priit Järve op. cit., p. 75

criticism, since a lot of Russians living in Latvia were refused citizenship. According to Priit Jarve, language legislation establishes a direct relation between politics and national identity, because the legislation is an essential constituent of a nation's political development and language is essential to national identity. Moreover, he claims that the legislation follows the political development of the national elite and reflects its views, aims and ambitions. Hence, Järve posits that at the early stage of development of a newly independent state, the justification of language legislation is nation-building and nation-state building.<sup>60</sup>

Given that the Latvian citizenship law was strongly related to the language issue, one can state that the Latvian citizenship law was following the nation-building and nation-state building principle. The Moldovan citizenship law was rather liberal despite the initial nationalistic stance of the leaders pleading for reforms. However, the failed effort to unify with Romania has lead, according to Arunas Juska, to policies directed towards the creation of a Moldovan "ethno-territorial federation".<sup>61</sup> In the following subchapters I shall concentrate more thoroughly on the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet history of these countries with a focus on their identity politics.

## ***2.1 The Latvian Independence and Nation-Building***

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the peoples of the current Baltic States were living in the Russian Empire. In Western Europe, many smaller peoples lost their languages after having been assimilated in the process of nation-building. The Latvians along with the other Baltic peoples escaped this destiny. Although quite small, there were less than two million ethnic Latvians, these people were not assimilated by Russia. On the contrary, they were able to start careful nation-building

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<sup>60</sup> Idem

<sup>61</sup> Arunas Juska, op. cit., p. 524

from the second half of the nineteenth century, however not nation-state building.<sup>62</sup> David D. Laitin explains that “Russia was a late modernizer; as a result it could not be a very efficient assimilator”.<sup>63</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, Russia made the last attempt to advance Russian in the Baltic States, but mainly failed. One century later, the Soviet Union repeated this failure.<sup>64</sup>

After the First World War, the Baltic peoples exited from the falling Russian Empire with their own languages, which afterwards became the official languages of the independent nation-states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania between the two World Wars.<sup>65</sup> So, between 1918 and 1940 Latvia was an independent, prosperous Western European state. In 1940, Latvia was forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union, by the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In 1990-1991, when Latvia regained independence, there were a large Russian-speaking minority - almost 35 percent of the total population, with little knowledge of the local language.<sup>66</sup>

The Baltic popular movements began with Gorbachev’s *glasnost* and *perestroika*, they served as encouragement and models for other Soviet countries including Moldova.<sup>67</sup> After the 1991 Latvian independence, an inherent existential fear of the titular nation associated with the projection of its physical and cultural survival emerged. Consequently, Latvia, along with the other two Baltic States, adopted its first legislative act in 1989. The latter expressed the constitutional status of the state language. However, it established a transition period from Russian to the state language in public life and clearly recognized rights and guarantees for the Russian-speakers. Under the Latvian Act

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<sup>62</sup> Priit Järve op. cit., p. 75-76

<sup>63</sup> David D. Laitin “Identity in Formation. The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad”, 1998, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press. In: Priit Järve op. cit., 75

<sup>64</sup> Priit Järve, op. cit., p. 76

<sup>65</sup> Dietrich Andre Loeber, “Language Rights in Independent Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, 1918-1940”, 1993 In: Sergiy Vilfan “Ethnic Groups and Language Rights”, London and Dartmouth: New York University Press, 1993 In: Priit Jarve, op. cit., p. 76

<sup>66</sup> See Jan Arveds Trapans “*Toward Independence: The Baltic Popular Movements*”, Westview Press, 1991, p. 3-11

<sup>67</sup> See Jan Arveds Trapans, op. cit., p. 3

on Language of 1989, monolingual Russian-speakers could not work in the public sector. That provision came forward from the fear that the much-awaited state independence of the Baltic States might be lost again in the changeable international situation. However, Latvia, trying to get closer to the mainstream and moved by the common Baltic Russophobia, developed strong ambitions for joining the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as soon as possible. However, in the context of the country's aspirations for future membership in the European and transatlantic structures, Latvia had to balance and recognize the presence within its state borders, of a large population of Russian-speakers. According to Järve, Latvia along with Estonia had to follow two different language-related policy agendas simultaneously.<sup>68</sup> (See Appendix Table A.) Even prior to the adoption of the new language law in Latvia (1989), the concept of state language was integrated in other laws aimed at forming a policy of restraint of the Russian-speakers. The former was present particularly in the citizenship law. Later, laws on education and elections followed.<sup>69</sup>

Post-Soviet Latvia has established a more exclusive citizenship regime than other Post-Soviet Republics. In 1991, the country's *demos* were restricted to persons and their descendents who were citizens of Latvia on June 17, 1940, the date the Soviet Union occupied the country.<sup>70</sup> Given that Russians became a real presence in Latvia only after World-War II, the majority of its Russian populace were not Latvian citizens, and were as a result automatically excluded from its post-Soviet political life. The 1994 law on citizenship set further exclusionary parameters, including a “window” system that limited the number of people eligible to join the *demos* annually. In fact, that system stalled the

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<sup>68</sup> Priit Järve, op. cit., p. 80-82

<sup>69</sup> Priit Järve, op. cit., p. 82

<sup>70</sup> “Postanovlenie verkhovnogo Soveta Latviiskoi Respubliki o vosstanovlenii prav grazhdan Latviiskoi Respubliki i osnovnykh usloviiakh naturalizatsii” (Register of the Supreme Soviet of the Latvian Republic and the Basic Requirements for Naturalization), September 15, 1991, in “Vedomosti verkhovnogo soveta i pravitelstva Latviiskoi Respubliki” (Report of the Supreme Soviet and Government of the Latvian Republic), no. 43 (October 31, 1991): 2128 In: Commercio, Michelle E. “Exit in the Near Abroad. The

development of a multi-ethnic society.<sup>71</sup> Thus, to become citizens of their countries of residence, the minorities had to take language tests. Hence, Järve suggests that as the Russian-speakers' knowledge of the titular language was rather limited (see Appendix Table B), the slow naturalization process was easily predictable.<sup>72</sup>

The special age quotas, called “naturalization windows” were in force between 1995 and 1998 and excluded older groups from applying for citizenship for years. According to Järve as well as Commercio, that provision was aimed at keeping a predictable massive naturalization under control. So, the pace of naturalization in Latvia during that period was rather low. Thus, between 1995 and 1998, only 11,432 persons were naturalized in Latvia.<sup>73</sup>

During Latvia's EU accession process, the Latvian citizenship Law was criticized by the OSCE and was a serious impediment for the country during that period.<sup>74</sup> From the above mentioned facts, it is obvious that the language issue is closely related to the citizenship question. The 1999 accession report on Latvia also discussed the problem of its Russian minorities who have not been granted citizenship. Thus, in the report OSCE stated that the use of the exam that tests a respondent's knowledge of Latvian society, laws, and government was too complicated, and therefore many Russians were being denied citizenship. Undoubtedly, pressure from the OSCE has changed the process used to obtain citizenship, but the High Commissioner still has found faults with the process.<sup>75</sup> At the end of year 1999, the accession report's section on minorities stated the following:

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Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan” , *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 51, no. 6, November/December 2004, p. 24

<sup>71</sup> “Zakon o grazhdanstve” [Law on Citizenship], July 22, 1994. The law on citizenship also requires applicants to reside in Latvia for five years and know the history and national anthem of Latvia, and calls for the creation of a commission to test the state (Latvian) language skills of applicants for naturalization. In: Commercio, Michelle E. op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Jamestown Foundation, [http://www.amber.ucsf.edu/homes/ross/public\\_html/russia/\\_ruslang.txt](http://www.amber.ucsf.edu/homes/ross/public_html/russia/_ruslang.txt) In: Priit Järve op. cit., p.83

<sup>73</sup> Priit Jarve, p. 83

<sup>74</sup> Michael Johns, ““Do As I Say, Not As I Do”: The European Union, Eastern Europe and Minority Rights”, *East European Politics and Societies*, 2003, p. 690

<sup>75</sup> Michael Johns, op. cit., p. 690

“A last issue to be addressed in this context, concerns a further simplification of the citizenship tests on Latvian history, and the constitution in accordance with the recommendations made by the OSCE.”<sup>76</sup> Hence, According to Vadim Poleschuk, in order to meet the EU’s demands, Latvia had a great deal of work to do, as of 2001, in Latvia there were still more than 550,000 stateless people (the vast majority Russians), that is around 20 percent of the country’s total population.<sup>77</sup>

Demands from the European Community and later the European Union for more indulgent naturalization provisions – brought up to a certain degree by this legislation – have driven the Latvian government to organize a referendum in 1998 on the question of naturalization.<sup>78</sup> Even though the “window system” was abolished after the 1998 referendum, the naturalization requirement itself was not removed, and many restrictions on non-citizens remain in force.<sup>79</sup> Thus, Järve suggests that all these restrictive legislative provisions appear to indicate that the initial aim of citizenship policies in Latvia were not the naturalization of the non-titular Soviet era settlers but their emigration. However, he emphasizes that only a limited number of Russian-speakers emigrated from the Baltic States.<sup>80</sup>

Notwithstanding the conditionalities imposed by the EU institutions on Latvia’s way to the EU, the anti-Russian feelings were still largely prevailing in the titular populations. Hence, politicians considered it advantageous to carry on playing the “nationalistic card”. Therefore, amending the citizenship and language laws was regarded as “politically suicidal”.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, in spite of the disapproval on behalf of the OSCE and its High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Council of Europe and the EU,

<sup>76</sup> 1999 European Union Accession Progress Report–Latvia In: Michael Johns, op. cit., p. 691

<sup>77</sup> Vadim Poleschuk, Accession to the European Union and National Integration in Estonia and Latvia (Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues Report #8, 2001), 4. In: Michael Johns, op. cit., p. 691

<sup>78</sup> “Izmenenīia v zakone o grazhdanstve”

[Amendments to the Law on Citizenship], Diena (November 4, 1998) In: Commercio, Michelle E. op. cit, p. 24.

