

University of Tampere
School of Management

**THE NEXUS OF LINKAGE AND LEVERAGE IN
RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARD THE NEAR ABROAD:
THE CASE OF MOLDOVA**

Vadim Romashov, 410557

vadim.romashov@uta.fi

Cross-Border University

International Relations

University of Tampere

School of Management

Master's Programme in International Relations

ROMASHOV, VADIM: The nexus of Linkage and Leverage in Russia's Policy toward the Near
Abroad: The Case of Moldova

Master's Thesis, 113 pages, 1 annex.

Cross-Border University / International Relations

September 2014

The evolution of the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative and especially the adoption of the Association Agreements by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have evoked Russia's increasing concern regarding the incremental "EU-ization" of the post-Soviet regional order. Moscow has adjusted its own policy toward the respective states accordingly. In the context of the 2014 Crimean issue, a number of empirically-oriented research which explore Russian foreign policy instruments towards its Near Abroad countries has grown. Even the concepts of 'soft power' and 'smart power' are often used by experts to portray the recent transformations in Russia's foreign policy. However, the employment of such concepts risks neglecting the fundamental and complex asymmetric interdependence between Russia and the post-Soviet republics.

This study puts forward an alternative theoretical framework underpinned by the concepts of 'leverage' and 'linkage', as developed by Levitsky & Way, that allows the accounting for this interdependence in a systematic manner. The thesis develops *the linkage-leverage nexus* approach, which enables a comprehensive analysis of Russian foreign policy instruments toward post-Soviet states in a regional environment determined by security threats, stateness issues, turbulence in domestic politics, energy, and trade-related problems. The respective analytical approach is subsequently applied to the case study of Russian-Moldovan relations. In order to demonstrate the validity of this approach the author employs a method of process-tracing that examines vast empirical data, including various documents, numerous official statements, expert opinions and media accounts, and eventually unfolds the causal mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus.

The result of analysis supports the main argument of the thesis asserting that the increasing instrumentalization of the existing linkage between Russia and the countries in its Near Abroad may lead to undermining sovereignty and territorial integrity of individual states, such as Moldova. The presented conceptualization of external influence on domestic decision-making process with regard to foreign policy agenda brings closer structuralist and agent-centred International Relations approaches.

KEY WORDS: linkage, leverage, Russia, Levitsky & Way, Moldova, post-Soviet space, process-tracing

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Theoretical and analytical framework	11
2.1. Conceptualization of linkage-leverage nexus	11
2.1.1. Linkage and leverage and their dimensions	11
2.1.2. Spiral nexus of linkage & leverage and role of culture	15
2.2. The post-Soviet space in the context of linkage-leverage nexus	21
2.2.1. Asymmetric interdependence	21
2.2.2. Security environment and threatened sovereignty	31
3. Methodological approach	37
3.1. Case selection	37
3.2. Process tracing	41
4. Analytical narratives about Russian policy toward Moldova	48
4.1. Politico-military dimensions	49
4.1.1. Hard leverage	49
4.1.2. Soft leverage	61
4.1.3. Summary table	67
4.2. Economic dimension	68
4.2.1. Soft leverage	68
4.2.2. Hard leverage	73
4.2.3. Summary table	78
4.3. Socio-cultural dimensions	79
4.3.1. Soft leverage	79
4.3.2. Hard leverage	84
4.3.3. Summary table	91
5. Conclusion	93
Bibliography	100
Theory, Methodology and Concept-building	100
Case Study	104
Annex 1: Share of Russia, CIS and the EU in Moldova's trade turnover (2003-2012)	114

1. Introduction

Research focus

Russia has always defined its Near Abroad as a zone of special interest, designing the regional institutions correspondingly. Since 2009, these efforts have been challenged in a particular context of what has been perceived in Moscow as a rival initiative, namely the European Union's (EU) Eastern Partnership initiative (EaP). The Russian leadership has been concerned about the political changes stemming from approximation of a number of these countries, including Moldova, to the EU. The Association Agreement (AA) with the EU (and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) as its main component) has become a normative mechanism of such an approximation. Chisinau signed the document on 27 June 2014 and ratified on 2 July 2014.¹ The preliminary application of the agreement is planned to begin in October 2014.² In addition, Moldovan citizens have benefited from the visa-free regime with the EU as of April 2014.

In Moscow, the approximation of the EaP states to the EU was interpreted as a process of *EU-ization* of the post-Soviet regional order, which needs to be countered with Russia's more active policy. The country's government has therefore decided to intensify its influence on the states in its Near Abroad, by adopting both additional 'sticks' (including political and economic pressure) and 'carrots' (new incentives to cooperate with Moscow), in order to target both the elites and the population in these states.³ Since 2010, Russia's leadership has actively developed a project specifically aimed to compete with EU's power of attraction – the Eurasian Economic Union. Belarus' 'integration discount' as a part of the accession to the Eurasian Custom Union in 2010, as well as Armenia's withdrawal from its course towards the EU to the benefit of participation in the Eurasian project in 2013, are illustrative examples of tangible achievements of Russia's foreign policy actions aimed at counterbalancing EU's growing influence at Russia's doorstep.

In this connection, it has become a commonplace to argue that the aforementioned changes in Russian foreign policy are a reflection of the growing Russia's 'smart power' policy.⁴ Whilst such an approach accounts for the changing nature of Russian foreign policy, the growing application of this analytical concept has neglected longstanding *complex asymmetrical*

¹ Georgia and Ukraine signed the AA on the same day with Moldova. The Georgian parliament ratified the agreement on 18 July 2014 and the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada ratified the document on 16 September 2014.

² «Применение политических и экономических положений договора об ассоциации может начаться в Молдове уже в октябре» [“Application of political and economic provisions of the Association Agreement could begin in Moldova in October”], *moldnews*, 27.06.2014, <http://www.moldnews.md/rus/news/68497>.

³ Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, Alena & Mourato Pinto, João: “EU's Eastern Partnership, the Russia-led integration initiatives in the post-Soviet Space, and the options of the 'states-in-between'”, *IPRIS Viewpoint*, No. 127, 2013.

⁴ Roslycky, Lada L.: ‘Russia's smart power in Crimea: sowing the seeds of trust’, *Southern European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, September 2011.

interdependence (to use the original term of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye)⁵ between Russia and the post-Soviet republics. Due to this peculiarity of relations in the post-Soviet space, a significant number of instruments are available for Russia, ranging from a common set of values, cultural and language ties, to the existence of military power instruments. Moreover, the interdependence between Moscow and its neighbor states, stemming from a long and common history of coexistence as one single political entity, makes it possible for Moscow to employ these instruments in a particular and efficient manner.

To account for the dynamic changes in Russian transforming policy towards its Near Abroad and the application of a wide range of foreign policy instruments, the present approach builds upon a conceptualization of Russia's foreign policy in a framework underpinned by the concepts of *leverage* and *linkage*, proposed by Levitsky and Way,⁶ which has been rarely applied to Russian foreign policy.⁷ This approach aims at a comprehensive analysis of Russian foreign policy instruments toward participants of the EaP initiative in a complex regional environment determined by security threats, stateness issues, turbulence in domestic politics, and energy and trade-related problems. Focusing on the external influence on domestic decision-making process, with regard to the foreign policy agenda, the thesis brings structuralist and agent-centred approaches of International Relations closer together. *The linkage-leverage nexus* analytical concept presented below offers a perspective, which connects the two theoretical concepts of Democratization theory, linkage and leverage, with empirically-oriented researches on the Russian foreign policy towards its Near Abroad.

Empirical area studies of International Relations in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis often lack focus on specific internal and external factors that shape foreign policy. Even though this research does not present a detailed study of the factors that come specifically from Russian domestic politics, it examines structural elements and agents that construct Russian foreign policy towards the respective countries in a particular political context. The study seeks to find a better explanation of contemporary Russia's foreign policy.

Relevance of the term "Near Abroad"

Indeed, "the Near Abroad" is very contested term and used in a specific manner in the Russian context. The objectivity of its application and pointing in this study is explained by the characteristics of the term itself that makes it suitable for the conceptualization of Russian

⁵ Keohane, Robert O. & Nye, Joseph S.: *Power and Interdependence* (2nd ed.), New York: Longman, 2001.

⁶ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan: *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

⁷ Tolstrup, Jakob: "When can External Actors Influence Democratization? Leverage, Linkages, and Gatekeeper Elites", *CDDRL working paper*, July 2010, No. 118.

multipatterned influence on the policies of the post-Soviet states. First of all, it is important to understand that “Near Abroad” is substantially more than just a reference to geographic area covering all countries that previously comprised the Soviet Union. It is not simply a static statement of past or historical fact of the dissolution of the USSR and the emergence of new independent states, as it is in the case of widely used “post-Soviet space” and rarely referred “new abroad” terms. The “Near Abroad” is rather a politically, socially and culturally constructed linguistic reflection of a new dynamic reality formed in aftermath of radical historical transformations of the single community of political entities and peoples. The notion encompasses intertwining of political, social and cultural dimensions of the complex relationships amongst the former Soviet Union states that forms basis for the asymmetric interdependence between Russia and other post-Soviet countries. I prefer writing the word combination “Near Abroad” with uppercase letters in order to highlight it as a ‘name’ for such interdependence used in discursive context of the post-Soviet space, as well as to underline my own critical engagement with the concept.

The name is often seen as having only political connotation, namely being the linguistic embodiment of Russian ‘neo-imperialistic’ ambitions; aspirations to restore the Soviet Union or at least preserve its influence in the post-Soviet states.⁸ Certainly, the term is politicized both by adherents and opponents to Russian policy. In this study, the term is considered as one of the manifestations of the Russian Federation linkage to the post-Soviet countries. As it is argued in more details below, linkage can be instrumentalized to serve foreign policy goals, and so, the term “Near Abroad” can also be instrumentalized. Furthermore, it can represent even a threat to one’s sovereignty; for example, if the Near Abroad is treated as a post-Soviet space with unsettled borders of not fully and not really independent states.⁹

The politicization of the term “Near Abroad” is also result of geopolitical projection onto language. The Near Abroad is often referred as Russian sphere of influence, and such references are supported by relative statements of high-level Russian officials (for example, the Russian ex-President Dmitry Medvedev’s widely quoted descriptive phrase “zone of privileged interests” of Russia definitively contributes to consolidation of interpretation of the Near Abroad in geopolitical sense). At the same time, the Russian sphere of influence today, unlike at the time of the Russian

⁸ See, for examples, Safire, William: “On Language; The Near Abroad”, *NYT*, 22.05.1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/22/magazine/on-language-the-near-abroad.html>; Erlanger, Steven: “The World; Learning to Fear Putin’s Gaze”, *NYT*, 25.02.2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/25/weekinreview/the-world-learning-to-fear-putin-s-gaze.html>; Landsbergis, Vytautas: “Concepts of ‘abroad’: near and remote neighborhood of Lithuania”, *Geopolitika*, 29.06.2007, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=915>; Макарычев Андрей: «Метафоры регионализма в международно-политическом дискурсе» [Makarychev, Andrey: “Metaphors of regionalism in international political discourse”], *IPF*, <http://www.policy.hu/makarychev/rus17.htm> (last access 02.09.2014).

⁹ Гусейнов Гасан: *Карта нашей Родины: идеологема между словом и телом* [Gusejnov, Gasan: *Map of our motherland: Ideologema between word and body*], Moscow: OGI, 2005, pp. 15-16.

Empire or the Soviet Union, is circumscribed only by historical past, socio-cultural proximities, and geographic vicinity between former ‘metropolis’ and ‘colonies’ without claims on global domination. This contemporary Russian regional sphere of influence is challenged by global expansionism of the US and pan-regional expansionism of the EU, both aimed to penetrate into ‘traditional’ zone of Russian immediate interests. Given such geopolitical environment, the Near Abroad is seen by Russian politicians as a buffer zone to this Western expansion which is perceived as a threat to state sovereignty.

At the conceptual and discursive level, the Western challenge to Russia’s Near Abroad has also acquired a specific name “Eastern Partnership”, that actually aims at undermining the notion of the “Near Abroad”. If we take a more neutral term “new abroad” to substitute a subjective one “Near Abroad”, then an analogous term for the same geographic area in Eastern Europe for the EU is “new neighborhood”.¹⁰ Thus, it comes as no surprise that under the European Neighborhood Policy, a new initiative for the Eastern European post-Soviet countries (except the Baltic States, which are EU members) appeared. The two notions “Near Abroad” and “Eastern Partnership”, of course, cannot be compared, simply because “Eastern Partnership” is a normative and institutional term that in its discursive context refers mostly to economic cooperation, while “Near Abroad” stems primarily from historical past, social interaction, and culture (economics is rather secondary to them).

The last but not least point, in regard to the relevancy of the term in question, the use of “the Near Abroad” in academic literature on Russian foreign policy should go beyond the political aspects of the notion and not neglect its social and cultural dimensions. “The Near Abroad” is not so much an ideological term used in pro-Russian propaganda as a linguistic reflection of people’s lives and destinies in the post-Soviet space, which, in spite of emergence of state borders separating people, are still closely intertwined. Precisely, this interdependence is what is important when we study the instrumentalisation of Russian linkage to create leverage on foreign policy decision-making in the post-Soviet states. The term “Near Abroad” is an illustrative linguistic representation of the post-Soviet space as a geographic and socio-cultural space with a highly dense multidimensional linkage of Russia to the countries, with which it used to form a single political and economic structure. Therefore, it fits well into the analytical framework of the study presented below. Nevertheless, in more general terms the notion “post-Soviet space” is also used in the thesis.

¹⁰ For an example of usage of the term “New Neighbourhood”, see Kagan, Robert: “New Europe, Old Russia”, *The Washington Post*, 06.02.2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/05/AR2008020502879.html>; Pop, Adrian, Pascariu, Gabriela, Anglitoiu, George, Purcarus, Alexandru: “Romania and the Republic of Moldova – Between the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Prospect of EU Enlargement”, in: Pre-accession impact studies III, Study No.5, *EIR*, http://www.ier.ro/sites/default/files/documente/Studiideimpact_PaisIII/Pais3_studiu_5_en.pdf (last access 07.09.2014).

Analytical framework

As already indicated above, the point of departure of this thesis is Moscow's special role in the politics of the post-Soviet states, which has been formed due to an asymmetric interdependent relationship between Russia and countries of its Near Abroad; Russia as less dependent actor uses its position to influence others. The idea draws on neoliberal concept of complex interdependence developed by Nye and Keohane. In their conceptualization the scholars have noticed that asymmetry in interdependent relations provides the dominant party with power over its dependent counterpart.¹¹ This is evident especially at the regional level of international relations, where the ties between states are very dense, multidimensional and leaders are clearly marked.

This type of relationship corresponds to a significant degree of linkage that Russia possesses over all post-Soviet countries. The term 'linkage' was conceptualized by representatives of the Democratization theory, Steven Levitsky and Lukan Way, who defined it as "the density of a country's ties to the United States, the European Union countries and Western-led multilateral institutions".¹² However, the concept of linkage can be applied also to powerful non-Western international actors: this form of interaction between states cannot be considered as a prerogative of the West alone.¹³ Either way, given its attention to various dimensions of interdependence, the concept of linkage offers a promising perspective on the study of Russian foreign policy.

Linkage is a complex dimension of foreign policy that manifests itself in different spheres of inter-state relations. Levitsky and Way differentiate between six main types of linkage: economic, intergovernmental, social, communication, civil society and technocratic.¹⁴ The list presented by the scholars nevertheless is not exhaustive and may include other categories of linkage. For example, Gwendolyn Sasse adds here "aid linkage".¹⁵ The present analysis indicates the following types of linkage: military (security), economic, political, social, information, and cultural. Importantly, the latter involves ethnical, cultural and psychological aspects of inter-national relations, such as collective memory, proximity of cultural values, ethnic origins, and languages.

I argue that the dense set of links creates the basis for projection of leverage: the dependence (caused by linkage) can be used as a tool of influence on one's foreign policy decision-making (that is leverage). Linkage is indispensable for the effective application of leverage: the denser the linkage in an asymmetrical models of cooperation, the stronger the leverage. To describe this phenomenon I use the notion of *the linkage-leverage nexus*, meaning that there is an important

¹¹ Keohane, Robert O. & Nye, Joseph S.: *Power and Interdependence* (2001).

¹² Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: "International Linkage and Democratization", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 2005.

¹³ Tolstrup, Jakob: "When can External Actors Influence Democratization?" (2010).

¹⁴ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

¹⁵ Sasse, Gwendolyn: "Linkages and the promotion of democracy: the EU's eastern neighbourhood", *Democratization*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2013.

reinforcing dynamic between the two; eventually, one can think of a spiral of ‘linkage’ and ‘leverage’ impulses mutually intensifying each other. Since leverage in this case appears to be a derivative of linkage, it should have the same dimensions of linkage, corresponding to whether it makes use of security, political, economic, social, information, and cultural ties.

This study distinguishes between the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ types of the leverage. Yet in contrast to Nye’s conceptualization of ‘softness’ and ‘hardness’ of power, centred on “currencies” of power that intrinsically mean *tools* of a particular foreign policy, the thesis defines ‘softness’ and ‘hardness’ of leverage according to *effect* it produces in regard to sovereignty exercised by the authority of the target state. I acknowledge that the question of how to measure effect of power is widely disputed in the field of IR studies and I do not seek to find an answer to it. Nevertheless, the present dualistic classification of leverage is important for understanding how the mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus is functioning and what objectives it pursues. Such a classification is necessary for Foreign Policy Analysis in order to get an idea what consequences the application of leverage generated from linkage is capable to cause. Thus, in the present study the classification of hard and soft leverage is rather a methodological tool employed for better distinction of impact the instrumentalisation of linkage can bring to sovereignty of individual states.

In doing so, the thesis assumes that the state sovereignty may be directly questioned and/or threatened by hard leverage, even though no military means have been employed. *Hard leverage* takes place when the power position of the authorities in the respective countries is destabilized and their existential capacity to maintain ‘stateness’ is in question. This is a result of activation of linkage, which would create a favorable environment for people to support particular incentives. Eventually, the sovereignty of the respective states would be undermined, and centrifugal tendencies and separatist aspirations would be triggered, leading to a potential redefinition of the state organization. On the contrary, *soft leverage* is weak to generate an effect on state sovereignty. I assert that it is the balance between linkage and leverage, its ‘powerful derivative’, as well as the purposeful choices in application of either ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ leverage that underpin Russia’s foreign policy towards the Near Abroad states.

In addition, the thesis distinguishes among *potential* and *actual* types of activity of linkage-leverage nexus based respectively on threat and action. When threats become realised, leverage enters into the actual stage, and it is most effective if it is underpinned by legitimacy from the local populace and refers to their active support. In this case, linkage is called for creating favourable environment that induces local people to support incentives. Eventually, this can lead to hard leverage when triggers separatist aspirations within the nation. Multidimensional linkage between Russia and the near abroad states means that the hard leverage can undermine national sovereignty at vulnerable points.

The case and methodological orientation

The situation in some of the post-Soviet states is exacerbated by the existence of specific characteristics of both Russian linkage and internal political and socio-economic situation within the target state. Therefore, a study of the linkage-leverage nexus requires a careful selection of individual cases. In this study, the linkage-leverage nexus approach is applied to the case of Moldova. Although all post-Soviet states (Central Asian and East European post-Soviet countries as well as countries of South Caucasus) share similarities determined primarily by the common Soviet past and the asymmetric independence to Russia, a number of circumstances contribute to the multi-dimensional nature of the asymmetrical interdependence between Russia and Moldova.

While following a pro-European foreign policy course, Moldova simultaneously has a particularly close religious and cultural proximity with Russia, and large population of ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers live on its territory. In addition, Moldova is economically dependent on Russia, including the imports of goods and energy, humanitarian aid, and labour emigration to large Russian cities. Moldova's population is ethnically divided, which is represented in its political organization. At the same time, Russia has maintained close relations to Transdnistria, a Moldovan breakaway region, and Gagauzia, an autonomous region of Moldova, where the Russian language is dominant in all spheres of everyday life.