<sup>79</sup> Commercio, Michelle E. op. cit, p. 24.

<sup>80</sup> Priit Järve, op. cit. p. 83

Latvia took its time in discussing the new draft language law. Even Finland declared that it would not support Latvia's EU accession in case the new Latvian Language law would go on depriving the Russian minority from equal participation in public life.<sup>82</sup>

The 2000 Latvian Language Law was amended as to offer the minorities residing on its territory more flexibility in participating in the public and social life. Hence, in order to run for elections, a minority representative does not have to provide a certificate of high proficiency of the Latvian language; the candidate can assess his/her own knowledge of Latvian. However, despite these amendments, the attitude of the minorities towards these regulations remained very critical.<sup>83</sup> In 2000, the pro-minority alliance of the parliament maintained that minority rights in Latvia were still being infringed, since the practice of elimination of state-funded schooling in the minority language persisted and that the Latvian authorities refused to start a dialogue with political parties and NGOs representing minorities.<sup>84</sup>

In line with Brubaker's triadic relation defined in the theoretical chapter of this thesis, the Latvian nationalizing-state had a strong nationalistic position which has led to restrictive and exclusionary citizenship politics and policies. Interestingly enough, the powerful national motherland – Russia, did not have leverage on Latvia despite the presence of Russian troops in 1994 on Latvian territories.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, although the European Union promotes the respect for human rights, it was rather tolerant towards Latvia's restrictive citizenship politics.<sup>86</sup> Hence, it was not without the movements of the national minority that the European institutions imposed conditionalities upon Latvia on its road to EU accession. Consequently, one may say that Latvia pursued restrictive

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<sup>81</sup> Idem

<sup>82</sup> Nordic Council of Ministers, "Norden, the top Europe". Newsletter No. 6. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers. In: Priit Järve, op. cit. p. 87

<sup>83</sup> Priit Järve, op. cit. p. 88-89

<sup>84</sup> See Priit Järve op cit., p. 88 – 89

<sup>85</sup> See Rogers Brubaker, op. cit., 1996, p. 47

<sup>86</sup> See Michael Johns, op. cit., p. 690

citizenship policies as a result of its decision to distance itself from Russia however not without the assertion that the European Union regarded it as a potential candidate.

The facts related above show that after the 1991 independence, Latvia chose to disenfranchise its Russian minority in order to totally cut itself from the Russian Federation. That decision was driven by the fact that Latvia had a tradition as a modern independent state prior to being forcefully annexed by the Soviet Union. So, the large number of Russians living in the country was perceived as a threat for Latvia's nation-building and return to Europe after regaining independence. Hence, in order to maintain its long-awaited independence it adopted rather nationalistic laws, which nonetheless, did not prevent its EU accession.

In the following subchapter I shall relate Moldova's experience in its nation-building given the particularities of its history and "disputed national identity", as Alina Mungiu-Pippidi coined it, and the outcomes of its "liberal nationality policies".<sup>87</sup>

## ***2.2 The Moldovan Independence and Nation-Building***

The Republic of Moldova (RM) is an independent state that emerged on the world map as a result of the collapse of the Soviet empire.<sup>88</sup> The RM was established in its current borders in 1940 by the decision of the Supreme Council of USSR as the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR). In 1940, according to provisions of the additional secret protocols of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the USSR annexed the territory between Prut and Dniester rivers with the historical name of Basarabia. This territory has been in the expansionist interests of the Russian Empire for ages. Starting with the sixteenth century, Danube Principalities, Walachia and Moldova were under the

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<sup>87</sup> See Arunas Juska, op. cit., p. 546

protectorate of the Ottoman Empire. The Russian-Turkish War of 1806-1812 ended up with peace in Bucharest. As a result, the Russian Empire annexed Basarabia to its territories, which initially enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, while the Romanian language was further used in the local administration simultaneously with the Russian one. The autonomy of Basarabia and the local legislation were eliminated already in 1828. The practice of imposing the Russian language in the official as well as cultural and religious life, often referred to as “Russification” had military and economic goals and was often implemented through massive colonization of the autonomous territories populated by ethnic minorities of the Russian Empire.<sup>89</sup>

When the Russian Empire collapsed after the Bolshevik revolution in November 1917, a representative local body called “Sfatul Tarii” made a decision on May 27, 1918 to unify Basarabia with Romania. By the time when Moscow decided to create the “Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia”, Basarabia had been a part of Romania for 22 years. Hence, the territory of the MSSR was made up in 1940 of Basarabia (except Southern Basarabia/Moldova assigned to Ukraine) and a part of the territory of the former Moldovan Socialist Soviet Autonomous Republic (Transnistria or also called Trans-Dniestria by the secessionist government of the later, See Table 1).<sup>90</sup> However, the Moldovan Socialist Soviet Autonomous Republic (MSSAR) was founded in October 1924 in the left bank of river Dniester that is Transnistria. The MSSAR was a constituent part of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic with a surface area of 8,5000 square kilometers.<sup>91</sup>

### Table 1

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<sup>88</sup> Natalia Chirtoaca, “Juridical Study of the Documents Signed in the course of the negotiations process on the Transnistrian conflict settlement” In: Arcadie Barbarosie and Oazu Nantoi (eds.) *“Aspects of the Transnistrian Conflict”*, Institute for Public Policy, 2004, Chisinau, p. 19

<sup>89</sup> Oazu Nantoi “Historical Premises for the Outburst of Violent Conflict in Transnistrian Moldova”, In: Gheorghe Cojocaru, David Darchiashvili, Guram Dumbadze, Igor Munteanu, Tamara Pataraia (eds.) *“Anthology of Comparative Studies. Societies in Transition. Moldova and Georgia”*, Tbilisi, 2001, p. 21

<sup>90</sup> Oazu Nantoi, op. cit., p. 21

### Main historical data

Years	Event	Outcome
1812	Moldova's annexation by the Russian Empire	Moldova becomes an Imperial <i>oblast'</i> and later a Russian <i>gubernia</i> , called Basarabia
1918	The representative local body "Sfatul Tarii" issued a decision on unifying Basarabia with Romania	The Unification of Basarabia with Greater Romania
1924	The foundation of the Moldovan Socialist Soviet Autonomous Republic (MSSAR or Transnistria)	Formation of a new "Moldovan" ethnicity based on a regional identity
1940	Soviet Troops occupy Basarabia	The creation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova (MSSR)
1990	The Supreme Soviet proclaimed the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic a Sovereign State	
1991	The Parliament voted for new name "Republic of Moldova"	

Thus, with the foundation of a new state on the left bank of the river Dniester, in the 1920s a new people and language rapidly emerged. Moldovan histories, textbooks, grammars, newspapers and other publications were supported by the Soviet authorities, persons whose language and ethnicity was "Romanian" became "Moldovan". Moreover, the Cyrillic script was being used as a main trait to distinguish the Moldovans from the Romanians.<sup>92</sup>

The Moldovans from Transnistria, which was part of the Russian Empire since 1792 consider Moldova, not Romania to be their motherland. They call themselves Moldovans, not Romanians, and claim that they are Russian citizens.<sup>93</sup> The Romanians

<sup>91</sup> Natalia Cojocaru and Stela Suhan "The Collective memory and Identity construction in Transnistria" In: Arcadie Barbarosie and Oazu Nantoi (eds), op. cit., p. 129

<sup>92</sup> Charles King op. cit., 2000, p. 3

<sup>93</sup> Victor Birsan "Masacrul Inocentilor din Moldova 1 martie – 29 iulie, 1992" ["The Massacre of the Innocents from Moldova, March 1- July 29, 1992."] Publishing House of the Romanian cultural Foundation, Bucharest, 1993. In: Natalia Cojocaru and Stela Suhan op. cit. p. 129

from Transnistria do not keep the events that occurred in 1859 and 1918 that is the reunification of Moldova with the Greater Romania, in their collective memory.<sup>94</sup> In 1941 the Romanian and German troops had taken Basarabia and Bukovina and officially reintegrated them together with Transnistria into the Romanian state.<sup>95</sup> However, the Moldovans from Transnistria considered the Basarabian enrolment into the Romanian Army from 1941-1944 and its participation under the royal tricolor for the “the cause of the Romanian unity” an act of occupation.<sup>96</sup> However, in 1944 Transnistria came again under Soviet power. Nevertheless, the events of 1944 did not strengthen the Transnistrian’s Romanian consciousness.<sup>97</sup>

In line with the above mentioned, Iulian Chifu suggests that the Moldovan society has been segregated by the introduction of the concept of multiethnicism along with or instead of multiculturalism. To explain this segregation he introduces the term of “ethnic Moldovenism”. According to Chifu, “ethnic Moldovenism” promotes the idea of the existence of a Moldovan ethnicity, absolutely different from the Romanian one, with a different history, past, development, based on a regional identity and on a history of the former Moldovan Principality. He suggests that the objective of the promotion of the “ethnic Moldovenism” is to “elevate regional identity to the status of national identity and promote it as a basis for the existence of two Romanian states”.<sup>98</sup>

Another important aspect that, according to Chifu, has influenced the segregation of the Moldovan society is the creation of a Transnistrian Russian-speaking people or nation, based on a linguistic identity principle. The latter is used as an argument for the still actual Transnistrian will to self-determination, based on a “Transnistrian ethnic nation”,

<sup>94</sup> Natalia Cojocaru and Stela Suhan op. cit. p. 129

<sup>95</sup> Charles King, op. cit., p. 93

<sup>96</sup> Oleg Serebrian “Politosfera”, Cartier, Chisinau, 2001, In: Natalia Cojocaru and Stela Suhan op. cit. p. 129

<sup>97</sup> Natalia Cojocaru and Stela Suhan op. cit. p. 129

<sup>98</sup> Iulian Chifu “Identity and Multiculturalism: Diversity and Societal Cohesion” In: *“From Misunderstanding towards openness and collaboration in Multicultural Societies. Experience of Moldovan, Estonia and Northern Ireland”*, Pontons, Chisinau, 2005. p. 233

created along the same lines of the “ethnic Moldovenism”, using the Cyrillic script – “as an element of artificial identity in order to be different from the Moldovenism on the right side of the Dniester – combined with the multiethnicism of a Russian-speaking society made up, on average, of comparable percentages of Romanians/Moldovans, Ukrainians and Russians”. The population in Transnistria is actually based on the import of 20 percent of Russian-speaking population from the former Soviet spaces into the capital of the region, with a large majority (80 percent) of Romanians/Moldovans living outside Tiraspol – the capital of the region. In Tiraspol, Romanians/Moldovans represent only 13 percent of the population.<sup>99</sup> That is also confirmed by Charles King who states that “Given the sensitive position of the new Moldovan SSR as an object of Romanian irredentism, Soviet policy underscored the separateness of Moldovans and Romanians. ... Moldovans were portrayed as a distinct ethnic group by stressing the Slavic elements in Moldovan history and culture. Immigration of Russians and Ukrainians into the Republic was encouraged and ethnic Slavs had more favorable positions in the Communist Party, government and enterprises.”<sup>100</sup>

Under the conditions of a distorted national identity promoted for decades by the Soviet policy and continued by the post-Communist parties in the early 1990s and currently by the Communist Government, an interesting feature of an inclusionary democracy emerged. Thus, the Moldovan government and hence Moldovans offered citizenship and civic rights to their Slavic and non-Slavic fellows, as opposed to the Latvians. I shall dwell more upon that choice later on this subchapter.

Given the disputed national identity, the movement for the renaissance and national liberation in the RM was supported by the democratization policy, “perestroika”, launched by Gorbachev in 1985. It has become an objective necessity to create a viable

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<sup>99</sup> Idem

<sup>100</sup> Charles King, “History”, *Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, 1999, Fourth Edition, pp. 545-546 In: Oazu Natoi op. cit. p.p. 23-24

political alternative that would meet the democratic and national aspirations of people in this new environment of the second half of the 1980s. That period was marked by the opposition of the Communist Party of the RM to the demands of the majority of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic's (MSSR) population - disintegration from the USSR. The resistance of the Communist Party of Moldova generated and continually supported the hostility in the national minorities by spreading rumors and slanders and straining the atmosphere in the society. At a meeting held on June 3, 1988 in the grand hall of the Union of Writers in Chisinau, the Initiative Group of the Democratic Movement was created to support reforms.<sup>101</sup>

The Initiative Group of the Democratic Movement was set up as an alternative opposition body to the Communist Party of Moldova. A provoking rumor was launched regarding the intention of the Democratic Movement to unite the MSSR with the Socialist Republic of Romania, even though it was hard to imagine such an event could take place in the Ceausescu regime that, like the Chisinau communist regime, kept a conspicuous silence on the developments in the MSSR.<sup>102</sup>

The main objective of the Initiative Group of the Democratic Movement was raising public awareness on the real situation in the MSSR. At the same time, the Democratic Movement organized meetings and demonstrations as well as campaigns aimed at supporting the decision to grant official status to the Romanian language and returning to the Latin alphabet, achieving political and civil rights, dismantling the command administrative system and decentralizing the economy.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> See Oazu Nantoi "Historical Premises for the Outburst of Violent Conflict in Transnistrian Moldova", In: Gheorghe Cojocaru, David Darchiashvili, Guram Dumbadze, Igor Munteanu, Tamara Pataraia (eds.) op. cit., 2001, p. 21

<sup>102</sup> Natalia Cojocaru and Stela Suhan "The Collective memory and Identity construction in Transnistria" In: Arcadie Barbarosie and Oazu Nantoi (eds.), op. cit., p. 29

<sup>103</sup> Natalia Chirtoaca, op. cit., p. 19

On May 20, 1989, following the example of the Baltic States, the Congress was held on the founding of the Popular Front of Moldova (PFM).<sup>104</sup> The objective of the later was not acquiring of political and/or state power in the country, but rather the economic, social and cultural sovereignty of the MSSR as an equal state within USSR. The main issue that the Popular Front of Moldova undertook was that of the MSSR sovereignty. The next steps, and rather firm ones, towards national self-determination were made on August 27, 1989, when the Great National Assembly drafted its final document “On the state sovereignty and our right to a future”. This document formulated quite clearly the demand “to reestablish the historic name of the Moldovan people and language as they have been for centuries – Romanian”.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, the process of self determination of the RM began on August 31, 1989, with the adoption of the Law on State Language and of the Law on Functioning of Languages on the Territory of the MSSR by the 11<sup>th</sup> legislature of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR.<sup>106</sup> The preamble of the Law on State Language stipulates that: “In order to eliminate deformations in the linguistic system of the MSSR, the Moldovan language is placed under state protection, being one of the pre-requisites of the Moldovan nation’s existence in the framework of its sovereign national statehood structure, to ensure its functioning in all spheres in the territory of the MSSR.” Thus, the adoption of these two laws generated an extremely negative reaction in industrial centers of Transnistria. By these laws, the Romanian (Moldovan) language, which is the language of the titular nation, has been granted the status of state language and the Latin alphabet replaced the Cyrillic one and the fact that the Moldovan with Romanian language are identical has been recognized. These laws have created stereotypes in the Russian-speaking population,

<sup>104</sup> See Charles King, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 185 - 189

<sup>105</sup> Natalia Chirtoaca, *op. cit.*, p. 20

<sup>106</sup> See Charles King., *op. cit.*, 2000, 120-142

especially the one residing in Transnistria. Fears that the new laws will turn the Russian-speaking residents into second-class citizens appeared.<sup>107</sup>

The ideological machinery of the Transnistrian leaders, following the traditions of the 1930s in the USSR, made its best to transform the feeling of Romania-phobia and the unreasonable fear of the unification of the RM with Romania into an efficient instrument of public opinion manipulation. Moreover, at the industrial enterprises in Transnistria, including the ones of the military-complex of the USSR, workers went on strikes and protests against giving the status of official language to the Romanian language. Obviously, strikes within the military-industrial complex in principle were impossible without the approval of the Moscow leadership.<sup>108</sup>

From the viewpoint of the Transnistrian and Gagauz leaders, the government of the RM adopted a position against the national minorities namely against the “internationalist” message predicated by Moscow and the communist party. Thus, minorities were conflicting with the government itself and not only with certain nationalist political groups, which have previously been the great supporters of the political and cultural change.<sup>109</sup> As a result of these reforms, in 1992 the Transnistrian conflict went off.