In the case of Moldova, all patterns of the critical phenomenon, that is, dimensions of linkage are well present. Chisinau is therefore especially susceptible to Moscow's influence within the state. In the recent years, Moldova has experienced a dramatic clash of external factors affecting its internal situation and political orientation, which has urged scholars to pay attention to this country. Today, Chisinau is a subject to the Russian intensive leverage generated practically from all dimensions of Russia's linkage. Moreover, it is under pressure from Moscow's hard leverage, i.e. its sovereignty as well as authority of the actual leadership is contested.

The linkage-leverage nexus is viewed in the present study as a causal mechanism, the function of which results in 'power-shaped' outcome, i.e. leverage, derived from an independent variable presented by linkage. To identify, validate and test causal process the study employs a method of process tracing. In 2013, it was developed by Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen into a full-fledged and comprehensive methodology, which became the main guiding lights for the thesis.¹⁶ The method contributes to the epistemological purpose of the present research endeavour, namely bringing closer agent-centred and structuralist approaches to study power in asymmetrical relations between dominant and dependent actors of international relations. The thesis presents the

¹⁶ Beach, Derek & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013.

closed circuit process of sequent transformations of linkage to leverage in the form of analytical narratives, i.e. storytelling explaining a causal mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus. It attempts to observe all relevant events that create the causal chain of the linkage-leverage nexus, and primarily policy actions and speech acts aimed at the instrumentalization of Russian economic, security, political, social, information, and cultural links to Moldova into the same dimensions of leverage. In order to create an accessible picture of the causalities I narrate the analytical stories apart, describing dimensions divided into three major blocks: politico-military, economic and socio-cultural.

I believe that the Russian intensified ‘linkage-leverage’ policy is a response to the radical changes occurring in the relations with the countries of its Near Abroad. Therefore, when applying the process tracing method I focus on the period starting from 2009, when the EaP, perceived in Moscow as a rival integration project, pushed the Russian policy to active actions. However, the starting time-point for the study of Russian policy toward Moldova differs according to the *analytical narratives*, i.e. dimensions of linkage. It is important to consider that linkages are not created overnight; some ties among post-Soviet states are centuries-old. Nevertheless, I confine myself to trace the process starting from the period of Moldovan independence. But not every linkage needs to be studied since the beginning of 1990s: I will go back to this early period only if linkage has been accumulated for subsequent (after 2009) production of leverage (particularly, related to the Transdnistrian settlement). As for the end point of Russia’s actions, this paper considers individual manifestations of Russian leverage generated through linkage to Moldova as actual outcomes of the linkage-leverage nexus.

All in all, the main research purpose of the analysis of the Russian linkage-leverage nexus approached with process tracing method, is to test the conceptualized causal mechanism of linkage and leverage nexus using the case of Russia’s foreign policy towards Moldova. The main research task stemmed from this purpose is to identify the actual causal process whereby the initial point X (linkage) is transmitted through a causal mechanism (nexus) to produce an outcome Y (leverage). In the course of the research the following important aspect of argumentation presented above must be validated: the instrumentalisation of linkage has two types of functional activity – potential and actual – and both of them may result in exerting direct or indirect impact on the sovereignty of the target state that eventually creates two forms of leverage, respectively, hard and soft.

The structure of the work

The first chapter presents the analytical framework, which is developed on the basis of concepts of ‘linkage’ and ‘leverage’, while introducing a distinction between the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ leverage as well as ‘potential’ and ‘actual’ activity of linkage-leverage nexus. The discussions in this chapter are guided by a general task to adjust the Western concepts to the ‘realities’ of Russian

policy in the post-Soviet space. Namely, it is aimed at constructing an analytical framework for the analysis of Russian foreign policy practices in the post-Soviet space that takes into consideration the complexity of asymmetrical interdependent relations between Russia and countries of its Near Abroad. The chapter involves critical discussions both on theory and analytical approaches in foreign policy analysis provided by traditions of Democratization theory. Eventually, the study presents a different understanding of the concepts that is embodied in an analytical approach, which can be applied in addition to Western states, and to policies of other regional powers.

I analyze academic literature of various authors who both criticise and improve these concepts. While discussing the drawbacks and advantages of linkage and leverage concepts, the thesis finds that Democratization theory does not connect linkage and leverage with each other and, in fact, the two factors of the external influence are functioning separately one from another. This is the crucial constraint of the theory that does not allow analysing the complexity of interdependent relations between powerful regional actor and weak partners. The present conceptualization of linkage and leverage overcomes this limitation, and connects the factors within the structural mechanism of linkage and leverage nexus. It reveals the process of transformation of linkage into leverage which aims at the preservation of the existent linkage between the actors or the creation of a stronger one. Further conceptualization of the two factors of external influence carries on within the discussions regarding the prospects of the application of the linkage-leverage nexus concept to the analysis of Russian policy in the post-Soviet space, given the features of this policy, which distinguish it from the policies of the Western countries in this region.

The second chapter provides a methodological approach for the analytical framework. To test the suggested conceptualization of linkage and leverage I employ process tracing as my main method. The research material includes various and numerous documents, official statements, minutes, expert reports, media accounts, and so forth. For the analysis of economic linkage and leverage I refer to official and expert statistics, and based on this data, I make additional calculations that enable to capture the patterns of economic relations between Moldova and Russia with better accuracy. As a supporting material and in addition to interviews from media, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with Moldovan experts, who presented their views on the developments of the relations between the states. This helps to construct the overall picture from the eyes of the direct observers of the process.

The second chapter is followed by applying the analytical and methodological approaches to the case study of Moldova. In the analytical part of the work, I narrate ‘stories’ about Russian policy in Moldova, which refer to dimensions of Russia’s linkage-leverage nexus that can be observed through the comprehensive research on Russia-Moldova relations. Practically, the analysis demonstrates how an approach based on the concept of linkage-leverage nexus can capture the

patterns and mechanisms of the Russian-Moldovan relationship. Each analytical narrative has two parts that pertain to ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ effects of Russian linkage-leverage interaction.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss the possible consequences of the contemporary Russian policy toward Moldova and present main developments of the conceptualization of linkage-leverage nexus as well as my view on importance of the concept for comparative studies in International Relations. Additionally, I outline a guideline for researchers who decide to apply this analytical framework in their academic inquiries. The conclusion brings up some problems of the developed concept, difficulties in applying the analytical approach, and the aspects that require further consideration and improvement.

The study does not claim the presented conceptualization of linkage and leverage within the unified single mechanism called “nexus” to be an all-encompassing approach, neither does it argue that the concept of linkage-leverage nexus is the only proper one to study Russian policy in the post-Soviet space. This thesis, rather presents a different conceptual interpretation of linkage and leverage and opens up new prospects for discussions in this regard. I believe that the approach will find its audience among the analysts of foreign policies and can be applied to foreign policy analyses of other influential international relations actors, including the US and the EU.

Nevertheless, the geographic interest of this study is Russia’s Near Abroad, which is currently under the process of EU-inization, which challenges Russian influence in the region and causes a new ‘explosion’ in the organizational structure of Moscow’s foreign policy. This study demonstrates how the balance between linkage and leverage, as well as the choices in application of either ‘soft’ or ‘hard’ leverage underpin this policy. Considering the fact that the balance within the linkage-leverage nexus is varying all the time and the policy has many different characteristics in regard to different post-Soviet republics, it is necessary to analyse the Russian policy toward the post-Soviet countries on continuing basis, and this work is one of the efforts in this endeavour.

2. Theoretical and analytical framework

2.1. Conceptualization of linkage-leverage nexus

2.1.1. Linkage and leverage and their dimensions

The expression “You will always find something you need in the last place you look” is used a lot by people with a lot of life experience, but in my case it was interpreted as a call to action “if you want to find an explanation look through theories you never thought to check”. I took this approach when I decided to look through ‘Westernized’ Democratization theory to understand Russia’s foreign policy. The decision was driven by a personal conviction in this regard – foreign policy cannot be discriminated by democratic and non-democratic policies. If one wishes to understand the sources of Western ‘democratic’ power targeted at ‘non-democratic’ states, s/he should look for it, first of all, in Democratization theory that is specially created to explain the turbulent interrelations between the ‘democratic’ West and the ‘barbarous’ Others. This theory has two essential categories, traditionally considered in the Western theory as two key dimensions of the post-cold war international environment – *linkage* and *leverage*. The categories are nothing more than the main international factors affecting domestic policy, and, in essence, the theory assumes that these factors are two features of the Western policy, which play a crucial role in democratizing authoritarian states.

Linkage and leverage – the two main concepts for this study – are strongly associated with the prominent representatives of Democratization theory, Steven Levitsky and Lukan Way, who started developing the concepts in 2005 within their grand concept of competitive authoritarianism. They were those scholars who have conceptualized linkage and leverage as two basic factors of Western influence on the post-Communist ‘regimes’.¹⁷ Recently, some other representatives of Democratization theory took up the two concepts, both to improve their conceptualization¹⁸ and to widen their application, including to non-Western countries¹⁹.

Indeed, Levitsky and Way are not pioneers in developing the concepts of leverage and linkage: they are just among the foremost ‘conceptualizers’ of the two factors of external influence. For instance, Milada Vachudova is the one who works with the concept of leverage in the context of the EU’s enlargement policy towards the Eastern European Countries. She distinguishes ‘passive’ leverage, which relies merely on virtue of existence and usual conduct of the EU and ‘active’

¹⁷ See Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “International Linkage and Democratization” (2005); *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010); “Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide” (2007).

¹⁸ See Sasse, Gwendolyn: “Linkages and the promotion of democracy” (2013).

¹⁹ See Tolstrup, Jakob: “When can External Actors Influence Democratization?” (2010).

leverage, which is based on deliberate policies of the EU toward candidate states.²⁰ Intrinsically, these two types of leverage are similar to such widely referred in the Integration theory types of power, frequently attributed to the EU, as ‘power of attraction’ and ‘normative power’.

Vachudova’s strong emphasis on the EU’s effective leverage only as conditionality power, neglects the important early theoretical developments on the EU influence by Geoffrey Pridham and Laurence Whitehead who stressed the importance of political, social and economic linkage.²¹ The distinction of the works of Levitsky and Way is that they are the first scholars who described the close interaction between linkage and leverage. However, they did not dwell on this interaction. Thus, the process in which leverage is actually produced from the aggregate of links between dominant and dependent actors of international cooperation remains unnoticed. In contrast to them, this study does not consider linkage only as an unintentional dimension of external influence but argues that it can be also purposive, i.e. links can be created and instrumentalized with certain intention to exert influence of directional effect in order to produce leverage and support its application by creating favourable environment within a target country.

Levitsky and Way define leverage as governments’ vulnerability to external (Western) *democratizing* pressure. According to the scholars, mechanisms of leverage comprise diplomatic pressure, political conditionality, sanctions and military intervention, and of course, the threat of them. Initially the researchers argued that Western leverage is affected by both bargaining power of targeted authoritarian states, which is the latter’s ability to avoid punishing actions of the Western community, and potential economic, security, and the other impact the Western countries have on them.²² Later they reconsidered the causes that contribute to effectiveness of Western leverage and removed the possibility of the targeted state to “bargain” with the West, by replacing the bargaining with the tendency of Western powers to use their pressure. All in all, they concluded that the highest leverage is achieved when Western pressure is “both likely and consequential”.²³

Levitsky and Way identified also three factors that determine leverage. The first is the states’ size and military and economic strength – obviously, small and weak states are more vulnerable to external pressure than those in larger countries with substantial military and economic strength (such as China or Russia). The second factor is “the existence of competing issues on Western foreign policy agenda”. Way and Levitsky argue: “leverage may be limited... in countries

²⁰ Vachudova, Milada Anna: *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration After Communism*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

²¹ See Pridham, Geoffrey (ed.): *Encouraging Democracy: the International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991; and Whitehead, Laurence (ed.): *The international Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

²² Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide” (2007).

²³ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010) – p. 43.

where Western governments have important economic or security interests at stake”,²⁴ such as in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkey. Thirdly, the degree of Western leverage can be affected by the existence of military, economic and political support that alternative (usually regional) power provides to incumbent governments facing Western pressure. The scholars call them “black knights”, and Russia which supports the loyal political regimes in the post-Soviet space thereby undermines the Western ‘democratizing’ impulse, is identified as one of these “black knights”.²⁵ In short, leverage is quite a non-democratic tool that democratic Western countries do not disdain to use toward ‘unfriendly’ non-democratic states when they do not comply with Western democratic norms.

Levitsky and Way define the second dimension of the post-Cold war environment, Western linkage, as “the density of ties (economic, political, diplomatic, social and organizational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods and services, people, and information) between particular countries and the US, the EU, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions”.²⁶ Linkage is a complex dimension of foreign policy that manifests itself in different spheres of inter-state relations. Levitsky and Way differentiate between six main types of linkage: economic (trade, investment, credit and assistance), intergovernmental (diplomatic and military ties, participation in alliances, treaties and international organizations), social (flows of people), communication (flows of information), civil society (ties to NGOs, religious and party organizations, etc.), and geographic proximity.²⁷ In the course of their conceptualization, they acknowledged that geographic proximity cannot be considered as a dimension of linkage but a source of it or rather a facilitator and an intensifier of the linkage network. Therefore, the scholars substituted it with “technocratic linkage” associated with the presence of the elite educated in the West and/or having close ties with Western universities, NGOs and institutes.²⁸

The list presented by Levitsky and Way has been extended to include other categories of linkage, or provide a different classification of the existing items. For example, Gwendolyn Sasse distinguishes the “aid linkage” as a separate dimension of linkage that comprises economic, military and democracy assistance provided by Western countries.²⁹ However, from my point of view, there is not a compelling reason for this, as assistance is a type of economic, political, military, social, and other dimensions of linkage, rather than an individual dimension. Nevertheless, a researcher is free to categorize according to the substantiated purposes of his/her study.

²⁴ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “International linkage and democratization” (2005).

²⁵ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

²⁶ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Ibid.* – p.43.

²⁷ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide” (2007).

²⁸ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

²⁹ Sasse, Gwendolyn: “Linkages and the promotion of democracy” (2013).

This study permits itself to use this right and considers the following types of linkage, comprising types of linkage identified by Levitsky and Way, Sasse and with some additional adjustments:

- *economic* (trade, investments, membership in trade organizations, energy relations, credit and other forms of economic aid, ties to business elite);
- *security* (military cooperation, membership in military alliances and treaties, presence of foreign troops, support for fighting against external and internal security threats);
- *political* (intergovernmental and diplomatic ties, membership in political alliances and institutions, external governance, ties to political elites, parties, opposition);
- *social* (migration, people-to-people communication, ties to NGOs and religious organizations, foreign education, assistance in implementing social projects, humanitarian aid);
- *information* (flow of information, including media, academic and expert associations, internet-based information sources and social networks);
- *cultural* (proximity of ethnicity, language, religion, common historical memory and similar patterns of behavior).

According to Levitsky and Way, “linkage serves as a transmitter of international influence” and contributes to ‘democratization’ through: heightening the international salience of everything that goes ‘wrong’ in the states under “the democratizing pressure”; shaping preferences and so creating domestic constituencies with a stake adhering to ‘Western norms’; and reshaping the domestic distribution of power resources by strengthening opposition forces, which are in favour to the West, and weakening and isolating ‘anti-Western’ incumbents.³⁰ However, initially it was also stressed that linkage increases the probability of an international response, which, as was described above, is an important cause for enhancing effectiveness of leverage.³¹ All this eventually raises the cost of ‘authoritarian regime’.

A comparison between linkage and soft power inevitably comes to mind. The effects of linkage described by Levitsky and Way are very similar to what soft power does, according to Nye.³² Both linkage and soft power shape incentives and preferences inside of states. This is not surprising; after all, Levitsky and Way admit that their concept of linkage draws on Keohane and Nye’s work on “complex interdependence”, understood as “multiple channels of contacts among

³⁰ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

³¹ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “International linkage and democratization” (2005).

³² Nye, Joseph S.: *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

societies”.³³ Apparently, the joint work of academicians had produced a subsequent impact also on conceptualization of soft power advanced by Nye.

In their first article on linkage and leverage Levitsky and Way stated:

Unlike leverage, linkage is primarily a source of soft power. Its effects are diffuse, indirect, and often difficult to detect. Yet where linkage is extensive, it creates multiple pressure points... As a result, the democratizing pressure generated by linkage is often more pervasive, and more persistent, than that generated via leverage alone.³⁴

and also:

It influences a range of non-state actors, generating decentralizing forms of pressure that frequently operate below the radar screens of international observers. To significant extent, then, linkage blurs international and domestic politics, transforming international expectations into domestic demands.³⁵

Thus, it is safe to argue that linkage is not simply a density of ties of one state to another state or group of states, but a source of power itself. Unfortunately, Levitsky and Way do not dwell on relations between ‘soft’ power and linkage, though it would disclose the nature of the phenomenon. I believe that the real sources of soft power are based on linkage and not merely on culture, values and policies, as Nye argued.³⁶ Culture, political values and policies are rather dimensions of linkage that eventually generates ‘soft power’. If it is assumed that linkage is power (without discussing its questionable ‘softness’ or ‘hardness’), it is essential to know what is the outcome of exertion of this power, and how then a second factor of external influence, leverage, is produced.

2.1.2. Spiral nexus of linkage & leverage and role of culture

The reasoning of linkage and leverage concepts presented above implies that the two categories must have immediate interrelation. However, Levitsky and Way are somewhat restrained in their judgments on this matter. Indeed, they realize that “leverage is most effective when combined with extensive linkage”. The scholars note that linkage and leverage work in pair and their interaction have a direct proportional effect on the result of the work – the higher linkage and leverage the more likely that the goals of their action will be achieved. Nevertheless, Levitsky and Way attribute the primary role in this interplay to linkage, because leverage alone normally cannot bring lasting and persistent effect.³⁷ The ultimate goal of this action, as the academicians defined, is “the democratization of authoritative states”. In essence, ‘democratization’ means regime change,

³³ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

³⁴ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “International linkage and democratization” (2005).

³⁵ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change”, in: *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 4, July, 2006.

³⁶ Nye, Joseph S.: *Soft Power* (2004).

³⁷ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

only with a more pleasant name. The ‘democratic face’ of regime change implies that the driver of change is within the target state but triggered by external influence via soft means of power that shape incentives and preferences of local populace.³⁸ If it is assumed that linkage plays the primary role in this process, it means that the operation of linkage is supplemented by leverage, that is, linkage is backed by leverage. This argument is quite evident, so it would be more interesting to know the opposite – how linkage contributes to better leverage. I argue that whereas leverage helps linkage from outside, linkage backs leverage from inside by creating a proper domestic environment through shaping preferences of the masses and elites.

Although Levitsky and Way stress that the impact of leverage varies with linkage, and “in the absence of linkage the effects of leverage are too limited and too inconsistent”, they avoid making an assumption that linkage as such is a source of leverage.³⁹ Sasse, however, notes that “linkage can, but does not have to, turn into leverage”. But at the same time she argues that “leverage denotes the direction of causality, whereas linkage points to sets of relationships without prejudging the mechanism, significance, and direction of causality”. Thus, the scholar explains that linkage and leverage “function on different analytical levels: while a country’s set of linkages can be mapped more or less comprehensively for a certain moment in time, leverage requires an *ex post* assessment taking outcome variables into account”.⁴⁰

Therefore, we could consider linkage as a static set of ties at concrete moment. However, as it was discussed above, linkage is a form of power and it creates a certain effect. Therefore, linkage cannot be mapped simply as a set of ties; it should be considered as a form of power with its own mechanisms that can produce an effect and outcome. However, since this form of power creates favourable environment for exerting leverage, it is rather a potential than an active power. I argue that leverage is based on linkage, as it achieves its force specifically from the density of ties. If we consider, for example, economic ties, then leverage in the form of sanctions would have its best effect when the economy of target state or the economic situation of target social group of this state incurs significant losses. The significance of losses naturally depends on how dense and beneficial economic linkage is. The same is relevant for inducements and conditionality – the possible expansion of the existent economic or social contacts or establishing new ones, including getting direct economic assistance or political support, opens the prospects for threatening with a taking away these benefits. Leverage in any event leads to cutting or a threat of cutting the existent and/or potential links beneficial to more dependent party.

³⁸ See Nye, Joseph S.: *Soft Power* (2004).

³⁹ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

⁴⁰ Sasse, Gwendolyn: “Linkages and the promotion of democracy” (2013).