During the Soviet times Transnistria, which is on the left bank of river Dniester was prevalently populated by Slavic nationalities. Hence, the main industries were based on the left bank of the country. Therefore Moldova was economically dependent on Transnistria which in 1990 decided to secede. According to the Transnistrian leaders, the secession happened on interethnic conflict grounds. In 1992 an armed conflict irrupted.<sup>110</sup> The Moldovan side however, rightly argued that the Transnistrian secession was less about ethnicity and more about the separatists’ wish to restore the old Soviet Union.

<sup>107</sup> See Oazu Nantoi, op. cit., pp. 22-25

<sup>108</sup> Ibidem

<sup>109</sup> Charles King, op. cit., 2000, p. 185

However, the pan-Romanian nationalistic stance of Mircea Druc's government (1990) can be held responsible for the growth of the conflict into an open warfare later in 1992 although after his dismissal.<sup>111</sup> Hence, in an attempt to reintegrate the country, the nationalistic pro-Romanian discourse has been changed into a pro-independence one.

On July 21, 1992 the presidents of the RM and of the Russian Federation signed the Agreement "On the principles of peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova". After the cease fire, the anti-constitutional regime from Tiraspol already had (a) control over a territory where the structures of the previous constitutional regime along with the political opposition had been removed. Moreover, it had (b) a group of pseudo political forces prepared to resort to violent reprisals against any opposition combined with a (c) heavily censored mass media (press, radio, TV) that was depicting the RM as an adversary state. Furthermore, as a consequence of the armed conflict it had (d) well-trained and well-equipped military troops with ammunitions from the arsenal of the 14th Army deployed in the summer 1992.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, Transnistria disposed of (e) industrial enterprises with close relations with the Russian Federation. Moreover, it had (f) customs and border-guard offices, both at the Moldovan and Ukrainian borders and along the river Dniester (about 820 km in total). Not less importantly, the Transnistrian (h) population residing in the industrial centers had a totalitarian mentality. Furthermore, (k) the Russian Federation, which was the only state to recognize Transnistria as an independent state, was providing political, economic, military and informational support. Last but not least, Transnistria had the (l) possibility to put an economic blockade on Moldova by cutting down gas or denying access to the railway which links the latter with Ukraine and the Russian Federation.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>110</sup> See Oleg Serebrean "*Politica si Geopolitica*" ["Politics and Geopolitics"], Cartier, 2004, p. 136-146

<sup>111</sup> Charles King "Moldova" In: Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.) "*Political Parties of Eastern Europe, Russia and the Successor States*", Longman Group Limited, 1994, p. 296

<sup>112</sup> Oazu Nantoi "About the situation in the East districts of the Republic of Moldova (1992-2000)", January, 2001, p. 1, <http://www.ipp.md/biblioteca.php?l=en&idc=34>

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem

Another element which contributed to the accomplishment of the anti-Romanian Moldovenism was Romania's participation in the World War II. At first, Romania was an ally of the Fascist Germany, its involvement in the aggression against the Soviet Union was justified by the political regime at the time and necessity "to liberate Basarabia from the Bolshevik occupation". Appalling acts of war, reprisals against local Jews and "Bolsheviks" objectively had a negative impact on the memory of the Slavic and non-titular population and finally contributed to the consolidation of the Romania-phobia.<sup>114</sup>

The discourse on reunifying Moldova and Romania was met with strong opposition by ethnic Russians and members of other non-titular ethnic groups living in the republic. The reasons put forward by the ethnic Russians were as follow: first, it was argued that the Dniester region populated by Slavs had never belonged to either Romania or Moldova. Second, the reunification of Moldova with Romania threatened to radically change the ethno-demographic balance in the republic. Thus, it was argued that as a consequence of reunification, ethnic Slavs would become a numerically irrelevant minority with almost no political and economic influence in the state of Romania. Third, economically, Romania was even more underdeveloped and had a lower standard of living than Moldova. Additionally, during the late 1980s, Romania was extremely politically unstable. The anti-government actions that spread throughout Romanian cities, and which resulted in the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in 1989, had put the country on the edge of civil war. Finally, the Romanian state's very poor treatment of ethnic minorities, especially ethnic Hungarians and Roma people, made the unification of Moldova and Romania simply unacceptable to the Slavic minorities.<sup>115</sup> Consequently, it is clear that the potential Moldovan reunification with Romania generated a lot of contention within the Moldovan society. Hence, Brubaker's explanation of the triadic

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<sup>114</sup> See Oazu Nantoi, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-25

relation mentioned earlier in the theoretical chapter fits the Moldovan case very well.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, the ruling elites of the Moldovan nationalizing-state had to give up on their nationalistic discourse. That was determined by a strong countermovement on behalf of the national minorities which would not have been possible without a strong support from the national mother-land. Hence, the Transnistrian conflict along with its disputed identity made Moldova more prone to further control from the Russian Federation.

Given that a lot of speculations have been made along the reunification line, it is interesting to look at the position adopted by Romania in respect of the much debated reunification of Moldova with Romania. According to Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, the Romanian governments after Ceausescu had a rather lukewarm attitude towards Moldova. Ion Iliescu was educated in Moscow and therefore was not a nationalist. Moreover, the Romanian nationalism after 1989 was focused rather on Transylvania than on Moldova. Furthermore, fighting with a post-communist power which was strongly dominating the poor rural regions, the Romanian opposition was not enthusiastic to unite with Moldova. The latter, according to Mungiu-Pippidi, was poorer and more rural than Romania, with 50 percent of its population considering that a single party-system provides the best government ever. Later on, when Romania was accomplishing its Euro-Atlantic integration, it had to resolve its relations with the neighbors.<sup>117</sup> Thus, in 1997 Romania signed a treaty with Ukraine that provided that the former has no claims over the territories lost as a result of the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, namely Southern Moldova and Bukovina which are now part of Ukraine. Hence, according to Mungiu-Pippidi, Romania's Euro-Atlantic integration was a priority, and the "modest drive for a

<sup>115</sup> Ganelin, A. 'Buket Moldovy [Knot of Problems in Moldova]', *Komsomolskaja Pravda*, 25 October, 1990 and Romanova, A. 1992 'Proschanie s Moldovoi [Farewell to Moldova]', *Druzhiba Narodov*, no. 5–6, pp. 195–201 In: Arunas Juska op. cit., p. 537

<sup>116</sup> See Rogers Brubaker, op. cit., 1996, p. 44

<sup>117</sup> Alina Mungiu-Pippidi "Disputed Identity as Inescapable Pluralism: Moldova's Ambiguous Transition", FPRI Project on Democratic Transitions Working Paper, February 8, 2007, p. 13

reunification” with Moldova “fell victim to this policy”.<sup>118</sup> Hence, from the above mentioned, one can see that the fears that were prevailing in the Moldovan Slavic population about a possible reunification of the former with Romania were unfounded. Moreover, one of the arguments brought by Arunas Juska, namely that Moldovan Slavs were opposing the reunification on grounds of Moldova being more economically developed than Romania is inconsistent with Alina Mungiu-Pippidi’s argument, who rightly states the reverse.

On June 23, 1990, the Supreme Soviet expressed the will of the people and proclaimed the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic a sovereign state. By this act, the following basic principles of the constitutional process were realized: source and bearer of sovereignty (the people); integrity and indivisibility of the state; fundamental human rights; citizenship of the Republic of Moldova; pluralism; and a multi-party system. After independence, the Law on the citizenship of the RM No. 596-XII of June 5, 1991 was adopted. That law established a single citizenship on the territory of the republic and banned the common citizenship of the USSR. At the moment of its adoption, this law was specific to a sovereign and independent state, because it determined permanent political and legal relations between individuals and the state, which were expressed in mutual rights and duties.<sup>119</sup>

The Moldovan citizenship law was “one of the most liberal in eastern Europe”, allowing all persons residing in the republic when the declaration of sovereignty was made on June 23, 1990 to become citizens regardless of ethnicity, language, length of residence or other criteria. Moreover, the 1994 Moldovan Constitution did not refer to Moldova as a “national” state, referring to the “people of Moldova” rather than to any particular ethnic group. Furthermore, even when the Popular Front was extremely active, Russian was still a *de facto* second language in the republican administration,

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<sup>118</sup> Idem

and by the late 1990s social events in Chisinau were as likely to be held in Russian as in Romanian.<sup>120</sup> International observers have qualified the Moldovan nation-state as civic and inclusive rather than ethnically defined.<sup>121</sup> Therefore, Moldova was the first post-Soviet republic to be admitted to the Council of Europe, in June 1995.<sup>122</sup>