The linkage-leverage interplay in international relations can be described as following. The density of connections of one state to another forms the linkage network, which is an essential dimension of foreign policy by itself. Based on the dense linkage and using a wide range of ties in various spheres of inter-state interactions, a powerful country may create strong leverage utilizing another state's dependency on the existing model of cooperation. However, it is important to recall that Nye together with Keohane explained that international cooperation is often asymmetrical; that is, states depend on each other in a varying degree. They argued that it is precisely the asymmetry in interdependent relations that provides for power to the dominant party.⁴¹ Dependence (as a result of asymmetric extensive linkage) can be used as a tool of influence on one's foreign policy decision-making (that is leverage). Thus, the direct dependence of leverage on linkage occurs: the denser the linkages in an asymmetrical model of cooperation, the stronger the leverage. Leverage in this case appears to be a derivative of linkage. The common purpose of exploiting such leverage is to draw the target state closer into their orbit of interests (this process is often associated with "regime change" or "democratization"), that is, to establish even closer ties with the dependent state. Therefore, we may witness a constant process: linkage creates leverage, and leverage's main goal is to create even stronger linkage. In this study, this process is called the *spiral nexus of linkage & leverage* (where "nexus" refers to mutually reinforcing interaction of linkage and leverage and "spiral" points to the 'ideal goal' of causal process: linkage creates leverage that eventually creates denser linkage) or shortly *linkage-leverage nexus*.

In addition, for the purpose of this work it is necessary to clarify dimensions of linkage and leverage. Being a derivative of linkage, leverage should have the same patterns, that correspond to whether it makes use of economic, social, political and cultural ties, as well as security links. Nevertheless, theoretically there is one dimension of leverage where the presence of dense linkage is not a necessary prerequisite for exerting pressure – military intervention. One state can unleash war against another state without any links to the 'victim' – this logic stems Middle Age, exaggeratedly: "I want your territory". However, this logic does not work so well in the modern Westphalian and in the emerging post-modern system of international relations.⁴² Today, military intervention requires legitimacy from the international society or at least from an influential group of states that have authorized themselves to present the interests of the international society. In the contemporary world, obtaining legitimacy implies preliminary and parallel work with the local population using the density of links in order to create an image of humanitarian intervention; military aggression opposed by both local and international societies is doomed to fail.

⁴¹ See for details Keohane, Robert O. & Nye, Joseph S.: *Power and Interdependence* (2001).

⁴² Кортунов Сергей: *Мировая политика* [Kortunov, Sergey: *World Politics*], Moscow: Publishing house of the State University – Higher School of Economics, 2007.

As it was described by Levitsky and Way, as well as Sasse, only tangible links such as economic, migration, information, political, diplomatic ties, etc. Importantly, they ignore culture, which in my assumption should also be considered as a linkage dimension. If we examine it as a layer of deep cultural relations based on historical memory, ethnic and language proximity, identity and similarities in behavior between nations living in the interrelating countries. Particularly this dimension of linkage forms a solid fundamental linkage, which hardly can be destroyed by external forces of third-party actors, especially if they are historically and culturally less involved than the deeply ingrained relations. Although Levistky and Way note that linkage is rooted in a variety of historical factors such as colonialism, military occupation, and geopolitical alliances, they do not consider a common history as a link but rather a facilitator and intensifier, like the geographic proximity, of the tangible links.⁴³ The scholars examine the role of history in creating links between countries on the global scale, but I suppose that the *intra-regional* level of relations between states can be more indicative for inter-state power relations and thus better reveal their deep layers.

This limitation of the linkage concept is inherited by the Democratization theory as a whole. The goal of “the democratizing process” is global, and the West simply cannot possess deep-rooted cultural ties with all nations around the globe, in such a way that they seriously influence identities as of the target countries as well as of Western nations themselves. ‘Americanized’ theories, such as Democratization theory and neo-liberalism⁴⁴ have declared the superiority of ‘Western values’ and do not accept questioning neither transforming it by third-party countries. On the contrary, ‘democratization’ or ‘regime change’ implies that the target state is penetrated by values and norms that are new and non-traditional for this country, but at the same time, allegedly, ‘universally attractive’. The value-normative penetration aims at creating new patterns of behaviour of the local population and altering their identity, if they do not meet with ‘Western standards’.

This study aims to integrate a dimension of linkage that involves collective memory, proximity of cultural values, ethnic origins, and languages, all of them contributing to common patterns of behavior, into further research on external influence, and refers to the respective dimension as *cultural linkage*.⁴⁵ Cultural links can be assumed to be much more solid and less amenable to alternative external influence than the other dimensions of linkage. In contrast to economic, political, and social linkages, which often depend on factors that can be altered in the short- or medium-term perspective (such as country’s openness to the external influence, supported

⁴³ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

⁴⁴ For example, the works of J. Nye on soft power are distinguished with such an approach proclaiming superiority of ‘Western values’ and ‘Western culture’ that are allegedly “universally attractive”. At the same time, Nye presents a superficial understanding of culture as a source of soft power. He speaks of culture only in terms of export of cultural products such as music, films, fashion, and even commercial goods of mass consumption (2004 – p. 11).

⁴⁵ For the convenience of the research, in the course of the analysis I combine cultural links with social and information ties under the name *socio-cultural linkage*.

by the political will of its elites and disposition of the people to accept it), cultural linkage are deeply rooted in human experience, historical memory, language, habits, norms of behavior, traditions, rituals, cultural heritage of literature and art, and so on.⁴⁶

However, to channel cultural links into a particular political direction, intervening external powers and the related domestic agents need to resort to historical revisionism, the propaganda of a new ideology, norms and values, manipulation of nationalistic feelings; eventually, they would need to alter the public conscience and behavior. Thus, the mitigation, change and substitution of existing cultural links (to the benefit of an alternative cultural linkage) require a lot of time and effort. Moreover, the exact time period and consequences of those ‘risky games’ are hard to estimate. Some of the dimensions of cultural linkage, like historical memory, experience, patterns of behavior, as they have been transmitted from one generation to another, cannot be erased completely; neither is it possible to demolish ethnical and language proximity between nations. The efforts of the Soviet leadership to assimilate numerous peoples in the Caucasus, or Turkey’s policy of denying the existence of the Kurdish people on its territory, which eventually led to violent inter-ethnic conflicts, illustrate this fact.⁴⁷ As a result, cultural linkage can serve as a foundation, a facilitator, or a significant impediment to creation of the other dimensions of linkage indicated above.

One of the main assumptions of this study is built upon the mechanism of interplay of linkage and leverage. It supposes that the main goal of an actor who possesses the power of linkage-leverage nexus is to exploit interrelation of linkage and leverage in a way that they do not negatively affect each other. I assume that leverage should be used very neatly in a manner that it would not undermine those linkages that were not intended to be targeted. For example, if sanctions are imposed too widely and too extensively, they can cause serious damage to the stance of those individuals or social and political groups that support the intervening international actor. If the outcome of leverage eventually contradicts the expectations of the supporters, this can lead to the weakening of important links, such as social and political ties, and eventually the loss of local support. Needless to say, military intervention carries yet greater risks.

⁴⁶ This understanding of culture is based on Pierre Bourdieu’s view on culture as a “habitus”, which is the set of socially learnt dispositions, skills and ways of acting that are often taken for granted, and which are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life (See Bourdieu, Pierre: *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, London: Routledge, 1989). Though in this study ‘habitus’ includes not only socialized norms or tendencies that guide behavior and thinking in construing and interpreting one’s world but also language, ethnicity and identity that forms certain patterns of behavior and personal reasoning of a large group of people that can be called nation and, in some circumstances, national/ethnic minority and even allegedly attributed to a certain ‘civilization’.

⁴⁷ Busygina, Irina: lecture on “Regional conflicts and method of their resolution” within the course *Regional Development: Risks and Opportunities*, MGIMO-University, Moscow, 29.11.2012.

It seems that the role of linkage, when leverage is applied, would be to create supporting incentives of local groups and individuals, adherent to values presented by the external agent. The incentives usually oppose the incumbent leadership and aim to change the current foreign policy orientation. The stimulus of the incentives is a prospect of withdrawal of the leverage if the required change happened. In addition, in case of low linkage, extensive leverage can contribute even to maintenance of power and preservation of the policy orientation by incumbents: when the government does not face strong domestic opposition it can successfully build the image of the enemy upon the external states who put pressure on its authority and legitimacy.

Obviously, linkage undermines leverage if it is ineffective and narrow, and therefore is not able to create the necessary environment for exploiting leverage. Levitsky and Way note that in low linkage countries external pressure is weaker and can have only short-time effect tending to be limited and sporadic.⁴⁸ Moreover, it seems to be advisable for a powerful actor to keep links beneficial to the dependent side (individuals, social groups, and/or state) as it makes potential cut of links be a significant threat.

The present study distinguishes between the two types of activity of the linkage-leverage nexus: based on threat (*potential*) and based on action (*actual*). *Potential activity* requires an environment that generates fear amongst the population of the target state, of losing the existing or planned set of beneficial links to a powerful state (for example, in case of the rejection of political conditions imposed by a powerful international actor). The application of sanctions, withdrawal of economic and political benefits, and other instances of realized downsizing cooperation, as well as the military intervention, represent the *actual* stage of linkage-leverage nexus. To be most effective, it requires legitimacy from the local populace and their active support. In this case, linkage is called for creating favourable environment that induces local people for supporting incentives.

It is important to note that Vachudova's discrimination between 'passive' and 'active' leverage⁴⁹ did not provide much insight for my differentiation between 'potential' and 'actual' activity of the linkage-leverage nexus. Perhaps, passive leverage, as it is based on creating of possibilities of accession for a target state into the EU, may indicate a similar tendency of potential activity of linkage-leverage nexus, when it produces the possibility for a target state to establish a more beneficial links with a power-wielding state. Active leverage, if understood as conditionality power, may also point to the actual activity of linkage-leverage nexus developed in this study. However, active and passive leverage in Vachudova's interpretation represent only one of the various aspects of potential and actual functional types of the linkage-leverage nexus.

⁴⁸ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: *Competitive authoritarianism* (2010).

⁴⁹ Vachudova, Milada Anna: *Europe Undivided* (2005).

2.2. The post-Soviet space in the context of linkage-leverage nexus

2.2.1. Asymmetric interdependence

Based on the discussions above, I argue that an external actor tries to utilize its existing and potential links to a country with a purpose to gain leverage over it, and so tie the target state closer to the circle of own interests. I avoid using here such words as “democratization”, “Western countries” and “Western norms”, as I believe that the two forms of external influence on foreign policy of certain state are not a prerogative of the West alone. Quite the contrary, any actor, which is less dependent in asymmetric structure of cooperation among international and, particularly, regional actors, is able to make use of linkage-leverage nexus that is always present in inter-state relationships. For example, Jakob Tolstrup sees “nothing particular Western” in the concepts of leverage and linkage and suggests making them “more general” and “more applicable to all of the various external actors”.⁵⁰ But Tolstrup did not dwell on this issue, and, in general, the ignorance of this fact remains to be a significant constraint of Democratization theory. Although the Western theoretical conceptualization of linkage and leverage gives a clear answer to the question regarding the sources and mechanisms of external support for ‘pro-Western’ forces in the target country, it with difficulty finds an explanation of the ways in which ‘anti-Western’ receive their backing from outside of the state.

According to Levitsky and Way, the “black knights” wielding countervailing power to Western pressure provide support for the states captured by geopolitical game in form of economic, military and diplomatic assistance.⁵¹ However, their conceptualization of linkage and leverage does not clearly indicate the sources of this power. The present study is an attempt to fill this gap. It argues that the “black knights” (I would refer to them as *alternative powerful actors*) have their own linkage and leverage, which form the countervailing power against Western influence in the target state, and in regard to certain states their linkage and leverage may be even more powerful than the Western countries actually have.⁵² The representatives of Democratization theory face difficulties in giving a unified definition to linkage and leverage as key dimensions of foreign policy of non-Western international actors, and their criteria is based upon the level of adherence of an actor to democratic values, appears inapplicable in case of international relations in the regions neighboring Russia. While there could be different estimations of Russian and Western foreign policy actions, given to their democratic aspirations toward other countries, I think it would be more rational for

⁵⁰ See Tolstrup’s version of the framework of leverage and linkage in: “When can External Actors Influence Democratization?” (2010).

⁵¹ Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide” (2007).

⁵² Sasse, in particular, notes competing nature of Russian and Western linkages to the countries treated as ‘neighbours’ by both Russia and EU (see Sasse, Gwendolyn: “Linkages and the promotion of democracy”, 2013).

this study to look at exact foreign policy instruments abstracting away from a still ambiguous understanding of what behavior international actors consider “democratic”.

Russia has wide and various connections with numerous countries all over the world. The density of Russian ties is determined by different factors and, first of all, geographic proximity, cultural interactions, intertwined historical past, and economic cooperation. It is clear that the region wherein the ties between Russia and other countries are most dense is the post-Soviet space. Based on the assumption that linkage produces leverage, Russian leverage should be most powerful in regard to the post-Soviet republics. However, after the dissolution of the USSR Western countries have developed their links to the post-communist states and intensified connections that existed before. Nevertheless, Russia has managed to preserve its high-dense linkage, and consequently leverage, over the former Soviet Union states, with the notable exception being the elites in the Baltic States who did their best in severing economic, political, and cultural links with Russia and the post-Soviet space by replacing them with tight linkage networks to the West. Recently, the advantages of Russian foreign policy have been challenged by *EU-ization* spreading to Russia’s Near Abroad. The process has been actively opposed but has not been strong enough to compete the Eurasian integrationist efforts. In response to the ‘westernization’ of the post-Soviet space, Russia has attempted to reinforce its linkages and strengthen leverage in the FSU region. Prior to the analysis of the mechanisms of how linkage produces leverage within the spiral nexus in Russian foreign policy, it is necessary to outline dimensions of Russian linkage and present the asymmetric interdependence that exists in the post-Soviet region and empowers Moscow’s leverage.

Economic linkage

Russian economic linkage to the post-Soviet republics emanates from the peculiarities of the economic development of the region based upon industrial production of various products, distributed and consumed within the then-existed model of the Soviet society. With the collapse of this model, numerous cooperation ties between enterprises of the former USSR and the system of consumption maintenance broke up. But the essence of this model still persists to a certain degree, for instance, many industrial enterprises of Ukraine and Belarus, such as machinery and aircraft construction, cannot survive without Russian supplies of raw material, technology and the Russian market.⁵³ Similarly, Russia needs various components for its final products and traditionally procures them from these states, which are the most industrially and technologically advanced among the CIS countries, except Russia. The new independent states in the post-Soviet space are

⁵³ See for an example of such cooperation, «Украина и Россия договорились о совместном выпуске “Русланов”», [“Ukraine and Russia agreed on a joint release of ‘Ruslans’ “], *LB.ua*, 17.07.2013, http://economics.lb.ua/business/2013/07/17/213352_ukraina_rossiya_dogovorilis.html.

unable to withstand tough competition of the world market and complete the successful reorientation of their exports, and therefore the Russian market is still the most important outlet for their goods. In addition, Russia is the main investor in the CIS countries, taking into account FDI coming from offshore (mostly Cyprus) companies that are controlled by Russian businesses.⁵⁴

Energy relations are the most considerable linkage; indeed, it is a distinguishing characteristic of Russian relations with post-Soviet countries, which are vitally dependent on Russian energy deliveries, albeit not all of them (for example, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan have enough energy resources both for their domestic consumption and for export which allows them to conduct a relatively independent foreign policy, irrespective of Moscow's opinion). Moreover, the economic infrastructure of most of the post-Soviet countries, including energy facilities and pipelines, rail and motor roads, is in some way or another linked to Russia.

The degree of integration within the region is an important indicator of the linkage density. There are several economic integration projects initiated by Russia as under the framework of CIS as well as on the basis of Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). The most viable of them today is the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, which is planned to be joined by Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. In 2012, the Free Trade Zone of the CIS countries (CIS FTZ) began operating and includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.⁵⁵ This, however, clashes with overlapping offers from the EU on DCFTA promoted under the EaP initiative covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. Some Russian experts believe that by developing the EaP Brussels directs its efforts toward complete disintegration of the former Soviet space and pull the CIS countries away of the influence of Russia.⁵⁶ I assume that precisely this initiative of the EU, viewed in Moscow as being aimed at undermining Russia's geopolitical influence in Eastern Europe and strengthening its own position, has become a trigger for the intensification of Russian linkages with countries of the Near Abroad.

Security linkage

The security of the former Soviet states is still substantially dependent on Russia. This circumstance is inherited from the Soviet single military defence system: all the essential military defence components, including air defence, air forces, navy, border troops, special forces, etc., were

⁵⁴ For details on the role of offshore companies in accumulation of FDI to the CIS countries, see reports of the project "The Monitoring of Mutual Investments in CIS Countries" of *IMEMO & Centre for Integration Studies of the EABR*, http://www.eabr.org/e/research/centreCIS/projectsandreportsCIS/invest_monitoring/ (last access 20.02.2014).

⁵⁵ Agreement on Free Trade Zone of the CIS, St. Petersburg, 18.10.2011 <http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=3183> (last access 20.02.2014).

⁵⁶ Сергунин Александр: «"Восточное партнерство": вызов российской дипломатии в Восточной Европе», [Sergunin Aleksandr: "The Eastern Partnership": a challenge to Russia's diplomacy in Eastern Europe"], *Vestnik of the Voronezh State University: linguistics and intercultural communication*, No.1, 2010.

fully integrated and subordinated to the Soviet high command in Moscow. The same was the case with intelligence service and law enforcement agencies. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new independent states (NIS) had to create their own military and security forces. Not all immediately succeeded in this process: some of them were in need of direct Russian security assistance in a form of special missions as, for example, it was in the case of Russian troops that guarded the Tajik-Afghani border between 1992 and 2005, and it is still the case of the Armenian-Turkish border, guarded by Russian forces.

In addition, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was accompanied by violent increase in inter-ethnic conflicts, complicated by rivalry of domestic political elites. In the newly created national republics ethnic minorities found their rights infringed by the state authorities. By the end of the 1990s, all the conflicts that occurred in the post-Soviet space were stopped or 'frozen' due to Russian mediation, peacekeeping operations, and in some cases direct military intervention. Today, the processes of the conflict settlement are taking place with immediate participation of Russia as a mediator, and the final solutions to the protracted conflicts are hardly to be achieved without taking Moscow's position into consideration.

It is important to understand that the presence of Russian military on the territory of new independent states must be considered not as 'leverage' but a specific dimension of military 'linkage'. The two main forms of presence of Russian troops in the post-Soviet space can be defined as peacekeeping forces, and military bases and facilities. The military presence may have a legal and legitimate basis recognized by the host country, as it is in case of the Russian 102nd military base in Armenia and 201st military base in Tajikistan. Another option is the stationing of Russian troops regardless of the reluctance of the host state. In this situation, they do not have legitimate and legal ground, for example, in case of Russian troops deployed in Abkhazian and South Ossetian breakaway regions of Georgia until 2009.⁵⁷

Russia is actively promoting a military-political alliance of the post-Soviet states under the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), joined by Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The CSTO is vertically integrated security structure built around Russia, and the dialogue and mutual guarantees of three security systems (the Central Asian, Southern and Western) are based on their individual ties to Russia without any horizontal type of interaction between each other.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the CSTO plays a crucial role in ensuring the security of the member-states from any external threats, including political-military aggressors (Chapter 4 of the

⁵⁷ In 2009 Russia signed agreements regulating presence of Russian troops with the republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia already recognized by Moscow as independent states. Therefore, at least for Russia and these republics the troops are legitimate.

⁵⁸ Dubnov, Arkady: "Tashkent Goes, Problems Stay: Will the CSTO Overcome the Conceptual Crisis?", *Russia in Global Affairs*, 07.10.2012, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Tashkent-Goes-Problems-Stay-15692>.