The Moldovan nation-building and its development as a democratic society were accomplished with an active participation of the population and led to three rather distinct divisions in the elites as well as in the population. The inability of the leading Soviet forces to meet the basic needs emerging at that time, determined the establishment of new parties, as well as of social-political movements preoccupied with the national rebirth, democratization, freedom and protection of human rights. The victory in the elections of the Popular Front in 1990 and the removal of the Communist Party from power led to an even greater division of the elites. Clashes of opinion concentrated on the key issues of the society's development: attitude towards the totalitarian communist system, directions of the development of the national economy, state sovereignty and independence, national rebirth, state language, etc.<sup>123</sup>

As a result of the division of the Moldovan political leaders, following the first post-Soviet elections in 1994, the political elites in Moldova were separated in three groups. The (a) radical pan-Romanians regarded the unification with Romania as the only way out from the economic crisis for a country which also confronted with territorial separatism.<sup>124</sup> Because of the economic and political disorder caused by the breakdown of the totalitarian system, (b) reactionary neo-Bolshevik forces supported chauvinistic tendencies of the non-titular nations living in the RM. This support was noticeable in different actions directed towards the maintenance of the dying Soviet

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<sup>119</sup> Natalia Chirtoaca, op. cit. p. 21

<sup>120</sup> Charles King, op. cit. 2000, p. 169

<sup>121</sup> "Report of the CSCE Human Dimension Mission to the Republic of Moldova", Warsaw, 1993; US Department of State, "Moldova Country Report on Human Rights Practices", 1998. In: Ibidem

<sup>122</sup> Charles King op. cit, 2000, p. 145

<sup>123</sup> Ibidem

system on the one hand towards undermining territorial integrity (the conflict in Transnistria) of the RM on the other hand.<sup>125</sup> Hence, the ultraconservative coalition called for the rejection of the national movement and the establishment of the status-quo – return to the Soviet Union. Consequently, (c) a third strand discarded both the pan-Romanian and the pro-Soviet stances, and pleaded for the “maintenance of an independent Moldovan state participating in some, but not all, of the structures of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)”.<sup>126</sup> Given that according to constitutional provisions Moldova is committed to “permanent neutrality” it is not part to the military structures of the CIS set up by the Tashkent agreement establishing a collective security framework for the post-Soviet Republics.<sup>127</sup>

In line with the above mentioned, the “Agrarian Club” which won the 1994 elections and to which the president Mircea Snegur belonged, was a great supporter of the CIS. Moreover, the Russian Federation was pressuring Moldova on joining the CIS by applying harsh trade sanctions since it was a non-member state.<sup>128</sup> Therefore, Snegur was arguing that Moldova’s economic situation needed continued participation in the trade and energy structures of the former Soviet Union. Hence, the Christian-Democratic Popular Front (FPCD), which was formed from the former Popular Front of Moldova, along with other anti-CIS parties criticized the commonwealth calling it a “continuation of the Soviet Union however under a different name”. So, despite the boycott of the votes by the anti-CIS factions, the RM has joined the CIS in 1994. The reason for that decision was Russia’s resort to heavy tariffs on goods imported from Moldova. Russia was the main market for the Moldovan agricultural as well as other products. Later on,

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<sup>124</sup> Idem

<sup>125</sup> Natalia Chirtoaca, op. cit. p. 25

<sup>126</sup> Charles King, op. cit. 2000, p. 146

<sup>127</sup> Stephen White, Ian McAllister, Margo Light, John Lowenhardt “A European or a Slavic Choice? Foreign Policy and Public Attitudes in Post-Soviet Europe”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 54, No. 2, March, 2002, p. 188

<sup>128</sup> Charles King, “Moldova” In: Bogdan Szajkowski (ed.) *“Political Parties of Eastern Europe, Russia and the Successor States”*, Longman Group Limited, 1994, p. 298

the presidium voted to ratify the Alma Ata accords which have been further followed by the ratification of the CIS economic treaty.<sup>129</sup>

After the FPCD lost the 1994 elections in favor of the Agrarian Party, a week after his appointment as the first democratically elected president of the RM, Mircea Snegur organized a “popular consultation”. That was a legally non-binding referendum which asked the question “Do you want Moldova to develop as an independent and unified state in the borders recognized by the United Nations, to implement a policy of neutrality, to support mutually advantageous economic relations with any country and to guarantee all citizens equal rights in accordance with the norms of international law?” The referendum had the following results: over 90 percent of voters voted in favor of independence of the Moldovan state. On the other hand, the pan-Romanianists – separated into the FPCD and the “Bloc of Peasants and Intellectuals” received all together less than 20 percent.<sup>130</sup> Thus, from the above communicated facts, one can fairly state that the post-independence Moldovan society still felt closely related to the former-Soviet countries. The Moldovan society did not see its country reuniting its historical motherland – Romania; rather, it saw itself closer to the former block. Hence, it is not incidental that the Moldovan citizenship law was liberal and accommodating towards national minorities. The citizenship status of the Soviet-times immigrants has been politicized to some degree, however in the wake of the Moldovan nationalism. Yet, neither immigration nor citizenship has been central to the Moldovan national movement. Rather, the most debated and politicized issues have been the state language, the unification with Romanian and the Moldovan territorial integrity.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Charles King, op. cit., 1994, p. 299

<sup>130</sup> Ibidem

<sup>131</sup> See Vladimir Socor “Annexation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina Condemned by Romania”, Report on the USSR, July 19, 1991a and “Moldavia Proclaims Independence, Commences Secession from USSR”, Report on the USSR, October 18, 1991b In: W. Rogers Brubaker, op. cit., 1992, p. 276

The practice of molding a Moldovan identity renewed after a short closure that last for only a few years. As of 1994, a serious policy on reverse identity has been steadily enacted. The new Moldovan Constitution stopped calling the language “Romanian” as in earlier language laws, as an alternative, it was called “Moldovan”. The strategy was the same as the one used in Soviet times: historical Romania was being mainly depicted as the “exploiter” of Moldova. Thus, Moldovan became the only officially acknowledged identity in official census. Surveys still show two categories of Romanian speakers, those who identify themselves as “Moldovans”, and those who identify themselves as “Romanians” who are a minority.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, the policies of the Romanian state towards Moldova were regarded by the Communist Party of Moldovan (CPM), who won the 2001 elections, as an attempt on Romania’s behalf to interfere in Moldova’s internal affairs and to educate a generation of patriots for a foreign state, that is Romania. Hence, after the communists came back to power in Moldova, the bilateral relations between Romania and Moldova worsened. So, by 2003, Romania has “phased out most of its aid, leaving only the scholarships for students in place”.<sup>133</sup>

To conclude, in this subchapter I have made an attempt to show that the path of the Moldovan nation-building has been a great deal influenced by its identity politics. The strong post-soviet legacy is traced in the commitment of the Moldovan electorate to the former Center and has obviously translated into its political choice. The elites, accordingly, are no less committed to the former Center either. Hence, the reverse identity policies practiced in Moldova in the early and mid 1990s were a continuity of the ones started in the Soviet times and can be still traced in its current political discourse. The particularity of the Moldovan identity is also reflected in its foreign policies, namely in its degrading relations with Romania. It is clear that the presence of

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<sup>132</sup> Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, op. cit., p. 7

<sup>133</sup> Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, op. cit., p. 13

national minorities with Moldovan citizenship was not regarded as a threat to the Moldovan nation-building as it was in the Latvian case.

## Chapter 3 The Effect of National Identity and Nationalist Politics on Economic Reforms in Latvia and Moldova

In the previous chapter I have looked into the specific of the Latvian and Moldovan national identity. The latter has shaped their perception of the legacies of the past as either threats or assets for nation-building and economic development. Hence, the inheritance of both Latvia and Moldova of large Russian and other ethnic minorities has been perceived by both in utterly different ways. Consequently, Latvia perceived the Russian minority as a threat to its nation-building, which is why it chose to disenfranchise it and cut itself from Russia. On the other hand, Moldova, did not perceive the Russian, let alone the other national minorities as a threat to its nation-building. On the contrary, the national motherland influence on Moldova was stronger due to the Russian minorities secessionist movement in Transnistria backed up by a weak Moldovan ethnic identity.

In the present chapter I intend to look at the early economic policies pursued by these two countries as a result of the initial choices of the ruling elites. The international institutions that they have chosen to adhere to after independence speak for the latter, which I believe, have been to some extent determined by the strength of their national identity and not less by the nationalist stance of the ruling elites. Hence, I intend to show that in the wake of independence Latvia has chosen to orient towards West whereas Moldova chose to keep its former ties with the East. In the Latvian case, those initial choices were determined by a strong Latvian ethnic identity, its wish to “return to Europe” as well as the strong nationalist position of the government. In the Moldovan case however, the disputed ethnic identity, balancing between an Eastern-Romance one<sup>134</sup> and a pan-Romanian one enabled the elites to strengthen the link with the former Center

– Russia. That has been accomplished by joining the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Hence, the latter choice contributed to keeping the ties with the former Soviet Republics rather than reorienting towards other alternative markets. Consequently, Moldova remained heavily dependent on the Russian energy supply and its export market. The abovementioned facts, combined with the frozen conflict in Transnistria backed up by the Russian Army, makes Moldova easily controlled by Russia – which is allegedly protecting the rights of its co-nationals living in Moldova.