Treaty mirroring NATO's Chapter 5), international terrorists and criminals, drug trafficking, illegal immigration, as well as large-scale natural disasters. The CSTO has created the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces and the Peacekeeping Forces. Currently, the organization is aimed at strengthening the integrated regional systems of air defence and air forces.⁵⁹

Russian military advisers consult colleagues from the post-Soviet partner-states, and the officers and special operation forces are trained at Russian military educational institutions and grounds. The post-Soviet states are armed mainly with Russian and Soviet weapons, and that creates their dependence on Russia, as the equipment requires constant technical service from Russian specialists. Moscow provides armament both on commercial basis and in form of aid.⁶⁰ Russian military and semi-military enterprises that are designing, producing and repairing military equipment, vehicles and weapons have created joint ventures with some of their partners from the CIS countries.⁶¹ In general, the military-industrial enterprises of the CIS countries need Russian purchase orders, technology and investments to continue their operations; otherwise they would become bankrupt.⁶²

Political linkage

It is hard to give an exhaustive list of Russian political ties to the FSU countries as they comprise numerous inter-governmental, inter-parliamentary, inter-party and inter-personal contacts. Moscow has strong ties with the heads of numerous post-Soviet republics, notwithstanding occasional diplomatic tensions with them, and in general with political, business and security elites, both ruling and opposition. It is important to mention, however, is the fact that the 'Russian factor' is an integral element of the political structure of the post-Soviet states as it is present practically in all political debates and competition between elites of the countries. Today, with an active rise of the 'European factor' in the domestic politics of the countries covered by the EaP, the division of their elites into pro-European and pro-Russian camps has become more evident than ever before. Elections in these countries are frequently accompanied with a necessity to make choice in favour of one or another geopolitical competitor; Russia or the West. That often translates into a choice between two integration formations – the EEU or the EU. Many Russian politicians and (affiliated

⁵⁹ CSTO structure, <http://www.odkb-csto.org/structure/> (last access 20.02.2014).

⁶⁰ For an example of such military cooperation between Russia and Central Asian countries, see Gorenburg, Dmitry: "External Support for Central Asian Military and Security Forces", *SIPRI Working Paper*, January 2014.

⁶¹ See, for an example, «Для Минобороны актуален вопрос создания на территории Армении корпорации «АрмРостехнологии»» ["Creation of the corporation 'ArmRostehnologii' in Armenia a topical issue for the Defense Ministry"], *Novosti-Armenia*, 17.12.2013, <http://www.newsarmenia.ru/defence/20131217/42993152.html>.

⁶² See, for an example, Birnbaum, Michael: "Ukraine factories equip Russian military despite support for rebels", *The Washington Post*, 15.08.2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukraine-factories-equip-russian-military-despite-support-for-rebels/2014/08/15/9c32cde7-a57c-4d7b-856a-e74b8307ef9d_story.html.

with them) experts with ideological purposes attribute the term “civilizational choice” to these two alternatives inevitably and constantly proposed for post-Soviet countries.⁶³

To promote a ‘civilization choice’ that would secure Russian interests Moscow is using its wide political linkage to pro-Russian agents that can influence decision-making process and contribute to mobilization of many-sided social linkage. For this purposes Russia uses political tricks common for the Western policy, as well, such as personal contacts between high representatives of its political establishment with loyal politicians, opposition leaders from the target state as well as meetings with local population advocating policy of the external actor. The aim of such an activity is to create legitimacy and attract public and media attention to the forces supporting external influence. Particularly, the members of the Russian State Duma and the Federal Council frequently pay visits to different regions of the CIS countries and make political statements that Russian officials sometimes do not dare to voice.

Regional cooperation plays no less an important role in linking the local population to Russia. Today, there are even attempts to implement a version of the EU’s integration concept “Europe of Regions” in a form of “Eurasian regions” specifically aimed at breakaway regions of certain post-Soviet republics.⁶⁴ Of course, the classic approaches to regional cooperation such as “twin cities” or the reciprocity of neighboring borderlands remain on the agenda, too. Various Russian regions take part in organization of joint sporting and cultural activities, including the organization of commemorations of historical dates and events, with other regions of post-Soviet countries. The inter-regional interaction implies wide economic cooperation, including trade and investments. Some Russian regional leaders make personal contributions towards establishing links with various regions across the CIS. For example, Yuriy Luzhkov, ex-mayor of Moscow, was very active in providing financial aid to the Crimean Autonomous Republic of Ukraine (allocated from Moscow’s city budget), organizing numerous pro-Russian activities in the region, and making provocative political statements, for which in 2008 he was declared *persona non grata* by the Ukrainian Security Service.⁶⁵ The Head of Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, was also active in

⁶³ See some examples described by Шевченко Алексей: «Мифологема «цивилизационного выбора» и ее роль в современной пропаганде» [Shevchenko, Alexei: “Mythologeme of ‘civilizational choice’ and its role in modern propaganda”], *Dialog.ua*, 19.06.2006, <http://dialogs.org.ua/ru/project/page7752.html> and Толочко Петр: «Цивилизационный выбор?» [Tolochko, Petr: “Civilizational choice?”], 2000, Vol. 576, No. 40, October 7-13 2011.

⁶⁴ «Концепцию проекта «Евразийский регион» на международной научно-практической конференции озвучила Нина Штански» [“Nina Shtanski voiced the concept of the “Eurasian region” at the international scientific-practical conference”], *Perviy Respublikansky Telekanal*, 25.09.2013 <http://tv.pgtrk.ru/news/20130925/11390>.

⁶⁵ “Ukraine forbids Moscow Mayor to enter to its territory”, *UNIAN*, 12.05.2008, <http://www.unian.info/world/115240-ukraine-forbids-moscow-mayor-to-enter-its-territory.html>.

Crimea by establishing friendly ties with Crimean Tatars by giving them financial aid to construct a mosque.⁶⁶

Social linkage

The most important aspect of social linkage that has bound all countries of the post-Soviet republics to Russia is migration. The visa-free regime within CIS countries reinforces cross-border flows of people, including tourism, personal visits, and business trips. Foreign workers enjoy the opportunities of the country's large economy that favours cheap foreign labour. Russia became the main destination for labour migrants from the CIS countries, and thus forms the centre of the regional migration structure, wherein the main flows of labour migrants from CIS countries are concentrated.⁶⁷ According to the World Bank calculations, Russia was ranked fourth in the world in 2011 by the volume of remittances sent by migrant workers from the country, while money transfers from abroad amounted in Tajikistan to 47 % of GDP, in Kyrgyzstan to 29 %, in Moldova to 23 %, in Armenia to 13 %.⁶⁸ Money sent by workers to their families helps them to make ends meet and develop the households. Labour migration strengthens social stability and the development of integration processes in CIS, as actively functioning migration networks enhance the countries' interdependence.⁶⁹ The migration interdependence between Russia and the CIS countries is unbalanced and asymmetric. Russia can easily redistribute the immigrant flows from one country to another, while the CIS countries have fewer options for the diversification of the emigration.

Along with labour migration, there is also considerable education migration. Russia is using its position as a country with an advanced education system amongst CIS countries to attract their students to study. Students from countries, with which Russia signed respective agreements, enjoy status that is almost equal to the Russian students in terms of admission to universities and receiving social benefits. The 2012 Concept of the State Migration Policy of Russia promotes, in particular, educational migration with a focus on CIS countries and the intention to open new

⁶⁶ «В Крыму на деньги Кадырова построили мечеть» [“A mosque was built to Crimea with money from Kadyrov”], *Rosbalt*, 23.08.2010, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/ukraina/2010/08/23/764575.html>.

⁶⁷ Чудиновских Ольга: «Статистика трудовой миграции в странах сети МИРПАЛ» [Chudinovskih, Olga: “Statistics of labour migration in the MiRPAL network countries”], *MiRPAL report*, 2011.

⁶⁸ The data is taken from “Labour Migration as a Factor of Development in space of the Commonwealth Independent States”, *Background document to the CIS Member States' Joint Statement on the Regional Position on Migration*, Preparatory Meeting of the Heads of the Migration Agencies of the CIS Member States for the 2013 High-Level Dialogue of the UN General Assembly on International Migration and Development, <http://iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/CIS-HLD-Background-document-final-ENG.pdf> (last access 20.02.2014).

⁶⁹ Zayonchkovskaya, Janna: “Migration in Modern Russia”, *RIAC*, 11.06.2013, http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=1952#top.

channels of academic mobility.⁷⁰ Since the Russian-educated foreigners preserve ties to Russian universities, NGOs, and academic societies, they are essential domestic adherents to regional integration with Russia. Acknowledging importance of the CIS citizens educated in Russian universities, Moscow is about to multiply state-funded study places for them; in this regard the corresponding bilateral agreements have been signed.

In addition, Russia is actively exporting its higher education. It established branches of the leading Russian universities in the CIS countries.⁷¹ Moscow opens and supports universities with education programmes in the Russian language or that are focused on studying Russian language and culture, such as Slavic Universities. The universities of CIS countries actively cooperate and many of them are members of the Eurasian Universities Association.⁷² A number of universities of the post-Soviet republics have partnership relations with Rossotrudnichestvo, the Russian government agency that aims to maintain ties with Russian compatriots abroad.

As a part of social linkage, Russia is also actively engaged in providing humanitarian aid to the post-Soviet countries. According to the 2013 Oxfam report, the FSU countries received humanitarian aid from Russia more often and in the greater volumes. The report argues that this testifies to “the deeper involvement and participation of Russia” in the life of its fellow former Soviet republics.⁷³ The authors of the Oxfam report believe that “the geographical distribution of Russia’s aid must be viewed in the context of its long-term strategic ambitions”, which shows that “Russia regards former Soviet republics as its sphere of influence, and its willingness to maintain close ties with them explains why they receive such a large proportion of its aid.”⁷⁴

Information linkage

The study views information linkage as a penetration of media and discourses of external actors in the target country. Indeed, in this regard Russia has a clear advantage in the CIS countries over the Western states, as Russian is a common language of international communication for many citizens of the CIS countries, and this considerably facilitates penetration of the discourses formed by Russian and pro-Russian media, experts and politicians. In addition to global Russian media agencies, such as *Russia Today*, *RIA*, *Voice of Russia* and *ITAR-TASS*, there are regional Russian and/or pro-Russian media operating in the post-Soviet countries. In Russia, there are also

⁷⁰ The Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation up to 2025, approved by the President on June 13, 2012, <http://www.fms.gov.ru/upload/iblock/07c/kgmp.pdf> (last access 18.03.2014).

⁷¹ See “МГУ рассматривает возможность создания филиалов в КНР и Киргизии” [“MSU is considering the establishment of branches in China and Kyrgyzstan”], *RIA*, 03.12.2013, <http://ria.ru/society/20131203/981656446.html>.

⁷² List of universities-members of the association, *the Eurasian Universities Association*, <http://www.eau-msu.ru/education> (in Rus.) (last access 02.03.2014).

⁷³ Brezhneva, Anna & Ukhova, Daria: “Russia as a Humanitarian Aid Donor”, *OXFAM discussion paper*, 15.07.2013, <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-russia-humanitarian-donor-150713-en.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

information agencies, including internet-based portals, which are focused on the post-Soviet region as a whole (such as *Regnum*) or its particular parts (for example, *Vestnik Kavkaza*).

Nicu Popescu argues that the Kremlin has created a network of loyal media, which are “vertically integrated in a huge ‘public relations’ machine”, also including “political technologists” faithful to the Kremlin.⁷⁵ The process of Russian discourse penetration into the post-Soviet region involves also various think-tanks and institutes that organize conferences and seminars with experts of pro-Russian orientation; among them there are such organizations as Institute of CIS, headed by Konstantin Zatulin, ex-chairman of the Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots of the State Duma, and Russia’s Institute for Strategic Studies, a government-financed institution. Following the recent information developments, many Russian experts, officials and politicians have created their personal websites and accounts in internet-based social networks mainly in *Facebook* and *Twitter*, where they express their views on world politics, regional developments and Russian policy. In regard to international and regional politics, some of the most active and resonant internet posts of those from Russian political ruling elite belong to such statesmen as Dmitry Rogozin, Deputy Prime Minister of Russia in charge of defence industry, and Aleksei Pushkov, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Foreign Affairs. Their activities on social media attract a great deal of attention and are widely discussed by various media companies in Russia and abroad.

The Russian federal state-run TV-channels broadcast for the CIS countries (with the help of satellite television) and often enjoy a large local Russian-speaking audience.⁷⁶ There are also pro-Russian domestic channels that broadcast in both Russian and in local languages. Some Russian newspapers and magazines are also distributed in the CIS countries; in addition, there are local newspapers that support Russia-led integration projects, including media printed by pro-Russian movements, Russian diaspora, NGOs, and political parties backed by Moscow. Russia supports and organizes various events and activities aimed at enhancing the skills of local Russian-language young journalists. For example, in June 2013 in Penza the Forum of young Russian speaking journalists from the CIS countries gathered representatives of youth media and young journalists from Armenia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Kazakhstan, and Russia. The forum was supported by Russkiy Mir foundation, a government-funded organization promoting Russian language and culture. As announced, the purpose of the event was “*to enhance the capacity of young Russian-speaking CIS journalists and strengthen ties among youth of CIS member states,*

⁷⁵ Popescu, Nicu: “Russia’s Soft Power Ambitions”, *CEPS Policy Brief*, No. 115, October 2006.

⁷⁶ Kudors, Andis: “ ‘Russian World’ – Russia’s Soft Power Approach to Compatriots Policy”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, 16.06.2010, Vol. 10, No. 81.

restore and develop the historical ties of the Commonwealth states".⁷⁷ Obviously, such an activity goes beyond information linkage and concerns already cultural links between Russia and post-Soviet countries.

Cultural linkage

The cultural links in the post-Soviet space are deeply rooted in a common history, shared cultural heritage, ethnic and language proximities, a single religion, and a long experience of coexistence of different ethnics, languages and religions that determined the similar patterns of behavior of nations living together in one space. These factors maintain cognate traits of mentality of the post-Soviet people, and form their non-tangible linkage to Russia, with which the common past is associated.

The statements of various Russian officials, experts and politicians, with reference to common past and shared culture between Russia and post-Soviet countries, are made to demonstrate that Russia is the core of the civilization called *Russkiy Mir* that brings together people of different origins, ethnics, religions and languages, who was and is involved in creation of the 'civilization' and its values. Naturally, the *Russkiy Mir* makes its own efforts to intensify the linkage to Russia. Russian compatriots and Russian-speaking population, as well as local people, attracted by and loyal to Russia, are treated as public bearers of these ideas and values within the area they live on. Therefore, Moscow is aiming to support "*consolidation of organizations of compatriots to enable them to effectively uphold their rights in the countries of residence while preserving the cultural and ethnic identity of the Russian diaspora and its ties with the historical homeland*".⁷⁸ Thus, it is supposed that the diaspora under protectorate of Moscow would play the role of a provider and keeper of Russian culture in the world, particularly in the post-Soviet space. In this context, information and social links facilitate and intensify cultural linkage. At the same time, cultural links form a basis for expansion of other dimensions of the Russian linkage.

Nevertheless, Russia's cultural linkage to post-Soviet countries is challenged by a natural factor, namely the generational change. With each succeeding generation the temporal depth of historical memory and shared experience proportionally move forward to the present and away from the initial point of time preserved in memory and experience of preceding generation. Reinhart Koselleck argues that with the significant lapse of time any great occurrence in the past "can appear in a completely different form, thanks to a 'historical criticism' capable of making allowances for

⁷⁷ «Форум молодых русскоязычных журналистов стран СНГ открывается в Пензе» [“Forum of young Russian speaking journalists of the CIS countries opens in Penza”], *RIA*, 11.06.2013, <http://ria.ru/society/20130611/942639801.html>.

⁷⁸ Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation approved by President on February, 12 2013, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D (last access 01.03.2013).

the polemical partiality of earlier contemporaries”.⁷⁹ Therefore, Moscow puts a great deal of effort to enhance its information, social and cultural links, and to counteract attempts for the revision of history common to the post-Soviet countries. This helps to continually cultivate historical memory. Otherwise, it would stop transferring from one generation to another.

Language is a very important, if not to say the main, carrier of historical memory, as it reflects cultural and ethnic identity of nations and determines personal thinking. It is a “unifier” that makes post-soviets understand each other and forms their common mentality.⁸⁰ Therefore, Moscow plans to extend the network of Russian language, cultural and science centres and museums abroad, and to involve the large Russian diaspora to the process of expanding and strengthening the space of the Russian language and culture.⁸¹ There has been training organized for Russian language teachers and the supply of methodological literature in CIS countries, primarily on the basis of Slavic universities, language centres and schools.

The Russian Orthodox Church became a partner of the state in this process. The Church and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have created a joint working group aimed at developing the interaction between the ‘spiritual’ and the foreign policy institutions. The canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church covers all post-Soviet republics except Armenia and Georgia, which have their own churches independent from, but which closely ‘cooperate’ with their Russian ‘colleagues’. Visits from the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to these countries causes great social resonance within the local population and draws a great amount of attention from political elite and media. While visiting countries, the Patriarch meets with heads of states and establishes personal contacts with them, and so tries to bridge a gulf between orthodox societies of the post-Soviet republics and the Moscow patriarchate.⁸² Indeed, it contributes to the spiritual consolidation of these countries. In addition, there are different social movements and associations advocating interests of the church and defending traditional moral values as a counterbalance to influence of the Western ‘moral decay’.

2.2.2. Security environment and threatened sovereignty

While it is obvious that exerting leverage creates threats to the security of the target state, the question how an external leverage affects security requires further investigation. The vulnerable

⁷⁹ Koselleck, Reinhart: *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 1985 – p. 139

⁸⁰ Interview with the Rector of Moscow Lomonosov State University, Victor Sadovnichiy, *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 25.11.2013, <http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/interview/Viktor-Sadovnichiy-U-nas-net-drugoy-skrepy-tolko-mentalitet-i-yazyk.html> (in Rus.)

⁸¹ Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (2013).

⁸² Interview with the Head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Ilarion of Volokolamsk, *Kommersant*, 09.12.2013, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2363789?isSearch=True>.

aspects of security of the target country should serve as entry points for an external power to apply leverage. As noted above, the strong one-sided linkage of a state to external power leads to asymmetric interdependence between them. Hence, the sectors of cooperation where linkage is asymmetric and high-concentrated, should be the most vulnerable points of country's *linkage-leverage security*, as the powerful side can cut or threaten them with the severing of the dense linkage, on which social, political, and economic stability of the target country rely. Nevertheless, cutting, for instance, information linkage alone cannot cause a catastrophic situation in the dependent state, therefore, apparently, such dimensions of linkage generate leverage through other means, and one of the purposes of this study is to find out what are they. For the purpose of this study I find it necessary to draw attention to the most important threats that exist in the post-Soviet region. This, hopefully, will cast some light on the process of the penetration of the linkage-leverage nexus to the state security through certain vulnerabilities.

The post-Soviet republics have plenty of security problems, which are caused not only by highly concentrated linkage but also by a great number of other external and internal factors and threats. The aggregate of such problems eventually creates a situation, in which most of the states appear to be fragile and backward. After the dissolution of the USSR the new independent states managed to establish their statehoods with all the basic institutions needed for this. Nevertheless, many of the post-Soviet countries failed to create stable *stateness*. The political systems of these countries are erratic, the state institutions are malfunctioning, and the change of authorities and power often happens through *coup d'état* rather than democratic election procedures. This creates the possibility for interference in domestic affairs by external forces, which support, in accordance with their interests, the ruling regime or opposition. In addition, various militant, radical and oligarchic groups are pursuing their own interests in certain states and in the entire region.

Russian security linkage to the CSTO countries implies assistance in tackling with some of these threats, including drug, arms and human trafficking, international crime, and illegal immigration. Russian assistance covers a considerable portion of expenses of the states regarding these matters, and, cutting this linkage would bring instability to CSTO members, especially, such vulnerable states as, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. Leverage based on security linkage is even more effective, if the external power plays a role of the guarantor of security from the aggression of other countries. An illustrative example of this is the Russian security protectorate of Armenia involved in the conflict with Azerbaijan, which has a standing potential to plunge into large-scale war. Apparently, this was a reason, why Yerevan renounced its plans to sign the Association Agreement with the EU, who, unlike Russia and CSTO, did not have enough resources and will to ensure security of the Armenian state.

In general, the most distinctive security problem existing in the post-Soviet region is related to presence of regional conflicts determined by separatist regimes, secessionist regions, and territorial disputes. They are commonly referred to as the post-Soviet “frozen” or “protracted” conflicts. The conflicts in Central Asia between neighbouring countries over territory and water resources from time-to-time escalate to military confrontation. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh is characterized with a permanent high-intensity military tensions. The post-Soviet conflicts differ by specific objects of dispute but are similar by their nature. The ethnic factor is to one degree or another always present in all of the conflicts. After the dissolution of the USSR various ethnic groups became separated and isolated from their motherland states, and their position as an ethnic minority in the new state did not coincide with their expectations for status in social and political system. The classical scholar in the field of ethnic conflicts, Donald Horowitz, explains ethnic conflict as a result of the concerns of a group about its place among the other groups (the feeling of threat to its occupied position or to its better future).⁸³

Hence, one may assume that in the context of ethnic conflicts linkage can generate leverage through social and political mobilization of people for actions against the incumbent authorities of their country, striving for a better position, status and representation within the socio-political structure of the state or for the full independence from the state treated as ‘usurper’ of power and a threat to their identity. Identity itself can be a crucial factor that triggers a conflict. Dan Smith believes that the most fundamental factors in conflict development are identity and group status, and that denial of their recognition and discrimination cause inevitable and irresistible protest.⁸⁴ A prominent Russian expert on ethnic conflicts, Valery Tishkov, gives great consideration to ethnicity and religion as powerful tools of political mobilization, which are also important factors of identity formation. In ethno-political conflicts, both sides appeal to the emotions of the people – they call either for “national liberation” and “self-determination” on the part of the rebels or for “national security”, “sovereignty” and “territorial integrity” on the part of the existing states. Often their referents are put in a way of something sacred and so not a subject for discussion or compromise.⁸⁵ Obviously, such cultural links as ethnicity, religion, historical memory, and language are the essential elements that form group and national identity. Thus, the intensification of these ties, which constitute *profound cultural linkage*, contributes to fostering inter-group competition, and so creates leverage applied through vulnerabilities of the country’s stateness.

⁸³ See Horowitz, Donald L.: *Ethnic groups in conflict*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1985.

⁸⁴ Smith, Dan: “Trends and causes of armed conflicts”, in: *The Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, August 2004, http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/smith_handbook.pdf.

⁸⁵ Тишков Валерий: «Конфликт в сложных обществах: предисловие к русскому изданию» // *Этнополитический конфликт: пути трансформации: настольная книга Бергховского центра* [Tishkov Valery: “Conflict in the complex societies: preface to the Russian edition”, in: *Ethnopolitical conflicts: ways to transformation: Berghof Handbook*], Moscow: Nauka, 2007.

Under the constructivist approach conflict can also be seen as a part of social reality constructed by social modes, intellectual categories, representations, and discourses. All of these elements of social reality have a historical dimension and they are reproduced in historical memory. Thus, memories can be selected in order to touch the feelings and cognitive focus of people and, thereby, to serve the individual, group or national needs and interests. This is how social mobilization can be provoked from within the state and can be supported by external forces. Horowitz noted that memory of earlier conflicts, even from ancient time, “can be revived to fit contemporary conditions” and “history can be a weapon, and tradition can fuel ethnic conflict”⁸⁶. The formation of the necessary discourses that refresh historical memory of social and ethnic groups happens through the creation of the corresponding information environment. Therefore, via the channels of information and social linkages, an external actor can create a discursive environment that serves its interests and revives the memory of the shared history and experiences. Eventually, it causes active support for external influence from local populace linked to the external actor by cultural, social and information ties. Thus, the task of an external actor employing leverage generated through cultural, social and information links is not to cut these ties, or threaten to cut them, but to create a perception among local people or specific social and/or ethnic groups that the current policy of their authorities (which are unfavourable for the external actor) can dramatically damage links to the ‘civilization’ important for their unique identity, habits and traditions.

This mechanism of leverage generated through cultural, social and information linkage does not convert and eliminate the identity of the selected populace. On the contrary, I argue, that in our case an external power (a state) wields the linkage-leverage nexus in order to intensify and reinforce identity, based on the existing cultural links, and revive positive memory of common history, shared experience, similar traditions, fraternal relations, ethnic roots, unifying single civilization, etc. By doing this, the external power, an international actor, tries to secure its interests in relation to the target state.

It is important to stress that post-Soviet conflicts are not purely ethnic conflicts but ethno-political ones. Valery Tishkov understands such conflict as one that occurs between two or more parties, in which at least one party is organized on an ethnic basis (politicized) or acting on behalf of an ethnic group. He highlights that conflict is not caused by ethnic identity as such but its politicization, which can be backed by various powers and motivations.⁸⁷ The object of political conflicts is usually specific resources – state authority, the organization of political institutions and the political status of social groups. The secessionism and separatism widely spread in the post-

⁸⁶ Horowitz, Donald L.: *Ethnic groups in conflict* (1985) – pp. 98-99.

⁸⁷ Tishkov Valery: “Conflict in the complex societies” (2007).

Soviet space can be attributed to *regional* political conflicts. Irina Busygina defines the *regional political conflict* as a conflict related to the desire of one social group to attain power and distribute it in favour of the region or to change the political status of the region.⁸⁸

Of course, economic interests are also important factors that can contribute to confrontation within and between the post-Soviet states. In the Soviet non-market planned economic model, the resources were distributed according to the decision made by the central apparatus in Moscow. With the transition to market economy, a new highly competitive economic reality led to the struggle for natural resources, large industrial facilities and transport and communication infrastructure among states, businesses, interested individuals and corrupt politicians. Therefore, in addition to important cultural, social and information linkages promoting rivalry in politically unstable and fragile states by shaping preferences of large social groups, a significant role is given to economic and political linkages, through which the preferences of elites are influenced.

Based on the present discussions regarding the *modus operandi* of the linkage-leverage nexus, the two types of mechanisms of interaction between linkage and leverage – actual and potential – can be adjusted for socio-cultural dimensions of linkage. In addition to the creation of a threat to cut essential links that maintain stable social, economic and political systems of the target country, the potential activity also involves the creation of a belief in the society, or some of its groups, that the ‘wrong’ policy and political orientation of their ruling (or opposition) elite could destroy important cultural ties to the external actor representing common civilization, shared values and similar identity. Understanding this difference in the functioning of the linkage-leverage nexus is important for the empirical research and practical application of this concept to Russia’s foreign policy toward post-Soviet republics, namely Moldova.

Comprehending the complex security environment and existence of stateness issues in the post-Soviet region, as well as for the purpose of convenient conduction of empirical research, I suggest distinguishing between leverages that have direct and indirect effect on *sovereignty* of the target country. Although I am aware of the ongoing transformation of the world system of sovereignty that blurs the very meaning of sovereignty, for the purpose of this research, I use a simple understanding of this notion as *the right to rule the state*.⁸⁹ To be more precise, this study refers to two traditional types of sovereignty: Westphalian or Vattelien sovereignty, and international legal sovereignty. According to Stephen Krasner, Westphalian sovereignty implies “the

⁸⁸ Бусыгина И.М. *Политическая регионалистика* [Busygina I.: *Political regionalistics*], Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006 – pp. 190-191.

⁸⁹ Donnelly, Jack: “Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society”, in: *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2006.

exclusion of external sources of authority both *de jure* and *de facto*".⁹⁰ It means that "within its own boundaries the state has a monopoly over authoritative decision-making". In the Westphalian system of international relations states are guided by the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of others. In modern times, this system acquired a principle of mutual recognition, which is a basis for international legal sovereignty of "juridically independent territorial entities", meaning that states are free and equal.⁹¹

Hence, I call a leverage that openly prejudices the legitimacy and right of domestic authority to rule the state within officially recognized borders *hard leverage*. Hard leverage, thus, leads to centrifugal tendencies within the state, that is, the confrontation at region-centre axis and separatist aspirations within the society are triggered. Of course, any leverage is a force that one way or another is imposed on authority, but not all levers bring sovereignty under a direct threat in a short-term perspective. I refer to the leverage, which does not impose direct threat to the state sovereignty, as *soft leverage*. It is important to underline that hard leverage of the intervening external power, unlike soft leverage, is specifically aimed at undermining order within the territorial polity for the purpose of preventing domestic authorities cooperating with alternative external actors.

It is worth mentioning that the terms 'soft' and 'hard' have nothing in common with Nye's soft power concept. In contrast to Nye's conceptualization of 'softness' of power that is centered on sources of power that intrinsically mean the *nature of tools* of a particular foreign policy, the present study defines 'softness' and 'hardness' of leverage according to the *effect* it produces in regard to sovereignty exercised by the authority of the target state. All in all, I believe that these peculiarities can be observed only when a researcher departs from the approach to study one's foreign policy globally but concentrates, instead, on concrete mechanisms of the linkage-leverage nexus at meso-level, i.e. regional politics. This research attempts to disclose such peculiarities within the analysis of the Russian policy toward Moldova as a case study.

⁹⁰ Krasner, Stephen D.: "Abiding Sovereignty", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2001.

⁹¹ Ibid.

3. Methodological approach

3.1. Case selection

One of the best ways to test theoretical claims and hypotheses is to study cases that can demonstrate mechanisms of the phenomenon in the focus of the research. Indeed, a researcher may study a case just to understand better the case itself, but one may also examine a particular case to provide insight into an issue. Based on these two main research interests in cases, the prominent theorist of case studies, Robert Stake, distinguishes between two types of cases. When a particular case itself is of interest, Stake calls this type of study an *intrinsic case study*. If the researcher pursues interests outside of the case, and the case plays supportive role to illustrate other cases or particular trait of the phenomenon or problem, then, according to Stake, we should speak about an *instrumental case study*.⁹² In the present research, I made an effort to examine in detail the process of the linkage-leverage nexus of Russian foreign policy. The case of Russia's policy towards Moldova, chosen for the purpose of the investigation, illustrates how the phenomenon of linkage-leverage nexus is manifest and exists within this policy. Thus, I may say that *the thesis provides an instrumental case study*.

Another characteristic of this research is that it is a single case study, the significance of which is debated among scholars. R. Stake and D. Vaughan representing the critics of single case study believe that one single case can be confirmative for a particular phenomenon but the researcher cannot rely on it for the generalization.⁹³ Their opponents in turn urge for better understanding of single case studies and their significance for theory building and argue that the plausibility of the results of this type of case study largely depends on proper case selection and method that it defines.⁹⁴ I agree with the former, that in this form of study the representation seems to be insufficient to develop a comprehensive generalization of the described phenomenon of linkage-leverage nexus in Russian policy toward post-Soviet states. However, to make a comparison of a number of cases with such a range of dimensions of the variables in the focus would take a considerable amount of time for data gathering, analysis and write-up, which does not fit into the scope of a Master's thesis. Therefore, I rather follow those, who advocate single case studies, and who concentrate on choosing the case well.

⁹² Stake, Robert E.: "Case Studies", in: Denzin, Norman K. et al. (eds.): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2000.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Klotz, Audie: "Case Selection", in: Klotz, Audie & Prakash, Deepa (eds.): *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 – pp. 43-58.

In International Relations, as Audie Klotz notes, a case usually is equated with a country, and today this became the most common unit of analysis.⁹⁵ My research does not disregard this well-established tradition of IR studies. Given the theme of the analysis, the range of options of cases for my study is limited to the post-Soviet states, of which I have to choose one that best meets the purposes of my investigation and resources I have for conducting it. Stake believes that a researcher should choose those cases from which he can learn the most of the phenomenon under examination. The scientist argues that *the opportunity to learn* should be the primary criterion for case selection. He also underlines that the best way would be to take the most accessible case so that a researcher could spend the most time with it.⁹⁶ As I am currently employed at Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI), where I gather material on Russian policy toward particular post-Soviet states, apparently, the circle of the case options can be reasonably reduced according to the states I have already tracked for. They are all post-Soviet states except the Baltic States and Russia's closest allies at the moment, i.e. the members of the Eurasian Economic Union that unites Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The exclusion of these countries also has an analytical explanation. The Baltic States, being members of the EU and NATO, are closely tied to the Western institutions and so Russian linkage to these countries is the weakest compared to other post-Soviet republics. On the contrary, Belarus and Kazakhstan are members of all integration formations initiated by Russia, and so Moscow has practically no interest to exert leverage on these countries in a bid to bring them to its 'gravitation field', as they already are firmly placed within it.

Klotz advises a case study researcher to remain mindful of the theoretical framework and the core question.⁹⁷ It is important always to stick to a dominant theme and keep in mind the key concepts that define a case, and the main dimensions of the phenomenon of interest. Hence, the present study requires the most illustrative case where all dimensions of linkage and leverage of Russia are present in full. The degree of dimensions of Russian linkage in relations with the post-Soviet republics varies from one country to another. My preliminary observation of the post-Soviet countries, within the focus of TAPRI's project, showed that such linkages as social, political, economic, military and information are more or less equally dense among all countries except such dissident countries as Turkmenistan (where neutrality became a state ideology and political tool), Azerbaijan (which is economically most independent from Russia compared to other post-Soviet republics), Georgia (whose ex-President Saakashvili did everything to drift apart from Russia, and in 2008 Moscow exhausted its hard leverage during the August war and thereafter when recognized independence of the Georgian breakaway regions), and to less extent Uzbekistan (where the self-

⁹⁵ Klotz, Audie: "Case Selection" (2008).

⁹⁶ Stake, Robert E.: "Case Studies" (2000).

⁹⁷ Klotz, Audie: Ibid.

contained president Islam Karimov wilfully attempts to conduct policy politically and militarily independent from Russia). At the same time, the dimension of linkage that is differs the most among post-Soviet republics is cultural. Although there are obvious similarities in behavior between all post-Soviet republics (including, of course, Russia), determined primarily by the common Soviet past, the Central Asian, Caucasian and Eastern European post-Soviet countries have two significantly different cultural patterns – language and religion. As stated above, I bear in mind the idea that in order to learn more from the single case I should select one that would provide for best representation of Russian linkage. For this purpose I need to select a country, which has closest religious and language ties with Russia (or at least a considerably large population of ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers).⁹⁸ Apparently, the two criterion set above are met best by Ukraine and Moldova (though the Moldovan language is Romanian *per se*, the country has a large population of ethnic Russians and even more of those, who speak Russian as native language).⁹⁹

These two countries could both be good cases for the analysis, as all patterns of the critical phenomenon, that is, dimensions of linkage, are well present there. In the recent years, both states are experiencing a dramatic clash of the external factors influencing their internal situation and political orientations, which has urged scholars to pay greater attention to these countries. However, one should not forget that concept of linkage-leverage nexus sets two descriptive factors for the case – in addition to linkage, leverage must be observed. Today, both Moldova and Ukraine are subjects to the Russian intensive leverage generated practically from all dimensions of Russia's linkage. Moreover, the countries are under pressure of Moscow's *hard* leverage, i.e. their sovereignty as well as authority of the ruling elite is contested. Such a situation is a result of a new round of geopolitical rivalry between the Western countries and Russia for the influence in the Eastern Europe. The current confrontation has reached its most tense phase since the collapse of the bipolar world order. Having greater geostrategic and economic importance than Moldova, Ukraine became the main target for the two poles of regional influence. The recent grave developments that still continue in the country attract enormous attention from the international media and thus are used for propagandist purposes by Russia and its Western counterparts. This significantly distorts the information space around Ukraine and along with rapidly changing chain of events seriously complicates gathering research material on this country.

⁹⁸ Indeed, the Russian population is diverse by itself comprising various ethnic groups practicing different religions and speaking different languages. However, it is common for Russian political elite to say that ethnic Russian people and Russian culture “drive Russia's nation's development” (see, for a prominent example, Vladimir Putin's speech at Russian Popular Front conference, 5.12.2013, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6371> (last access 12.12.2013).

⁹⁹ The estimations are based on Population census 2004: Demographic, national, language and cultural characteristics: Population by nationalities, mother tongue and language usually spoken, National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234> (last access 15.09.2013).

The information space around Moldova is also agitated but considerably less so and therefore it provides better opportunities to conduct a balanced case study. Moreover, the Russian linkage-leverage nexus in Moldova functions within the environment complicated by a ‘frozen conflict’ issue and generally problematic Moldovan stateness. This is an important aspect as the similar stateness issues are common for many post-Soviet states, including also Ukraine. Thus, the Moldovan case has good prospects for further comparisons with other cases of the region. For this purpose it would be important to look not only for deviants in the case but also ordinary happenings and settings. In this regard, Stake refers to H. Blumer, who calls for researchers to develop and use the distinctive features in order to detect and study the common.¹⁰⁰ That appears to be a kind of an inductive process of reasoning, by which a general conclusion is drawn from a set of distinctive premises of the critical phenomenon.

It is important to understand that a case study as such is not a method but rather a form and framework of research, or to put in Stake’s words “a case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what to be studied”.¹⁰¹ Each case requires its own methodological approach, but this study has a feature that allows me to speak about inter-methodological approach. As we already know from the discussions above, linkage-leverage is many-patterned as it has different dimensions, and I see that each of these patterns/dimensions can be an individual case requiring a particular method for its study.

Most of the dimensions are institutionalized and materialized in concrete policy practices, which can be well observed by *process tracing*, I mean here primarily economic, security and political dimensions. Others are aimed more at formation or maintaining of certain discourses, identities, fake consciousness, or shaping preferences and desires, and can be revealed better by *techniques of language studies*. I understand that one can see these two methodologies epistemologically divergent as process tracing is more traditional for positivist-empiricist scholars and language techniques, especially if they imply narrative and discourse analysis, are widely used by constructivists. Incidentally, Jeffrey Checkel, one of the prominent theorists of process tracing, notes that the latter is split as some of them appear to support use of process tracing in their tradition and others are very sceptical about it.¹⁰²

The two methodological approaches can and should be combined when we study such a multi-patterned social and political phenomenon as linkage-leverage nexus, dimension range of which includes social, political, economic, security, information and cultural links and the same

¹⁰⁰ Stake, Robert E.: “Case Studies” (2000).

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Checkel, Jeffrey T.: “Process tracing”, in: Klotz, Audie & Prakash, Deepa (eds.): *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 – pp. 114-127.

dimensions of leverage. The constructivist tradition will be more evident in the studying of cultural, information and social dimensions of the linkage-leverage nexus. I support Checkel's argument that the methodological framework combining textual and process tracing approaches would "fill the vast methodological space between positivism and post-structuralism".¹⁰³ I am also certain that practical application of this methodological understanding, especially in studying such phenomenon as the linkage-leverage nexus, can contribute to dialectical approximation of structuralism and agent-centrism as well as to further debate on manifestation and nature of power.

3.2. Process tracing

Linkage-leverage nexus as a causal process

The linkage-leverage nexus can be viewed as a causal mechanism, the function of which results in 'power-shaped' outcome, leverage, derived from an independent variable presented by linkage. Many political scientists argue that the best way to identify, validate and test causal chains is to employ a method of process tracing.¹⁰⁴ According to Jeffrey Checkel, this method can move researchers "beyond unproductive 'either/or' meta-theoretical debates to empirical applications where both agents and structures matter".¹⁰⁵ Thus, the method is fully in line with the epistemological purpose of the present research endeavour, namely bringing closer agent-centred and structuralist approaches to study of power in asymmetrical relations between dominant and dependent actors of international relations. At the same time, it should once again be noted that methodologically process tracing traditionally distances itself from constructivist epistemological assumptions as it is strongly rooted in empiricist and (post)positivist thinking.¹⁰⁶ Eventually this divergence between the two epistemologies provokes a clash of assumptions that can affect the *convincingness* of the process tracers in the eyes of constructivists. In this section, I explicate in detail how the method can test suppositions presented in the theoretical chapters above and also find a point where constructivist and positivist epistemologies intersect.

First of all, process tracing, being a theory-testing and theory-building method, fits well into case study, which, as outlined above, is the analytical framework for this research. The fact that process tracing is compatible with and complementary to a case study is highlighted by both case study and process tracing theorists.¹⁰⁷ The primary advantage of process tracing application is that it

¹⁰³ Checkel, Jeffrey T.: "Process tracing" (2008).

¹⁰⁴ See Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods* (2013).

¹⁰⁵ Checkel, Jeffrey T.: *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Here I draw upon critical discussions of Reilly, Rosemary C.: "Process tracing", in: *Encyclopedia of case study research*, Los Angeles, London: Sage, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Among the theorists, who advocate process tracing as a proper method to study cases in regard to evaluation of casual processes, are Audie Klotz ("Case selection", 2008), Rosemary Reilly (*Ibid.*), Jeffrey Checkel (*Ibid.*); Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun (*Ibid.*) and Alexander George & Andrew Bennett (*Case studies and Theory*

provides a detailed analysis of how a phenomenon evolves through time from particular initial conditions to a specific outcome. The method reveals in dynamic causal mechanism that connects cause and outcome, i.e. independent and dependent variables.