### **3.1 A common post-Soviet Background versus divergent initial choices**

Both Latvia and Moldova have a similar post-Socialist background. Before 1991, both belonged to the state-socialist economy, therefore they had to reform their economies from scratch. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Latvia's electronic and automotive industry which was supplying the market of the former was not competitive on the international market.<sup>135</sup> Likewise, the Moldovan production has suffered from deindustrialization and deskilling, since all the Moldovan agricultural machinery and military industrial enterprises<sup>136</sup> were supplied with raw material from the Soviet Union and was oriented towards its market. As a result production was closed and a lot of people went redundant.

Moldova and Latvia carried out similar economic reforms. The initial policy of marketization and privatization was legitimated by a neo-liberal policy. The neo-liberal thinking strongly emphasized individual property rights and this has been the policy

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<sup>134</sup> This position emphasizes the Slavic factor in the Moldovan ethnicity. For more, see: Iulian Chifu op. cit., 2005

<sup>135</sup> *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, Country Profile, 2007, [www.eiu.com](http://www.eiu.com), p. 22

<sup>136</sup> Industrial enterprises such as the plants "Mezon", "Sigma", "Alfa" etc, were part of the military industrial complex of the former USSR. Good Governance and Human Development. *National Human Development Report. Republic of Moldova*, 2003. p. 30 On: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

priority of Western advisers. The divesting of state property has been one of the key objectives of the transition process. The neo-liberal argument is that private ownership is more effective: it increases profitability, sales and utilization of capital.<sup>137</sup> Thus the economic reforms of Latvia and Moldova have been oriented towards market liberalization, with most state production and housing privatization. In Latvia the privatization was concentrated towards small-scale rather than large scale enterprises. Moreover, the former took place with the exclusion from deliberations on economic policies of the “distributional coalitions”.<sup>138</sup>

According to the Soviet-type industrial structures the “distributional coalitions” are well organized and enjoy considerable political influence. In Latvia the “distributional coalitions” were organized along the Slavic ethnic line since they were concentrated in the industrial regions of the country. That has happened because during the Soviet times highly skilled as well as low skilled labor force was imported to all Soviet States from Russia and often Ukraine, in order to allegedly industrialize the former. Moreover, in the late 1980s the industrial workers, of whom 59.4 percent were Russian-speakers, were rallied along the Soviet imperial idea and Soviet devotedness, chiefly when it came to economic matters.<sup>139</sup>

### **3.2 Latvian reforms as determined by identity politics**

After independence, the reforming Latvian government saw clearly that the ex-Soviet enterprises that functioned within the division of labor of the former USSR were

<sup>137</sup> World Bank, 1996. In: David Lane “Emerging Varieties of Capitalism in Former State Socialist Societies”, Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge, *Competition and Change*, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2005, p. 231 – 232

<sup>138</sup> Mancur Olsen “The Hidden Path to a Successful Economy” in *The Emergence of Market Economies in Eastern Europe*, edited by C. Clague and G. C. Rausser, New York, Blackwell, 1993 In: Andrew Savchenko “Toward Capitalism or Away from Russia? Early Stage of Post-Soviet Economic Reforms in Belarus and the Baltics”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol., 61, No. 1, 2002, p. 237-245

<sup>139</sup> R. Karklins “Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy: The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia”, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1994 In: Andrew Svachenko, op. cit., p. 252

no longer able to work and their immediate restructuring was impossible. Moreover, given that foreign trade with the former Soviet republics was not likely to generate profit, the Latvian government decided that foreign trade should be reoriented away from the former USSR. To this end, in 1992 Latvia exited the ruble zone and a provisional domestic currency was introduced (Latvian Rublis). The permanent currency was introduced one year later. Moreover, given that the Latvian government was nationalist, the national independence was the number one priority, hence, little attention has been offered to economic transition.<sup>140</sup>

The exclusion of the non-titular industrial workers and managers from the political discourse when the reforms were taking place, enabled the advisors from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to easily convince the Latvian politicians to implement the “shock therapy” version of market reforms and introduce the stabilization measures.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, the reorientation of the foreign trade was aimed at allowing the total elimination of the Latvian dependence on Russian oil supply. The energy independence was supported by the construction in 1992 and 1993 of oil terminals that in the long run would be used to import oil by sea. Hence, the first phase of economic reforms has been successful in Latvia because the “distributional coalitions” were excluded from decision making. The major cause for that was the “value-pattern of the nationalist ruling elites”.<sup>142</sup>

Keith A. Darden however, argues that the economic ideology of the elite in control of the state determines the choice of membership in international institutions.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, Darden believes that the national identity explanation does not fully account for the disparity in policy choices. Nonetheless, he agrees that the nationalist explanations

<sup>140</sup> Andrew Savchenko, op. cit., p. 246

<sup>141</sup> Andrew Savchenko, op. cit., p. 247-253

<sup>142</sup> K. Zidovicz “Fatalen Uzaleznie – Miecc Albo Nie Miecc” [“Fatal Dependency: To have or Not To Have”], Eurazija 3/4, 1994 In: Andrew Savchenko, op. cit., p. 248

<sup>143</sup> Keith A. Darden “*Economic Ideas and Institutional Choice among the post-Soviet States*”, Working Paper, Yale University, 2001, p. 6

may clarify to a certain degree the behavior of the Baltic States, but he argues that they do not fully explain the variation in institutional choice. Nonetheless, Darden's hypothesis which claims that "elite ideologies drive institutional choice" is not confirmed in the Moldovan case. In order to explain the ideational variation among the post-Soviet elites, from mid-1996 to 1997, Darden conducted around 200 interviews with decision-makers in nine post-Soviet countries, including Latvia and Moldova.<sup>144</sup>

The interviews conducted by Darden were aimed at learning about the officials' "ideas about how economies work and to get factual information about the formulation of the state's economic policy".<sup>145</sup> Based on these studies, Darden identified three frameworks which according to him are more widespread among the post-Soviet elites, these are: market-liberalism, mercantilism and organicism. Hence, he explains that market-liberalism is based on the liberal economic thought. However, given the ideas of the post-soviet background, market-liberals claim that the state-owned sectoral industrial complexes need to be destroyed or reorganized in order to make them competitive and that the state support should be abolished. These ideas were supported by Western economists through international organizations that organized trainings for the post-Soviet citizens. Organicism, on the other hand, is a conceptual legacy of the Soviet economic theory. It considers that the key to productivity and economic growth is specialized on monopolistic cooperation rather than competition. The former has made the Soviet economy highly interdependent. Finally, Darden defines mercantilism as a strand which resembles organicism in that it also gives importance to monopoly and cooperation rather than competition. However, mercantilism totally rejects international

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<sup>144</sup> Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, for more see: Keith A. Darden, *op. cit.*, p. 7 - 13

<sup>145</sup> Keith A. Darden, *op. cit.*, p. 7

economic relations and regards the relations between the Soviet Republics as that of the exploiter and the exploited.<sup>146</sup>

Hence, given the above definitions and the fact that in 1995-1996 the dominating economic ideology in the Latvian elites was “liberalism”, and that in 1999 it chose to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), Darden’s hypothesis is confirmed – “elite ideologies drive institutional choice”.<sup>147</sup> Nonetheless, the initial elite choices in the wake of Latvian independence were determined by strong nationalist considerations, as it has been shown in the previous chapter.

### ***3.3 Moldovan reforms as determined by identity politics***

The outcome in the Moldovan case is somewhat different. Darden defines the economic ideas dominating in Moldova in the period 1995-1996 as “organicist”.<sup>148</sup> Moldova joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1994 and the WTO only in 2001. Moreover, in 1994 Moldova was among the first Newly Independent States to sign a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU. The PCA used the standard cooperation agenda which the EU offered to all former Soviet States.<sup>149</sup> It sets up the institutional framework for bilateral relations, the major common objectives, and promotes activities and dialogue in a number of policy areas.<sup>150</sup> So, the PCA is aimed at supporting Moldova in building democracy based on the principles of the rule of law and not least important, it is aimed at transforming Moldova into a market economy. The latter cannot function without viable institutions which would set the rules of the game in a market society.

<sup>146</sup> See Keith A. Darden, op. cit., p. 8 - 9

<sup>147</sup> See Keith A. Darden, op. cit., p. 12

<sup>148</sup> Ibidem

<sup>149</sup> Andrei Zagorski “Policies towards Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus” In: Roland Dannreuther (ed.): “European Union Foreign and Security Policy, Towards a Neighborhood Strategy”, Routledge, 2004, p.