Set of hypotheses

The research employing the process tracing method, as well as other theory-testing methods, begins with a theoretical explanation of social change in focus of the research. The theoretical explanation of the causal mechanism of the linkage-leverage nexus in Russian foreign policy was presented in the previous chapters of this paper. *The leading hypothesis* is that a regional asymmetrical model of cooperation implies a process, where the leverage of external influence can be generated through multidimensional linkage involving various ties connecting dependent actor to its powerful partner. *The complementary hypotheses* bring the mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus to concrete outcome of the causal process. Hypothetically, in the linkage-leverage nexus the leverage acquires two main forms that could be called for convenience *soft* and *hard* in accordance to effect they cause. While soft leverage does not openly undermine sovereignty of the actor under ‘attack’, hard leverage directly undermines sovereignty of the target state by making use of internal problems relating to *stateness issues*, and that may result in questioning the legitimacy of local government, weakening its authority and the intensification of centrifugal tendencies leading to conflicts at the region-centre axis. The linkage-leverage nexus’ activity can be classified as *potential* that threatens the target actor with a cutting links beneficial and essential to it and as *actual* that implements the threats into concrete foreign policy actions actually cutting off these links.

There are also a number of assumptions aimed at disclosing non-causal relations between linkage and leverage. I assume that linkage and leverage acts in such a way that provides mutual support – ideally, they tend to the maximal consistency of acts. Linkage creates an environment within society in a target state, in which leverage would be most effective, and in its turn, sophisticated use of leverage means exerting its power as to not harm those links. It is important to preserve the external influence among representatives of civil society and the elite loyal to the intervening actor. All in all, the final goal of linkage-leverage nexus is to make the linkage of the powerful actor into a dependent state (or at least to its regions or social and/or political groups favouring the external influence) denser than before. Therefore, we can speak about circuit causal process.

Development in the Social Sciences, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005). All these scholars are theorists of methodology of social studies and, of course, cannot be divided strictly into two methodological groups – case study researchers or process tracers – as both represent positivist tradition and closely interact.

The role of process tracing in regard to these developments is to trace relations of linkage and leverage and eventually identify (or not) the linkage-leverage nexus as such a circuit causal process. The tracing of process helps to grade dimensions of the linkage-leverage nexus in respect to their ‘fundamentality’ in creating most effective policy of dominant actor towards its weak partner in asymmetrically interdependent relationship. In this regard, I wonder whether ‘cultural determinism’ fits to this process and assumption that cultural dimension of Russian linkage and leverage plays a decisive role in creation of the country’s high-capacity foreign policy instruments is right.

In addition to the theory-testing function, process tracing can acquire a theory-building function.¹⁰⁸ This functional aspect of the method is used in my analysis, too. Based on the results of process tracing of Russian linkage-leverage nexus I intend to draw a conclusion on the ways how linkage is instrumentalized into leverage and how leverage is operationalized to achieve concrete foreign policy goals. In general, I expect that process tracing would reveal the causal chain of consequent transformations of links between two countries into leverage, and this causal process should manifest in specific policy practices (actions) as well as the representative force (texts/speeches) of the dominant party that exerts power on the leadership and the population of the target state in order to change its political orientation.

A moment when language techniques and process tracing approximate

At the moment, when observing the transformation of linkage, especially informational, social and cultural, into leverage, language techniques can be applied to study leverage, as in this case it often acquires a form of representational force. The representational force is defined by Janice Mattern “as a nonphysical but nevertheless coercive form of power that it is exercised through language”.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore:

Representational force is a form of power that operates through the structure of a speaker’s narrative representation of ‘reality’. Specifically, a narrative expresses representational force when it is organised in such a way that it threatens the audience with unthinkable harm unless it submits, in word and in deed, to the terms of the speaker’s viewpoint.¹¹⁰

Thus the representational force in the context of the linkage-leverage nexus is rather potential leverage, i.e. a leverage that poses only a threat of cutting links to the country that are essential for the target audience without actually cutting them. However, only potential leverage it does not mean that the representational force cannot be *hard*. I suppose that it becomes ‘hard’ when,

¹⁰⁸ Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods* (2013).

¹⁰⁹ Mattern, Janice Bially: “Why ‘Soft Power’ Isn’t So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics”, in: *Millennium-Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2005.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

by utilizing primarily social, information, and cultural links it creates or activates certain identities and establishes certain discourses, which contradict the political orientation of the state leadership; and thus it triggers conflicts between the government and social/political groups loyal to external actor. Eventually, such a representational force, as a form of external pressure, undermines the government's authority and sovereignty. Such a 'power-shaped' outcome caused by linkage, fits well into the casual chain that is traced in this research.

Eventually, leverage may appear to be a kind of sociolinguistically produced force. By saying this I mean that it constructs (by means of language) 'reality' that would shape preferences of local people or widen their identities and personal reasoning in a way favourable for the power-wielder. Thus, the leverage manifests in textual and verbal accounts produced primarily by officials, politicians, certain experts, civilian activists and the media of, or loyal to, the external actor exerting influence on its dependent partner. Therefore, while searching within accounts of these agents, a researcher needs to look for narratives producing leverage in the form of representational force, which in our case becomes an element/part of the causal mechanism of the linkage-leverage nexus.

Causal analytical storytelling and time-framing

The circuit process of sequent transformations of linkage into leverage is presented in this research in form of analytical narratives, i.e. I tell 'stories' that are intended to explain a causal mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus. The analytical narratives present my own interpretative 'construct of the reality' of the Russian-Moldovan asymmetric interdependent relations, viewed through the lens of the analytical framework for the investigation of the linkage-leverage nexus in Russia's policy toward Moldova. Rosemary Reilly describes analytical narrative as following: it "functions as an explanation in which the movement through time and space of the process or event under investigation is deliberately couched in an analytic framing of interactions with the dynamics that will explain the phenomenon of interest".¹¹¹ She stresses that to construct an explicit sequence of events, which constitutes the process, is difficult, because "it requires a precise conceptualization of the types of events that created the causal chain, as well as those that did not".¹¹²

In my case, the types of events lay within the dimensions of linkage. Thus, I try to observe all relevant events that create the causal chain of the linkage-leverage nexus, and primarily political actions and texts aimed at the instrumentalization of Russian multidimensional links with Moldova to produce leverage. In order to create an accessible picture of the causalities I explain the analytical 'stories' apart, describing dimensions separately. The social and cultural ties connecting the Russian and Moldovan people are highly dense, due to the centuries-old interaction between the two

¹¹¹ Reilly, Rosemary C.: "Process tracing" (2010).

¹¹² Ibid.

societies. Therefore, it would be rational to combine these two dimensions of linkage into one, including information as a link that is closely associated with them. I also combine security and political dimensions into one analytical narrative because they both represent intergovernmental interaction between Russia and Moldova, and to a large scale are related to the Transnistrian settlement. Accordingly, the analysis presents three narratives: military-political, economic and socio-cultural. To maintain a ‘bigger picture’ all the analytical narratives are cross-referenced. Each of them has a ‘powerful end’, in which leverage emerges, and so every narrative is dual – *hard* and *soft*.

Sticking to time in causal storytelling is very important. The starting time-point for this case study differs according to analytical ‘stories’. Reilly in this regard notes that the issue of the starting point is very contentious. She finds that “some researchers begin their process trace in moments of critical junctures, whereas others argue that only contingent events can trigger path-dependent processes”.¹¹³ I believe that Russian foreign policy is dependent on ‘explosions’, radical changes, in international, regional and domestic politics. The recent ‘explosion’ that pushed the pendulum of Russian policy is associated with implementation of the EU’s EaP initiative targeted at the post-Soviet space. The starting point of the process tracing is 2009, defined by the evolution of the EaP that prompted Russia to adjust its foreign policy. At the same time, bearing in mind that linkages are not created overnight but sometimes go back decades and centuries. I go back to the early periods only if that linkage has accumulated for the subsequent (after 2009) production of leverage.

As for the end point, Reilly argues that it is easy to establish, “since it is determined by the outcome of interest”.¹¹⁴ Checkel, however, is against this argument: he finds the stopping point issue very difficult because in process tracing it is always hard to know when to stop – “how micro to go?”.¹¹⁵ I have set a time scope for how far to go back to ‘history’ of the casual mechanism. Thus, more or less I have decided on the ‘historical’ stopping point. Looking at this matter in broader terms, one could indicate the problem of the tangibility of outcomes of the causal process as the end point of Russian actions. The linkage-leverage nexus as a basis of Russian foreign policy is a dynamic process rather a linear way to obtain one particular foreign policy objective. Instead of looking for the achievements of Russian actions in the sense of connecting Moldova to the main Russian-led integration projects (in the long-term objective) or preventing ‘EU-ization’ and ‘NATO-ization’ of the country (as a medium-term objective), this study considers individual manifestations of Russian leverage generated through linkage to Moldova as actual outcomes of the linkage-leverage nexus to be a causal process.

¹¹³ Reilly, Rosemary C.: “Process tracing” (2010).

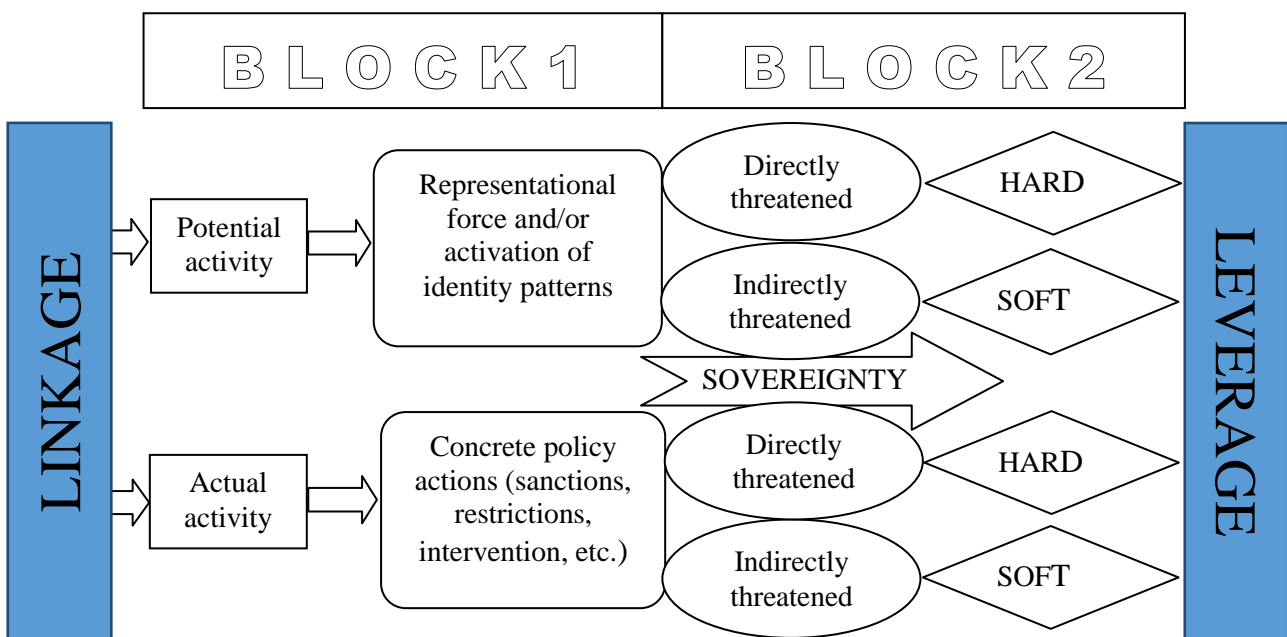
¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Checkel, Jeffrey T.: “Process tracing” (2008).

Schematic representation of the application of the method of process-tracing

The general task of the theory-testing process tracing is to validate (or not) the conceptual idea about what happens between the initial point (X) and outcome (Y) of the single process they are involved in. To clarify, in our case X is linkage and Y is leverage. The conceptualized causal mechanism of translating linkage into leverage is called nexus of linkage and leverage. According to the conceptualization, the causal mechanism includes two main activities of an external intervening actor: potential (aimed at the creation of ‘fear’ to lose important links and realized through exerting representational force or activation of certain identity patterns) and actual (a real cut of links implemented through concrete policy actions). Eventually, each of these activities may lead to hard and soft types of leverage, i.e. directly threatened (reinforced threat of separatism) and indirectly threatened (or not-threatened) sovereignty. The causal process can be divided into two interconnected blocks that are individually insufficient, but are necessary parts of the causal mechanism: instrumentalization of linkage (Block 1) and its impact on state sovereignty (Block 2). This guideline is relevant for all three types of ‘stories’ – military-political, economic and socio-cultural – that I tell in form of analytical narrative, defined by Dereck Beach and Rasmus Pedersen as “a tool used in the congruence method to structure a temporal analysis of correlations between X and Y during a historical process in a single case”.¹¹⁶ The block-scheme of the causal mechanism of linkage and leverage nexus is presented in Figure 1. For each of the analytical narratives an individual scheme is created and presented in form of tables including specific examples of transformation of Russian linkage to leverage at the each part of the causal mechanism.

Figure 1. Causal mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus



¹¹⁶ Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods* (2013) – p. 180.

Research material

There is a common understanding among process tracers that the data used for this method is qualitative by nature. However, in the present study I also include some statistics and make certain calculations in order to see how dense are given types of linkage between Russia and Moldova. Other sources in the research are overwhelmingly qualitative and secondary, including interviews on open access, analytical and historical reports, media accounts, documents, public statements, and minutes. In addition, I conducted two expert interviews regarding the theme of the research as a supplement source of information. I attribute the information acquired from the interviews to secondary material because the respondents are observers and not direct participants in the events that could have impact on the causal chain under investigation.¹¹⁷ The observers are well-known Moldovan foreign policy analysts. The interviews can be called “semi-structured” as the categories were created by the responders but the thematic field of the discussion was set by the interviewer. This format of interview gives flexibility and so, chance for new discoveries. A guideline of conducting interview is a methodology developed by Jack Douglas who works with the situational factors involved. His “creative interviewing” is purposefully situated interviewing, that embraces the immediate, concrete situation, tries to understand how it is affecting what is communicated, and by understanding these effects, changes the interviewer’s communication processes to increase the discovery of the truth.¹¹⁸ Understanding these general communication processes and then working with them more effectively help to discover truth and avoids any self-bias of the experts.

According to Beach and Pedersen, the interviewed observer can be biased toward a particular theory of which way the events happened, and that along with the imperfection of human memory would decrease the accuracy of the analysis. Therefore the careful use of triangulation across different kinds of sources is needed.¹¹⁹ Triangulation is an important driven force for the methodological construction of my research. It is important to emphasize that I do not rely on interviews alone: they are just a small component of the source base. Checkel noted that to assert plausibly a causal role of a mechanism under investigation requires “multiple data streams” (i.e. triangulation across various sources).¹²⁰ Triangulation is used in the research not only to improve reliability of interviews; in general, it is an important tool “to assess and potentially to correct for measurement error, contingent on the different sources being independent of each other”.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods* (2013) – P. 133; and also Aalto, Pami: lecture on “Interview methods”, within the course: *Major Methodological Orientations in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, lecture, University of Tampere, 28.09.2011.

¹¹⁸ Douglas, Jack D.: *Creative interviewing*, Beverly Hills, London, New Delhi: SAGE, 1985 – p. 22.

¹¹⁹ Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods* (2013) – pp. 134-135.

¹²⁰ Checkel, Jeffrey T.: “Process tracing” (2008).

¹²¹ Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Ibid.* – p.140.

4. Analytical narratives about Russian policy toward Moldova

The geographic location determined Moldova's position at the crossroads of different poles of attraction and influence, which means that the changes in Moldovan foreign policy have implications for regional politics. In 2003, the Moldovan leadership made a clear choice for the European integration and started its long journey towards integration with the EU. In June 2014, Chisinau signed the Association Agreement, which opened the door to European structures even wider. This course of approximation with the EU, however, is perceived in Russia as contradicting its foreign policy interests.

Since Russia's special concern in Moldova is related to the historical region of Bessarabia, Moscow associates the Europeanization of Moldova with the two processes: NATO enlargement and the 'Romanization'. As for the latter, the rhetoric of the Romanian president Traian Basescu about "reunification" of Romania and Moldova within the EU touches upon "Russian national feelings related to the destiny of Bessarabia as an integral part of Russian civilization space".¹²² However, the main Russian concerns relate to the NATO issue. The Russian leadership has long perceived Moldova as a buffer zone to the EU and NATO expansion into the East: if Moldova came under Western influence, the expansion to Ukraine becomes much easier (thus opening the possibility of a 'chain reaction' for other post-Soviet participants of the EaP). In this situation, Moldova has been a 'frontline' of the rivalry between Russia and West over Ukraine, which made Transdnistria, a pro-Russian breakaway region in Moldova, Moscow's main 'outpost'.

An important feature in this respect which needs to be especially emphasized is the fact that the existence of a frozen conflict on Moldovan territory appears to be a serious obstacle for further integration with the EU and NATO structures. The Transdnistrian issue has been long a characteristic of Moldova's dialogue practically with all international and regional actors. Russia has a special position in this respect: its early and direct involvement in the settlement of conflict made it possible for Moscow to form an advantageous linkage to Moldova in form of a significant military presence that no any other partner of Chisinau possesses so far. Military presence is an essential line of a 'big story' not only of the Russian military and political linkage to Moldova but, generally, of the entire Russian linkage-leverage nexus as instrument of influence on Chisinau. The development of the conflict has at large determined Moscow's policy toward Moldova as well as the 'fate' of the Moldovan state itself. Therefore, the first analytical narrative of the present analysis is about politico-military dimension of linkage, which is largely built upon this complicating factor of the Russian-Moldovan relationship.

¹²² Девятков Андрей: «Перед вызовом европеизации: политика России в Приднестровском урегулировании (1992-2012)» [Devyatkov, Andrey.: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization: Russia's policy in the Transnistrian settlement (1992-2012)*] Tyumen: Publishing house of the Tyumen State University, 2012 – p.114.

4.1. Politico-military dimensions

4.1.1. Hard leverage

Security has been the most important aspects of the development of Moldova as an independent state. During the Soviet time the security issues were solved in Moscow, but with the dissolution of the USSR the new independent republic started looking for an alternative to Moscow's protectorate.¹²³ The Moldovan leadership made a clear decision not to cooperate in the security sphere with Russia.¹²⁴ The country does not participate in the most advanced organization of military integration of the post-Soviet countries, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). As for the military structures of the CIS, Moldova is not engaged in important military component as the Joint CIS Air Defence System, and has only status of observer in the CIS Defence Ministers' Council. Perhaps, the most salient CIS security structures that could have at least some influence on foreign policy decisions in the security sphere of its member-countries, in which Moldova takes part, is the Council of CIS Border Force Commanders and the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre. The low integration into the common security space of the CIS is, however, compensated for the security linkage of Russia to Moldova by the presence of Russian troops on Moldovan territory.

In 1956 the Soviet 14th army was deployed in Moldavskaya SSR including the territory of Transdnistria. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the army remained, albeit considerably reduced, to guard stores of weapons and ammunition left from the strategic arsenal of the former Soviet Western Military District. In June-July 1992, Moldovan military forces attempted to restore jurisdiction over the left bank of the Dniester and that resulted in the violent military confrontation. The 14th Russian army, which was stationing on the territory of Moldova as a successor of the former Soviet 14th army, interfered into the conflict. This interference ceased the escalation and since then the *status quo* has been preserved. Russia's policy did not promote the conflict situation in Moldova as such, but the Soviet weapons of the 14th army served as the means of warfare, and namely Russia played the key role in saving physical existence of a political subject, the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR).¹²⁵ Thus, unintentionally or not, but the Russian 14th army's interference in the conflict supported separatist forces.