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<sup>150</sup> The Portal of the European Initiatives Program of the Soros Foundation-Moldova. On: [www.europa.md](http://www.europa.md)

The privatization of the Moldovan production sectors was inefficient and is still incomplete. The primary privatization method of the state property has been carried out through vouchers and the secondary privatization method is performed through direct sales. Yet, the shares (patrimonial bonds) of privatized factories depreciated, which raised a great social contempt and mistrust for Governmental policies and institutions. The collective farming infrastructure was not demanded and the lack of state subsidies for private farming has resulted in a prevalently family owned subsistence based agricultural production.<sup>151</sup>

I claim that one of the main factors that have left Moldova lagging behind Latvia is that the former looked to the East (Russia) and the latter to the West (the European Union). The RM maintained its links with the former Center (Russia) mainly through the CIS, whereas Latvia cut itself from Russia. For the nationalist elites who ruled the first Moldovan government, independence was nothing but a transitional step towards reunification with Romania. The nationalist party lost the 1994 elections to the Agrarian Party led by Mircea Snegur, who was a strong proponent of the Moldovan independence and CIS membership.<sup>152</sup> One of the key arguments of the then President of the RM, Mircea Snegur, for opting to join the CIS was the resolution of the Transnistrian armed conflict with Russian support.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, the 1995 foreign policy concept for the period 1998-2002 stated that “the Moldovan Government was committed to European integration as a “strategic objective” along with “continuous development of constructive relations with the Russian Federation”.<sup>154</sup> The 2001 victory of the Communist Party of Moldova did not remove the vector of the foreign policy from its “Slavic choice”.<sup>155</sup> In 2007 the conflict is frozen and still unresolved.

<sup>151</sup> See EBRD Transition Report. Infrastructure. 2004.

<sup>152</sup> Stephen White, Ian McAllister, Margo Light, John Lowenhardt, op. cit., p. 188

<sup>153</sup> Oleg Serebrian, op. cit., 2004, p. 147

<sup>154</sup> The Republic of Moldova Foreign Policy Guidelines for the Period 1998-2002 In: Stephen White, Ian McAllister, Margo Light, John Lowenhardt, op. cit., p. 188

<sup>155</sup> See Stephen White, Ian McAllister, Margo Light, John Lowenhardt, op. cit., p. 188

The CIS membership along and the fact that Russia is still one of the major export markets for Moldovan products is one of the main reasons why Moldova is still heavily dependent upon Russia in terms of trade and security (for the Moldovan export and import structure See Appendix Table C and Table D) . Interestingly enough, during the Soviet times, the Baltic countries were more economically integrated in the Soviet market than Moldova.<sup>156</sup> Nonetheless, the former decided to opt out, first and foremost on nationalist considerations. Moreover, Moldova's cooperation within the CIS is not only economic as it was formally declared; it is also political and social. Furthermore, the cooperation of the RM within the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of the CIS which deals exclusively with the development of model-legal acts for the member states also indicates that the Moldovan presence in the CIS is not merely economic.<sup>157</sup>

A group of Moldovan political and economic commentators carried out a study which approaches the issue of Moldova's position within the CIS.<sup>158</sup> The conclusion that has been drawn is clear: Moldova must have a more advantageous bilateral cooperation with Russia and other CIS member states rather than within a multilateral framework. That conclusion is based upon the fact that the CIS proved to be an amorphous and inefficient structure.<sup>159</sup> The multilateral agreements that are now in force are inefficient. Hence, bilateral agreements between Moldova and important commercial partners from the CIS should be concluded. Furthermore, the decision making process within the CIS

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<sup>156</sup> Valeriu Prohntchi "Economy. A Comparative Review of Economic indicators of CIS and EU: View from the republic of Moldova" In: Gheorghe Cojocaru, David Darchiashvili, Guram Dumbadze, Igor Munteanu, Tamara Pataria (eds.), op. cit, 2001, p. 101

<sup>157</sup> Oleg Serebrian "Republica Moldova, CSI si Integrarea Europeana " ["The Republic of Moldova, The CIS and the European Integration"] In: *Timpul*, November 25, <http://europa.timpul.md/Article.asp?idIssue=152&idRubric=1958&idArticle=5137>

<sup>158</sup> The study was carried with the support of the *Institute for Public Policy (IPP)*. IPP is an independent and well reputed Moldovan think-tank. See: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

<sup>159</sup> From the Conclusions of the International Conference on "Moldova's Way to the European Union", October 1 – 2, 2001. On: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

has a coordination and consulting character unlike the one within the EU, which is supranational.<sup>160</sup>

As a result of the inefficient common market within the CIS and various interests of the member states, new regional groupings, including economic ones have emerged. The most recent one is the Euro-Asian Economic Community.<sup>161</sup> Earlier were created structures like: the Central-Asian Union<sup>162</sup> and the Customs Union<sup>163</sup> to which Moldova is not part, but has Free Trade Agreements with its members. Furthermore, there is another regional Group GUUAM,<sup>164</sup> the Union Russia-Belarus etc. Moreover, the Free Trade Agreement, which has been signed and ratified by all of the CIS member states except for Russia, is not functional. Thus, there is no free movement of goods, capital as well as of labor force within the CIS.<sup>165</sup>

Moldova's presence in the CIS involves a lot of costs. Apart from several millions of Moldovan Leis transferred to the CIS budget in the form of mandatory membership contribution, Moldova had to also undergo some moral costs. The incurred costs are the 1992 armed conflict with Russian involvement; the deployment of the 14<sup>th</sup> Russian Army in Transnistria for 15 years now; the failure of the export relations with Russia which blocked in 2005 the trade of Moldovan wines and agricultural products. Russia is the main export market for Moldovan products. Moreover, as regarding the costs, one can include the high price for natural gas that Moldova pays to Russia – US\$110 per thousand cubic meters, which has privatized the Moldovan gas networks.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Valeriu Prohntchi, op. cit. 2001, 103

<sup>161</sup> With Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as member states. <http://www.evrases.com/>

<sup>162</sup> Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

<sup>163</sup> Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

<sup>164</sup> GUUAM was formally founded in 1995 as a political, economic and strategic alliance designed to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of these former Soviet Union republics, with Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova as member states. On: <http://www.guuam.org/general/browse.html>

<sup>165</sup> From the Conclusions of the International Conference on “*Moldova's Way to the European Union*”, October 1 – 2, 2001. On: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

<sup>166</sup> “Cit ne costa prezenta in CSI?” [“How much does the CIS membership cost us?”], *Ziarul de Garda*, No. 94, July 27, 2006. On: <http://garda.com.md/94/politic/>

According to some Moldovan political analysts, the CIS was created in order to prevent a violent dismemberment of the former USSR. However, as they claim, Russia decided to transform the CIS into an influential structure, by trying to give it an appearance of a mutually advantageous cooperation for all member states, by the kind of the European Union. Nevertheless, very few common interests were found, which is confirmed by the creation of other regional economic structures.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, 2/3 of the Russian trade is with non-CIS states and its economy is self-sufficient. Hence, it is obvious that Russia's objectives were other than insuring permanent suppliers of agricultural products for its market and export markets for Russian producers. Thus, it is argued that CIS is a means of maintaining Russian political and military influence in the "near abroad".<sup>168</sup>

In 2005, the Commission adopted the EU-Moldova Action Plan which is the main instrument of the European Neighborhood Policy.<sup>169</sup> The latter focuses on Moldova's weakest areas: strengthening the administrative and judicial capacity; ensuring respect for freedom of expression and media; cooperation on economic and regulatory issues aimed at improving the business environment and enhancing the long-term sustainability of economic policy; and last but not least the efforts towards a feasible resolution of the Transnistria conflict. Further collaboration on border management, migration supervision and the fight against trafficking in human beings, organized crime and money laundering are also identified as priorities for EU-Moldova enhanced cooperation.<sup>170</sup> Interestingly enough, the recent political discourse in Moldova shows that the latter tends to rely more on EU rather than Russia in the solution of the above issues.

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<sup>167</sup> From the Conclusions of the International Conference on "Moldova's Way to the European Union", October 1 – 2, 2001. On: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

<sup>168</sup> Valeriu Prohntichi, 2001, op. cit., p. 109

<sup>169</sup> The European Commission. "Communication on the Commission proposals for action plans under the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)", COM (2004) 795 final, December 9, 2004; and European Neighborhood strategy paper", COM (2004) 373 final, May 12, 2004 In Karen E. Smith "The outsiders: the European neighborhood policy", *International Affairs* 81, 4 (2005), p. 764

In the last few years, the Moldovan foreign policy has been balancing between both Russia and the EU according to the short term interests or emergency issues that the government had to pursue or tackle. In fact, Moldovan political commentators believe that this uncertainty has an older background, namely the attachment of the current Moldovan political elites to the political leaders from Moscow. Given Moldova's European aspirations and its dual external message, in 2006 the Moldovan elites were discussing the possibility of exiting the CIS in order to show its commitment to carrying out the reforms in line with the EU standards and thus enhancing its opportunity of integrating into the EU. Some politicians and political analysts emphasize that the EU has never talked about a clear perspective for Moldova's EU accession. Nonetheless, according to them, the first step has to be taken by the Moldovan Government, which has to make a clear statement and declare that it is ready to exit CIS, in case it sees a clear prospective for Moldova's EU accession.<sup>171</sup>

From the above mentioned, one can fairly state that the Moldovan elites are still loyal to the former Center, namely Russia. That is partly explained by the fact that in the early 1990s the Moldovan nationalist parties lost elections in favor of a strong supporter of the CIS. That happened because the Moldovan electorate was divided. Interestingly enough, that societal divide is not along ethnic lines, the cleavage runs between the titular nation, which from the outset could not agree upon their common identity and objectives. Hence, the ones identifying themselves as Moldavians, tended to be pro-CIS and of Eastern orientation. By contrast, the ones identifying themselves as Romanians, who are a minority, were Pan-Romanian and respectively pro-Western oriented.

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<sup>170</sup> The European Commission. On: [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/moldova/intro/index.htm#poli](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/moldova/intro/index.htm#poli)

<sup>171</sup> From the Conclusions of the International Conference on "*Moldova's Way to the European Union*", October 1 – 2, 2001. On: [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md) (01.02.2007)

## Conclusion

This thesis aims to bring a contribution to the study of the transition of the newly independent states from a socialist to a market society. To this end I have carried out a comparative study of the Moldovan and Latvian path of development from a socialist to a democratic market society with a special focus on identity politics. In order to understand why Moldova lags behind Latvia in terms of democratic and economic development, I looked at the Moldovan nation-building and development path after the 1991 independence and compared it to that of Latvia.

The major claim of this thesis was that one of the main factors that has left Moldova lagging behind Latvia is that the former looked to the East (Russia) and the latter to the West (the European Union). As a result, Moldova chose to join the Commonwealth of Independent States, thus sustaining its linkage with Russia, whereas Latvia has totally cut itself from the latter and oriented towards Western Europe. Furthermore, I argued that these initial choices have been determined by the particularity of the national identities of these two countries.

In order to substantiate my hypothesis, I used Brubaker's triadic relation between nationalizing state, national minorities and the influence of the national motherland which explains the citizenship policies in the Soviet successor states.

The main findings of this thesis are as follow. The divergence of the current state of affairs in Latvia and Moldova stems in their perception of their linkage with Russia. Latvia regarded the inclusion of a large Russian minority as a gloomy prospect which equaled with the maintenance of the old ties with the former Center. That, according to its early 1990s leadership, could threaten its nation-building and independence. That perception was determined by the nationalist feelings and strong Latvian identity which managed to resist the policies of Russification applied in Soviet times. The Moldovan

case is rather different. Despite the early 1990s nationalist movements, the Moldovan national identity is weaker, balancing between a Romanian and a Slavic choice. Moreover, given the secessionist tendencies of the Slavic minorities in Transnistria with Russian support, the latter had a stronger leverage on Moldova. As a result, the Moldovan elite and society did not object to the enfranchisement of the Russian minorities and granted them citizenship. The former choice has maintained Moldova under a constant Russian influence.

Hence, the Latvian nationalist government removed the “distributional coalitions” from the political discourse when the reforms were taking place. The former were organized along the Slavic ethnic line since they were concentrated in the industrial regions of the country. That exclusionary policy brought Latvia closer to the West.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, in order to eliminate its dependence upon Russian oil supply Latvia reoriented its foreign trade already in the early 1990s. Hence, the first phase of economic reforms has been successful in Latvia because the “distributional coalitions” were excluded from decision-making. The major cause for that was the “value-pattern of the nationalist ruling elites”.<sup>173</sup>

The Moldovan story is in complete contrast to that of Latvia. This is established by the fact that the elites of the former are still loyal to Russia. That is partly explained by the fact that the Moldovan electorate is divided, not only along ethnic lines, but the cleavage also runs between the titular nation.

To conclude, the research carried out has shown that my argument that the citizenship policies in both countries have been influenced by the strength of the national identity of the titular nation is confirmed by the empirical studies. Moreover, the hypothesis stating that “the inclusion of the new national minorities in Moldova was

<sup>172</sup> Andrew Savchenko, op. cit., p. 247-253

<sup>173</sup> K. Zidovicz “Fatalen Uzaleznie – Miecc Albo Nie Miecc” [“Fatal Dependency: To have or Not To Have”], *Eurazija* 3/4, 1994 In: Andrew Savchenko, op. cit., p. 248

determined by the specific of the Moldovan national identity. That decision influenced the early post-independence foreign and economic policies of Moldova” has been proven right.

## Appendix

**Table A Language-Related Policy Agendas in Estonia and Latvia**

Time period	Official agenda	Additional agenda
1989-1992	Restoring of the status of titular languages and preservation of national culture and identity	Exclusion of monolingual Russian-speakers from top jobs and achieving of political dominance by titular nation
1992-1999	Establishing of naturalization procedures with titular language proficiency tests	Stimulation of remigration of Soviet-era settlers to their former homelands
1999 -	Introduction of national integration programs with an emphasis on the learning/teaching of the state language as the main agent of integration	Continuation of previous citizenship and language policies in order to control the access of non-titular groups to political power.

Source: Priit Järve op. cit., p. 82

**Table B Language Competence of Titular Nations and Russian Minorities in the Baltic States (According to the 1989 Census)**

Country	Population of titular nation	Percentage of which knows Russian	Population of Russian minority	Percentage of which knows titular language
Estonia	963,269	33.6	474,815	13.7
Latvia	1,387,647	65.7	905,515	21.2
Lithuania	2,924,048	37.4	343,597	33.5

Source: Jamestown Foundation,

[http://www.amber.ucsf.edu/homes/ross/public\\_html/russia/\\_ruslang.txt](http://www.amber.ucsf.edu/homes/ross/public_html/russia/_ruslang.txt) In: Priit Järve op. cit., p.83

**Table C Republic of Moldova, Export structure by countries (in % if not indicated otherwise)**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total, million USD	874,1	631,8	463,4	471,5	565,5	643,8	789,9	985,2
Russia	58,2	53,3	41,3	44,5	43,7	37,1	39,0	35,9
Italy	2,7	3,5	5,5	7,7	8,0	8,8	10,4	13,8
Romania	6,7	9,6	8,9	8,0	6,7	8,8	11,4	10,0
Germany	3,7	3,8	7,2	7,7	7,1	7,2	7,1	7,2
Ukraine	5,7	7,7	7,0	7,5	10,1	9,5	7,1	6,6
Belarus	4,1	5,0	4,7	4,6	5,3	6,1	5,2	6,0
Total shares %	81,1	83,0	74,7	80,1	80,9	77,5	80,3	79,5

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the RM, In: Valeriu Prohntichi, 2005.<sup>174</sup>

**Table D Republic of Moldova, Import structure by countries (in % if not indicated otherwise)**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total, million USD	1171,3	1023,6	586,4	776,4	892,2	1038,0	1402,3	1768,5
Ukraine	18,0	14,8	13,5	13,5	17,1	19,6	22,1	24,7
Russia	28,4	22,8	23,6	15,4	16,1	14,8	13,0	12,0
Romania	8,6	11,0	13,9	15,4	10,5	8,7	7,0	9,3
Germany	8,1	9,0	10,5	11,3	9,4	8,3	9,7	8,5
Italy	4,1	6,3	6,5	6,3	7,2	8,5	8,3	7,4
Turkey	1,2	1,0	2,0	2,3	2,2	3,2	3,4	3,9
Belarus	4,1	4,9	3,9	4,1	4,4	3,9	3,6	3,6
France	1,1	2,2	2,1	2,6	2,9	2,2	2,5	3,0
Kazakhstan	0,4	0,2	0,0	0,4	0,4	0,9	3,4	2,8
Poland	1,1	1,0	1,4	2,0	2,0	2,4	2,8	2,5
China	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,9	1,1	1,5	2,1
Bulgaria	5,3	2,9	1,6	1,8	2,3	2,0	2,1	1,7
Total shares %	80,7	76,3	79,3	75,4	75,4	75,6	79,6	81,6

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the RM.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Valeriu Prohntichi "Securitatea Economica a Moldovei: O Privire a Secolului XXI" ["The Economic Security of Moldova: A View from the XXI Century"] In: Igor Munteanu, Iulian Chifu, Iulian Fruntasu, Nicolae Chirtoaca (eds.) "Moldova pe calea Democratiei si Stabilitatii" [Moldova on the way to Democracy and Stability], Cartier, 2005, p. 94

<sup>175</sup> Ibidem

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