Based on this event, one may say that it was the first time when the post-Soviet Russia openly instrumentalized its military linkage and gained hard leverage over Moldova, though I have doubts whether Russian leadership during that difficult time for its political future, seriously

¹²³ Moldovan Expert W, 29.05.2012, Tampere, Finland.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – pp. 12-33.

thought about maintaining Russia's presence in the region. In fact, during the first years after the end of military stage of the Transdniestrian conflict Russia viewed the conflict in the context of the withdrawal of the former Soviet 14th army. It is evident by the ceasefire agreement ("On Principles of a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Transdniestrian Region of the Republic of Moldova") signed by Russia and Moldova on July 21 1992, which says that: "*Questions about the status of the army, procedure and time interval of a stage-by-stage withdrawal shall be determined in the course of negotiations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova*".¹²⁶

Even though this wording is quite vague, it shows that Moscow was ready to discuss this issue by that time. However, later Russia developed so-called "strategy of synchronization" of the political settlement and the withdrawal of the 14th army. The Russian expert on the Transdniestrian conflict Andrey Devyatkov notes that initially, during the elaboration of the Russian-Moldovan agreement on the army withdrawal in 1993-1994, Moscow bounded up the two issues rather because there was no full confidence that few hundreds of peacekeeping soldiers will be able to contain the renewal of the military conflict. The Kremlin also clearly understood that the Transdniestrian leadership, supported by local people, would do everything to preclude the withdrawal as the army is important factor for their political independence, and even for physical survival, and the independent-minded and charismatic commander of the 14th army, General Aleksander Lebed, will support them.¹²⁷ In addition, on March 26, 1995, there was a referendum on the presence of the 14th Russian army on the territory of Transdniestria. More than 90% of voters voted "for" the presence of Russian troops in the PMR. Thus, it was obvious that the issue of the withdrawal could not be solved at once.

In 1995 the preparations for the first rounds of NATO enlargement began, and in this connection "the strategy of synchronization" started transforming into an instrument of influence on the foreign policy direction of Moldova.¹²⁸ In 1995, the 14th Army was reorganized into the Operational Group of Russian Forces in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova (OGRF) to continue guarding the ammunition depots, and one of its battalions fulfilling peacekeeping mission in accordance with the international agreement. Thus, the presence of Russian military on the territory of Moldova has consolidated, and that encroaches directly on the sovereignty of the Moldovan state. The developments of the first half of the 1990s were the start of the transformation of Russian military linkage into hard leverage over Moldova.

¹²⁶ Agreement on principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova, 21 July 1992, translation available at: <http://www.stefanwolff.com/files/Russian-Moldovan-Ceasefire-Agreement.pdf> (last access 14.09.2013).

¹²⁷ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – pp. 34-35.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* – p. 38.

Nevertheless, under the pressure of ‘the international community’ as well as for simple economic considerations Russia showed a will to withdraw the troops, and in 1994-1997 Moscow made a number of attempts to find political solution acceptable for Tiraspol and Chisinau and at the same time accelerated reduction of strength and armaments of the 14th army.¹²⁹ However, the procrastination of resolving the Transdnestrian issue, including the army withdrawal, played into the hands of Transdnestrians, who in 1995 finished the formation of their main state institutions. Their orientation towards independence or at least the soft confederation with Chisinau became official state ideology once and for all.¹³⁰ Eventually, the Russian military presence was an important factor of the emergence of the Transdnestrian statehood.

In 1990s, military factor played essential role in the development of the process. However, starting in the beginning of 2000s, the ‘realpolitik’ came to proscenium of the negotiation arena. In 2001-2002, Russia began to implement its ‘Istanbul Obligations’ in exchange for the creation of international regime of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), which was supposed to be a cornerstone of the European security policy. Under these obligations all *CFE limited* arms and equipment were to be withdrawn or destroyed by the end of 2001 and all Russian troops to be withdrawn by the end of 2002. The Russian Defence Ministry adopted the decision to liquidate OGRF, and despite fierce resistance from PMR authorities and with support of the OSCE began the withdrawal of military equipment and troops. The equipment withdrawal was completed on schedule but Russia failed to meet the deadline for withdrawal of troops.¹³¹ The Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Grigory Karasin, stressed that “*when in 2001-2003 appropriate conditions were created, we removed more than 40 railway wagons with ammunition and military equipment*”.¹³² An important factor that undermined “the appropriate conditions” for the withdrawal was the unwillingness of the US, the EU and other NATO members to cooperate with Russia on security issues. It was evident by the refusal to link the CFE ratification in their countries and complete withdrawal of the former 14th army. At the same time, the insistence of the US and EU on implementing the ‘Istanbul Obligations’ assumed by Russia created an impression in Moscow that the West will not let Russia play any substantial role in the future European security.¹³³

In 2003, Moscow initiated secret talks with the then president of Moldova, Vladimir Voronin, and the sides agreed to the memorandum presupposing asymmetrical federalization of the

¹²⁹ Hill, William H.: *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West: Lessons from the Moldova-Transdnestria Conflict*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012; Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* – p. 128.

¹³¹ “Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transdnestria”, *ICG Europe Report*, No. 157, 17.06.2004.

¹³² Interview with State Secretary - Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Grigory Karasin, *RIA*, 18.06.2013, <http://old.rian.ru/interview/20130618/944201121.html>.

¹³³ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – pp. 73-74, 129.

country that was proposed by the Russian envoy on the settlement process, Dmitry Kozak. But Voronin at the ultimate moment, and after consultations with representatives from the US and EU, drew back from the 'deal'. When the talks were revealed the Western countries accused Russia of its intentions to preserve its influence in the region. As evidence of these Russian aspirations, they pointed out Moscow's proposal (in response to Transdniestrian demand on military guarantees) to maintain Russian-led peacekeeping operation with 2,000 Russian troops (more than the then size of OGRF) until 2020, albeit with possible participation of Ukrainian troops and international observers.¹³⁴ Apparently, Kozak's task was to achieve the final political settlement under the aegis of Russia and extend the presence of the Russian military contingent, as a basis of the guaranteeing operation in order to restore Russian leading positions in determining the future of the unified Moldovan state.

According to Andrey Devyatkov, the signing of the Memorandum was explicitly undermined by the Western pressure on Moldova as Russia's unilateral diplomacy caused negative reaction of the EU, the US and OSCE. However, there scarcely were other alternatives for Chisinau and Tiraspol that also could lead to unification of the two banks of the Dniester River. The scholar believes that without taking into account realities of the actual existence of the independent state of PMR the representatives of OSCE, EU and US took quite the same one-sided actions: viewing Russia's efforts only as negative, they made Moldovan president understand that after the signing of the Memorandum his political future and Moldova's European future will be seriously questioned.¹³⁵ William Hill, the former Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova in 1999-2006, also notes that the Western countries, in general, deny the Russian independent diplomatic and political role in the region.¹³⁶

In the response to the actions of the EU, OSCE, and the US, Moscow suspended the withdrawal of military equipment and troops.¹³⁷ The strategy of synchronizing the withdrawal of armaments and troops with a political settlement of the conflict remains on the agenda of Russian policy in the Transdniestrian settlement, and Russian officials constantly repeat that there are still no 'appropriate conditions' for the withdrawal of OGRF as far as the political settlement is locked.¹³⁸ Moreover, since 2012 in accordance with the general plan of modernization of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, Russia's Defence Ministry began upgrading and refitting OGRF

¹³⁴ "Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transdniestria", (2004).

¹³⁵ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – p. 92.

¹³⁶ Hill, William H.: *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West* (2012).

¹³⁷ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Ibid.* – p. 93.

¹³⁸ See, for example, Interview with State Secretary - Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Grigory Karasin, (2013).

with modern weapons and military equipment.¹³⁹ All in all, the preservation of Russian military presence in the Moldovan breakaway region became an important form of linkage for Russia to generate a powerful instrument of influence on Moldovan authorities. The presence of OGRF contradicts Moldova's Constitution, which bans the stationing of foreign troops on its territory,¹⁴⁰ and at the same time explicitly supports the Transdniestrian secessionist government. Such a situation directly threatens Moldova's sovereignty and thus, forms Russian hard leverage toward this post-Soviet republic.

The next period of the development of Russian political linkage-leverage nexus began in 2005, when Moldova unilaterally adopted the Law on the Transdniestrian status that provided the possibility of establishing “*an autonomous territorial unit with special legal status*” – Transdniestria – after the implementation of conditions listed in subsection (2) of Article 1 of the law: demilitarization, in particular, the withdrawal of troops and armaments of the Russian Federation, and “*formation of democratically elected government*”.¹⁴¹ Devyatkov notes that the EU did not criticize Moldova's action towards Transdniestria, which in fact appeared to be evidence of the revival of Chisinau's centralist policy.¹⁴² This caused concrete retaliatory actions of Transdniestria, who in 2006 held a referendum which posed two questions:

1. Do you support the course towards the independence of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and the subsequent free association with the Russian Federation?
2. Do you consider it possible to renounce independence of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic and subsequently become part of the Republic of Moldova?

Expectedly, 97.2 % of citizens of Transdniestria, who took part in the referendum, were in favour and only 1.9 % of voters voted against independence and subsequent accession with the Russian Federation. Answering the alternative question, 94.9 % of voters said “no”, while only 3.3 % approved the possibility to renounce independence and consequent integration with Moldova.¹⁴³

The official representatives of Moldova as well as the US, the EU, the Council of Europe, Romania, Ukraine and the OSCE stated in advance that they do not recognize the referendum as legal. Moscow officially did not announce recognition of the legitimacy of the referendum either.

¹³⁹ Briefing by Evgeny Shevchuk and Dmitry Rogozin following results of the meeting in Tiraspol, *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik Pridnestrov'ya* No.2 (8), December 2012 (in Rus.).

¹⁴⁰ Constitution of Republic of Moldova, 29.07.1994, <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?id=311496&lang=2>, (last access 01.03.2014).

¹⁴¹ Law No. 173 On the basic principles of the legal status of localities on the left bank of the Dniester (Transdniestria), 22 July 2005, <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=313004&lang=2> (last access 28.05.2014).

¹⁴² Devyatkov, Andrey.: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – p. 101.

¹⁴³ «ЦИК Приднестровья обнародовал окончательные итоги референдума» [“Transdniestrian CEC announces final referendum results”], *RIA*, 26.09.2006, <http://ria.ru/politics/20060926/54271059.html>.

On the eve of the voting day the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, very carefully interpreted the referendum. He said that the plebiscite is “*probably a desire to draw attention to the fact that the situation is not resolved*”. He also stressed that the referendum in Transdniestria is a reaction to a virtual blockade, which affects the economy and people of this region, adding that the essence of the event “*is the need to return to the negotiating table.*”¹⁴⁴ Later commenting on the results Lavrov said that “*they were predictable*” and “*this is but one more confirmation of the thesis that conflicts ought to be settled on the basis of the fulfilment of all the existing agreements*”.¹⁴⁵ He also noted that Transdniestrian referendum is a counter-step to unilateral actions of Moldova, meaning, first of all, the aforementioned law on the status of Transdniestria.¹⁴⁶

However, this modest official Russian position does not mean that the Kremlin ignored the referendum. The plebiscite demonstrated solid support of local population for the Russian policy and so legitimized it, and this became a “powerful weapon” (if not practical than at least psychological) to influence the Moldovan political orientation and defend Russian interests from the attacks of external actors. Russian politicians made also concrete steps based on the results of referendum. On October 6, 2006 the Russian State Duma adopted a resolution on the recognition of Transdniestrian independence referendum legitimate. The State Duma called on the international community to allow for the outcome of the referendum. “*The State Duma considers that the Russian Federation should build its policy based on free will of the people of Pridnestrovie*”, says the statement.¹⁴⁷ The resolution was adopted unanimously by all 419 deputies present at the session.¹⁴⁸

Both the Moldovan law on the status of Transdniestria and the Transdniestrian referendum are two great obstacles to achieve any consensus on political status of the left bank of Dniester within the negotiation process. Russia has long insisted on the cancelation of the law by Moldovan legislators, otherwise there will be no serious progress in the political settlement.¹⁴⁹ At the same

¹⁴⁴ «Лавров: референдум в Приднестровье – реакция на фактическую блокаду» [“Lavrov: referendum in Transdniestria reaction to virtual blockade”], *RIA*, 15.09.2006, <http://ria.ru/politics/20060915/53909153.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Luis Amado After Their Talks, Lisbon, 18 September 2006, http://mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/59107B3E4741BA2EC32571EE003667B0?OpenDocument (last access 28.05.2014).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. and Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В. Лаврова, *PIA «Новости»* [Statements of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov, *RIA Novosti*], 3 October 2006, http://mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/F825D0C283952DACC32571FF002D50C2?OpenDocument (last access 28.05.2014).

¹⁴⁷ Statement of the State Duma of the Russian Federation On the Results of the Referendum in Transdniestria of September 17, 2006, adopted on 06.10.2006, *Palamentskaya gazeta*, No. 171, 12.10.2006.

¹⁴⁸ Minutes No. 304 of the State Duma Session, 06.10.2006.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador for Special Assignments, Sergey Gubarev, *Kommersant*, 28.05.2013, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/17258>; Ивашкина Ирина: «Россия поставила статус Приднестровья под вопрос» [Ivashkina, Irina: “Russia questions the status of Transdniestria”], *Kommersant*, 05.02.2014, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/25346>.

time Russia posed another important condition for compromises in the Transdniestrian settlement. Given the possibility of the Ukrainian and Georgian accession to NATO, Moscow began to consider Moldova as a “sanitation cordon”, which should secure Russia from complete isolation from the European security system. Thus, since 2006-2007 an arsenal of the Russian diplomacy in addition to “the synchronization principle” has been completed by the principle of Moldova’s “constitutional neutrality”, i.e. non-accession to NATO.¹⁵⁰ Officially, this policy is formulated as following: *Russia “will participate... in the settlement of the Transdniestria problem on the basis of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and neutral status of the Republic of Moldova while providing a special status for Transdniestria”*.¹⁵¹ Apparently, if one of these elements is absent, Russia cannot “respect” the others, and so the current position of Transdniestria will remain unchanged or rather can be changed in favour of the secessionist region. Russia has great concerns regarding the increasing influence of NATO in Moldova. The neutrality status enshrined in the Constitution of Moldova is not enough: Russian politicians understand that the constitution is not dogma and can be a subject to amendments. Therefore, the Russian leadership believes that a federative, or better confederative, Moldovan state unified with Transdniestria, which firmly opposes any close alliances with the West, is the best guarantee for Russia that Moldova would not fall under NATO’s influence.¹⁵²

In 2009, the EaP initiative of the EU began its active pulling-out of the Western post-Soviet republics from Russia’s orbit of influence. The EU involved Moldova into the EaP and initiated negotiations about the AA. Such process of ‘EU-ization’ causes two main concerns in Moscow: it opens a way for the expansion of NATO to the East and in case of Moldova to possible unification of the country with Romania under the EU, about which the Romanian president Traian Basescu repeatedly speaks.¹⁵³ The key figure, however, is NATO, whose military infrastructure’s approximation to the Russian border is traditionally perceived as an attempt to implement a project of “Europe without Russian participation”.¹⁵⁴ Russia’s policy in the Moldovan direction, especially after the accession of Romania and Bulgaria into NATO and the advent to power of the Alliance for European Integration in Moldova in 2009 (today succeeded by the Pro-European Coalition), is determined primarily by the interests to deterrent NATO enlargement. Therefore, the Russian

¹⁵⁰ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – pp. 106-107, 130.

¹⁵¹ Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2013.

¹⁵² Rogozin’s statements see: Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, No. 71 (4856), 20.04.2012.

¹⁵³ “Moldova may reunite with Romania in next 25 years – Basescu”, *RIA*, 30.11.2010, <http://en.ria.ru/world/20101130/161565516.html>; Interview transcript: Traian Basescu, president of Romania, *Financial Times*, 31.12.2010, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/2f1b77e8-06e0-11e0-8c29-00144feabdc0.html#axzz336GCHrPI>; “Romanian Foreign Minister criticizes President Basescu’s remarks on Moldova”, *ITAR-TASS*, 30.11.2013, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/709623>.

¹⁵⁴ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Ibid.* – p. 113.

official position on the Transdniestrian conflict settlement is linked with the neutrality status of Moldova.

With the increased understanding that the existing strategy is aimed at restraining Moldova from moving toward the EU and NATO is not effective enough, Russia made certain steps to demonstrate a more cooperative approach with the EU, including discontinuing its support, for the then intractable president of the PRM, Igor Smirnov. In June 2010, Russia and Germany signed the Meseberg Memorandum, which in fact was the last diplomatic effort of Moscow to anchor in the European security system. Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Dmitry Medvedev “*proposed to explore the establishment of an EU-Russian Political and Security Committee on ministerial level*” with the Transdniestrian conflict to become a major subject on the Committee’s agenda.¹⁵⁵ As it is known, the Memorandum failed and the Committee had never been set up. The testing ground, which was Transdniestria, has shown that the security dialogue between Russia and the EU is not possible in the present realities.

Following the failure of the Meseberg process, the Russian leadership has changed its approach to certain aspects of the Transdniestrian settlement. Moscow activated its mediating efforts and, in 2011, achieved the resumption of the talks between Tiraspol and Chisinau in 5+2 format after a five-year hiatus. In addition, Russia reiterated that independence of Transdniestria cannot be internationally recognized and reaffirmed its adherence to the principle of the territorial integrity of Moldova. Moscow also offered another encouraging signal for the European partners, namely its principal readiness to reform the format of the peacekeeping operation in Moldova and withdraw the troops from its territory, and probably substitute them for a police mission, i.e. to demilitarize the conflict zone, though with a stipulation that this can happen only after achieving an agreement on final settlement.¹⁵⁶ But the receiver of these signals, the EU, could not formulate solid position on its policy toward Russia, and the security dialogue between Moscow and Brussels came to an end without having started.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the increasing expansionist policy of the EU to the East continued and this forced Russia to take response actions along the entire former Soviet

¹⁵⁵ Memorandum (Meeting of the Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Dmitry Medvedev on June 4-5 2010 in Meseberg), <http://www.russianmission.eu/sites/default/files/user/files/2010-06-05-meseberg-memorandum.pdf> (last access 29.05.2014).

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Moldova, Valery Kuzmin, 09.12.2010, *AllMoldova*, <http://www.allmoldova.com/int/interview/valerii-kuzmin-091210.html> (in Rus); «МИД РФ выступил за «переформатирование» миротворчества в Приднестровье» [“Russian Foreign Ministry called for “reformatting” peacemaking in Transdniestria”], *RIA*, 29.03.2011, <http://ria.ru/politics/20110329/358935791.html>; «МИД РФ «видит» будущее Приднестровья в качестве «особого района» Молдавии» [“Russian Foreign Ministry ‘sees’ the future of Transdniestria as a ‘special district’ of Moldova”], *Regnum*, 29.07.2012, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/ukraina/1556184.html>; Interview with Russian Ambassador to Moldova, Farid Muhametshin, *ITAR-TASS*, 20.08.2012, <http://itar-tass.com/opinions/interviews/1278>.

¹⁵⁷ Moldovan Expert M (2012).

‘Western frontline’, and in particular, Moscow activated its strong political links and toughened its policy towards Moldova.

The contemporary tough policy on Moldova started taking shape with an appointment in March 2012 of a person with very nationalistic and straightforward rhetoric, Deputy Prime Minister and former Russian representative to NATO Dmitry Rogozin, a Special Representative of the Russian President on Transnistria and a Co-Chairman of Intergovernmental Committee on Economic Cooperation between Russia and Moldova. The appointment of such a politician, who as early as in March 2006, even before the Transnistrian referendum was held, urged to admit appeal of Transnistrian parliament to unite with the Russian Federation,¹⁵⁸ showed that the Kremlin needed active, rapid and decisive actions in this direction in order to preserve its regional influence. The Russian leadership decided to secure Russia’s interests by utilizing its solid position in the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, and this idea was well understood in Chisinau.¹⁵⁹ Moscow attempted to get ahead of the EU and take over the initiative in order to incline Moldova with Russia-initiated Eurasian integration. The rhetoric of Dmitry Rogozin and other Russian officials who deal with the Transnistrian issue can be boiled down to a message addressed to Chisinau that the final and main decision on the future of Moldovan territorial integrity is up to Moldova itself, but if Chisinau continues to move to Euro-Atlantic direction then it should forget about the unified state.¹⁶⁰

In his statements Rogozin points out that in case of Moldovan accession to NATO and/or its unification with Romania, Russia will re-consider its position on the recognition of the independence of Transnistria. He also stresses that the integration to the EU cannot be supported by Tiraspol. The Russian deputy prime minister believes that the AA with the EU is “a handle of the door to NATO” and openly warns Moldovan government of possible grave consequences for territorial integrity of the state in case it signs the agreement. Thus, the meaning of such rhetoric is that the current political orientation of the Moldovan ruling elite must be renounced; otherwise there is a possibility that no single state will be within the present Moldovan borders (still officially

¹⁵⁸ «Приднестровье должно быть включено в состав России» [“Transnistria should become a part of Russia”], *Kommersant Plus*, 30.03.2012, <http://arhiv.kommersant.press.md/russia/5204-l-r.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Moldovan Expert M (2012).

¹⁶⁰ For the most illustrative examples of Rogozin’s statements see: Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, 20.04.2012; Meeting between President of the PMR Evgeny Shevchuk and Deputy Chairperson of the Government of the Russian Federation, Special Representative of the Russian President for Pridnestrovie Dmitry Rogozin and Briefing by Evgeny Shevchuk and Dmitry Rogozin following results of the meeting in Tiraspol, *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik Pridnestrov’ya* No.2 (8), December 2012; Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, *Rossiia 24*, 02.09.2013, <http://www.vesti.ru/videos?vid=534252>; Speech of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin at the round table “European integration: international experience and perspectives for Moldova”, *TSN*, 03.09.2013, <http://tsn.md/news/politica/item/1552-rogozin-pered-tem-kak-vstupit-v-es-vam-pridetsya-vstupit-v-nato-i-otrabetat-eto-pravilo>; Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, 12.05.2014, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2468545> (all in Rus.).

recognized by Russia). Intrinsically, Rogozin said nothing new but just summed up the already known Russian preconditions to Moldova. At the same time, today Russia already came into the open and shows its game. Such Russian frankness with straightforward rhetoric of a Russian top-level official can be alarming for Moldovan politicians and at the same time supported by pro-Russian people on both banks of the Dniester River. Essentially, Rogozin's rhetoric, highlighting independence of Transdnistria, is a means of psychological pressure on pro-European Moldovan politicians, and on the eve of signing the AA between Moldova and the EU, the rhetoric has become increasingly threatening with less diplomatic ceremony.

However, the representational force of Rogozin is not the only 'weapon' against Moldovan pro-EU government. The potential political leverage has already been transformed into active leverage as some threats have started being implemented. After the accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation, Transdnistria has intensified its desire to unify with Russia. On March 3, 2014 Roman Khudyakov, a politician from Tiraspol, who is now a deputy of the Russian State Duma from Russian far-right party, Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), and a member of the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, sent a letter to the Russian Foreign Ministry asking to recognize Transdnistria as an independent state.¹⁶¹ On March 18, 2014 Chairman of the Transdnistrian Supreme Soviet Mikhail Burla sent the Russian State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin a letter in which he asked to broaden grounds for admitting new territories to the Russian Federation provided in legislation which was adopted specifically for the case of Crimea. Transdnistria is hoping that this will allow joining the Russian Federation.¹⁶² On April 16, 2014 a formal appeal to the Russian authorities, the UN and the OSCE to recognize the Transdnistrian independence was adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the PMR.¹⁶³

In May 2014, the tensions between Moldovan authorities and Russian politicians who during the period 2012-2014 made numerous visits reached its a new high for the last decade. Ukraine and Romania closed its airspace for the Moscow-bound plane of Dmitry Rogozin, who was on the visit with Russian Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky and other Russian officials to Transdnistria on May 9 to celebrate the Victory day. During his visit Rogozin received lists of Transdnistria citizens' signatures petitioning for unification with Russia. The signatures were supposed to back up the appeal to Moscow for accession to Russia adopted by the Transdnistrian parliament. Moldovan

¹⁶¹ «Роман Худяков предложил признать Приднестровье независимым государством» [“Roman Khudyakov suggested recognize Transdnistria as an independent state”], *LDPR*, 03.03.2014, http://ldpr.ru/events/roman_khudyakov_suggested_recognize_transnistria_as_an_independent_state/?is_print=1.

¹⁶² Бочарова Светлана и Бирюкова Лидия: «Приднестровье как Крым» [Bocharova, Svetlana & Biryukova, Lidia: “Transdnistria like Crimea”], *Vedomosti*, No. 46 (3550), 18.03.2014.

¹⁶³ Обращения Верховного Совета ПМР к Президенту, Госдуме, Совету Федерации РФ, ООН, ОБСЕ, Президенту ПМР [Appeal of the PMR Supreme Council to the President, the State Duma, the Council of Federation of the Russian Federation, OUN, OSCE, President of PMR], 16.04.2014, <http://www.vspmr.org/News/?ID=8843>.

authorities searched the plane and confiscated some boxes filled with the documents. The Russian delegation had to return to Moscow by a passenger plane. This incident caused a serious diplomatic scandal.¹⁶⁴ “*Anyway, provocation of Chisinau will have serious consequences for our bilateral relations*”, wrote Rogozin on his webpage in *Facebook*.¹⁶⁵

The hard leverage on Chisinau that has been produced from the linkage can be illustrated by yet another aspect of Russian-Moldovan interaction, namely the one related to the autonomous territorial entity of Moldova, Gagauz Yeri. The latter has been in a situation similar to Transdnistria after the dissolution of the USSR: the capital of the region, Komrat, declared independence even earlier than Tiraspol. Gagauzia was a de-facto independent state from Chisinau for four years (1990-1994) before it was peacefully integrated into the Moldovan state. The integration took place on the grounds of the Law on the Special Legal Status of Gagauzia adopted by the Republican Parliament, which granted the rights of autonomy to the Gagauz region.¹⁶⁶ The peaceful settlement of the conflict between the centre and region, however, did not eliminate tensions between Chisinau and Komrat.

Russian official and semi-official politicians, including Dmitry Rogozin and Sergey Naryshkin, frequently meet the leader of Gagauzia Mikhail Formuzal, who has been one of the most active advocates of the Eurasian integration of Moldova. Under his patronage, an expert group was formed to analyse and compare perspectives and effects of the country’s possible integration into the European *versus* the Eurasian Unions. He has also insisted on the involvement of Gagauzia in the decision-making process of Moldova, especially with regard to its foreign policy.¹⁶⁷ It is quite obvious that some actions taken and statements made toward Chisinau by Gagauz leaders are coordinated with Moscow. Their visits to Moscow (as well as of Russian representatives to Komrat) and frequent meetings with Russian official and semi-official figures prove this conjecture. The heads of some other municipal administrations are also favourable to Russia’s policy and enjoy Moscow’s reciprocal feeling, and not to mention even better Russian political ties with the Transdnistrian elite.

¹⁶⁴ “Moldova seizes lists of signatures for Transdnistria’s accession to Russia”, *ITAR-TASS* 10.05.2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/731112>; “Moldovan Behavior on Victory Day Inadequate – Russian Foreign Ministry”, *RIA*, 12.05.2014, <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140512/189769210/Moldovan-Behavior-on-Victory-Day-Inadequate--Russian-Foreign.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Rogozin, Dmitry: «Так или иначе провокация Кишинева будет иметь серьезные последствия для наших двусторонних отношений», 11.05.2014, <https://www.facebook.com/dmitry.rogozin?fref=ts>.

¹⁶⁶ Law on special legal status of Gagauzia (Gagauz-Yeri), 23.12.1994, <http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=311656&lang=2> (in Rus.) (last access 01.09.2013).

¹⁶⁷ See, for example, Speech of Head of Gagauzia, Mikhail Formuzal, at the International Conference “The modern integration processes: experience and prospects” in Chisinau on 28.06.2013, *Vse.md*, <http://vse.md/novosti/item/2466-moldove-ne-nuzhen-bezvizovyyi-rezhim-s-es-bashkan-gagauzii> (in Rus.).

On February 2, 2014 the Gagauzian region held two local plebiscites simultaneously: the consultative referendum on the foreign policy vector of the country (the EU or the Customs Union) and the legislative referendum on the “deferred status of autonomy”, which gives Gagauzia the right to self-determination if Moldova loses sovereignty. Despite the attempts of the Moldovan government to prevent the plebiscite, the turnout was high and the Gagauz people gave almost en-bloc vote in support of the integration with the then Customs Union and the deferred status of independence. Following this event, Rogozin made a post on *Facebook*: “*Moldovan eurointegrators are furious*”.¹⁶⁸ After the Gagauzian referendum there was a spread of ‘referendum idea’ through the entirety of Moldova, involving various municipalities and regions. When the former Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat urged local authorities to “sign a public declaration in support of the European vector and to condemn separatism” of Gagauzia, authorities in a number of districts including the second largest city Balti as well as Orhei, Basarabeasca, Ungheni, and Rascani refused to support this appeal.¹⁶⁹

To sum up, the situation where the positions of Russia and Moldova are being mutually opposed is one of the major hindrances to a solution of the conflict. The Russian position on the political settlement of the conflict has not changed substantially since 2003, when the ‘Kozak memorandum’, was proposed to Moldova. The Russian strong political support deprives Transdnistrian leadership of impulses to negotiate with Moldova. The geopolitical factor has a serious impact on the negotiation process as Moscow links its national interests, challenged from Brussels and Washington, with the settlement of the regional conflict in Moldova. The existing Russian leading position in the resolution of the ‘frozen conflict’ contributes to its powerful hard leverage that utilizes the stateness problems of Moldova in order to maintain the influence on decision-making of the country. In such an environment, Transdnistria has consolidated its political independence from Chisinau, and now Moldova will unlikely be able to restore its territorial integrity. At the same time Russia does not hasten with the recognition of the Transdnistrian independence in order to preserve this source of influence on Moldovan policy as long as possible. However, the Kremlin has a backup option: Russia’s close links and support to political elite of Gagauzia as well as of other Moldovan regions with compact settlements of ethnic groups (in particular Russians but also Bulgarians) foster them to act vigorously against the political course pursued by the centre as long as it does not meet their aspirations.

¹⁶⁸ Rogozin, Dmitry: «Молдавские евроинтеграторы в бешенстве», 02.02.2014, <https://www.facebook.com/dmitry.rogozin?fref=ts>.

¹⁶⁹ «Парламент Гагаузии утвердил итоги референдума об интеграции в Таможенный союз» [“Parliament of Gagauzia approved the results of the referendum about integration into the Customs Union”], *ITAR-TASS*, 14.02.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/968324>.

4.1.2. Soft leverage

The presence of Russian military on the territory of the post-Soviet states is considered as a means to undermine sovereignty of the host state, and thus associated mostly with ‘hard leverage’. However, the military *presence* as such cannot always be equated with military ‘occupation’ or ‘intervention’ but has non-aggressive forms of military cooperation such as various formats of military cooperation and peace-making operations. Yet, being non-aggressive does not exclude the possibility of exerting influence on political decision-making processes of the host country. To understand the soft leverage of the Russian military presence in Moldova, we need to take a look at the history of the peacekeeping operation on the Dniester River. The consent to the peacekeeping operation was achieved in July 1992, when the ceasefire agreement was signed by the presidents of Russia and Moldova in the presence of the Transdniestrian leadership. This document officially embodied the Russian position as a party of the conflict settlement and established peacekeeping forces, charged with ensuring the ceasefire and future security arrangements, under control of the Joint Control Commission (JCC).¹⁷⁰ The mandate of the peacekeepers was to operate in the security zone on the border between the Republic of Moldova and the self-proclaimed Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic. According to the agreement, the format of the peacekeeping mission is trilateral, including Moldovan, Transdniestrian and Russian peacekeepers, who are coordinated by a joint military command structure. Since 1994, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has participated in all JCC meetings. In 1998, the JCC was enlarged to include 10 Ukrainian military observers.

This form of peacekeeping operation has proved to be efficient to the extent that the conflict zone in question is the only one in Eastern Europe where the introduction of peacekeeping contingent led to the end of hostilities, which never recommenced. The local population had not protested against the peacekeeping mission.¹⁷¹ With the approximation to the EU Moldova has insisted on reformation of the peacekeeping operation under the auspices of the UN, OSCE or the EU.¹⁷² The ruling politicians in Chisinau like the president of Moldova Nicolae Timofti, Prime Minister Iurie Leanca, the leaders of Liberal Democratic Party Vladimir Filat and Mihai Ghimpu, have repeatedly proposed withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers and substituting them by a civil police mission, which obviously would effectively diminish the Russian role in the conflict

¹⁷⁰ Agreement on principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transdniestrian region of the Republic of Moldova, 21 July 1992.

¹⁷¹ With the exception of an organized anti-peacekeeping manifestation of residents, in January 2012, when the Moldovan party took an advantage of an accident (a death of Moldovan citizen at a peacekeeping post). This event can be considered as a part of the chain of Moldovan actions aimed at pressing-out Russian peacekeepers from the region.

¹⁷² Boian, Victoria: “Republic of Moldova’s security context: challenges and future perspectives”, in: Rytövuori-Apunen, Helena, et.al (eds): *Security and Development in a Complex Policy Environment: Perspectives from Moldova, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan*, Yerevan: Limush Printhouse, 2012 – pp. 8-34.

resolution process and, in general, political influence in the region.¹⁷³ Russia, in its turn, insists on inadmissibility of attempts of the Moldovan politicians to “blur” the existing peacekeeping and negotiation formats. Rogozin and representatives of the Russian foreign office constantly underline that no changes here can be done before a final agreement on conflict settlement and Chisinau must stop dragging the extra-regional actors into the process and so provoking clashes between them and Russia. Rogozin demands that Moldova recognizes the role of Russia as an actor with the strongest political and power authority in the region.¹⁷⁴

According to the ceasefire agreement, it can be terminated “*by consent of the parties or in case of withdrawal of one of the negotiating parties from it*”,¹⁷⁵ but the Moldovan leadership has so far not dared to exercise this right, fearing unpredictable consequences of such action. Moreover, the Joint Declaration of Russian and Moldovan presidents and the head of Transdnistria adopted in March 2009 notes the stabilizing role of the present peacekeeping mission and the advisability of transforming it into a peace-guaranteeing operation under the aegis of the OSCE only followed a settlement of the conflict.¹⁷⁶

The issue of internalization of the peacekeeping operation is directly linked with the beginning of the EU’s diplomatic intervention in the Transdnistrian settlement process. It was especially evident in the summer of 2003, when the EU proposed to substitute the Russian peacekeepers for the European peacekeeping contingent with participation of Russia as a partner. Moscow, which also felt the pressure within the issue of troops and armament withdrawal, perceived this proposal as an attempt to exclude Russian presence from a country of its Near Abroad. It was obvious that in such a joint peacekeeping operation Russia would be able to participate only in controlling and not in real management and planning. According to Devyatkov, this had a serious symbolic meaning for Russia: it would completely lose the role of an actor, who provides security in Europe and aspires to equal in rights participation in the European security system.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ See, for example, Зайченко Сергей: «Ситуация под контролем, или кто у кого на коротком поводке?» [Zaichenko, Sergey: “Situation under control or who keeps who on a short leash?”], *Pridnestrovie*, 12.10.2010, <http://www.pridnestrovie-daily.net/gazeta/articles/view.aspx?ArticleID=16010>; «Безопасность в Приднестровье гарантируется российскими миротворцами» [“Security in Transdnistria is guaranteed by Russian peacekeepers”], *Aktualnye Kommentarii*, 15.10.2013, <http://actualcomment.ru/news/17100/>.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, 20.04.2012.

¹⁷⁵ Agreement on principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transdnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, 21 July 1992.

¹⁷⁶ Joint Declaration Adopted Following Talks between President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, and President of the Republic of Moldova Vladimir Voronin and Head of Transdnistria Igor Smirnov, Barvikha, 18.05.2009, http://www.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/01D19D444863EDD5C325757E00524650?OpenDocument (last access 14.09.2013).

¹⁷⁷ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization*, (2012) – p. 130.

Such a possible scenario fostered Moscow's one-sided actions from July-November 2003 for the creation of the "Kozak's Memorandum". The proposal stipulated a federalization of the Moldovan state and stationing of Russian peacekeepers over 20 years as a guarantee that the conflict will not resume. Until today, Moscow avoids any discussions on the future of the peacekeeping mission while insisting on establishing a Moldovan federation or confederation.¹⁷⁸ The incumbent authorities in Chisinau have opposed such an option: an inclusion into the political decision-making process of a player with strong pro-Russian aspirations poses serious threats to both the political authority of the Moldovan leadership and the European (and to a certain degree pro-Romanian) orientation of Moldova (especially when the foreign policy course of the country is contentious for many Moldovan citizens). In issues of the peacekeeping mission, Transnistria seconds the position of Moscow, as Russian peacekeepers are considered the only guarantor of their political and economic independence. Moreover, Russian soldiers on the left bank of the Dniester River have important symbolic meaning to people who live there; they are an important part of their identity, fuelled by Russian and local propaganda.¹⁷⁹

Such a situation contributes to a deadlock of the political settlement and consolidation of the *status quo*. The only winner in this situation is Russia: the unresolved regional conflict is an effective impediment for Moldova to join NATO and the EU, as well as to merge with Romania. The continuous claims of the Russian officials reflect this position by emphasizing Moldova's neutral status as a precondition for Russia to consider any compromise regarding the unification of Moldova with Transnistria.¹⁸⁰ The best way to safeguard the neutral status of the country established by the Constitution is believed to be con/federalization of Moldova, as Transnistria being a part of the state will not let it join NATO or ally with Romania. As for Chisinau and Tiraspol, neither of the two can be satisfied with the *status quo*. Although the Transnistrians have been surviving the economic blockade since 2006 thanks to the Russian economic and political assistance, they are longing for a more certain future following twenty-two years of de-facto independence. At the same time, Chisinau is not ready to give up Transnistria and continue its

¹⁷⁸ "Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transnistria" (2004).

¹⁷⁹ For recent example of such rethorics, see Congratulations on the 22nd Anniversary of introduction of Russian peacekeepers to Transnistria of the PMR President, Evgeniy Shevchuk, *Novosti Pridnestrov'ya*, 29.07.2014, <http://novostipmr.com/ru/news/14-07-29/prezident-pmr-mirotvorcheskaya-operaciya-segodnya-kak-nikogda>; Statements of the PMR President, Evgeniy Shevchuk, at a rally devoted to the 22nd Anniversary of introduction of Russian peacekeepers to Transnistria in Bendery, *Novosti Pridnestrov'ya*, 29.07.2014, <http://novostipmr.com/ru/news/14-07-29/v-benderah-sostoyalsya-miting-v-chest-22-y-godovshchiny-vvoda>; Congratulations on the 22nd anniversary of the beginning of the peacekeeping operation in Transnistria of the PMR Co-Chair of the JCC, Oleg Belyakov, <http://www.okk-pridnestrovie.org/p0384.htm> (last access 01.08.2014).

¹⁸⁰ Statements of Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador for Special Assignments, Sergey Gubarev, *RIA*, 13.10.2010, <http://ria.ru/politics/20121013/773361328.html>.

further integration into Euro-Atlantic structures regardless of the future of the status of the left bank of the Dniester.

The *status quo*, unfavourable for both parties of the conflict, and the unstable security environment, caused by the 2013-2014 Ukrainian crisis and aspirations of the Moldovan government to accelerate the European integration process, make the parties go to the extremes, namely by taking provocative actions in the security zone. Since the end of 2013, the situation in the security zone has been considerably aggravated by unilateral actions of the Moldovan and Transdniestrian authorities. Among such actions are increases in the number of different kinds of security forces deployed there as well as the setting up of new posts without prior arrangement with the JCC. Russian peacekeepers have not openly interfered with this situation, being cautious about the potential discrediting of the peacekeeping operation format. At the same time, both Moldova and Transdniestria seem to have apprehended the consequences of bringing the situation beyond the point of no return. Eventually, all parties of the trilateral peacekeeping operation have become ‘prisoners’ of the current situation.

At the first glance, one can view the presence of the Russian military as a linkage that generates only hard leverage. However, at a closer look, the military presence also has a soft facet: in a form of the peacekeeping mission that was established by the consent of all the parties involved. The translation of military linkage to soft leverage results from the very fact that the presence of Russian peacekeepers on the territory of Moldova is a great obstacle for Chisinau joining NATO and the EU. Moscow’s aim is to preserve this factor as long as possible. In short, the Russian soft leverage generated from military linkage is based on the following main elements: legal status of the peacekeepers backed by support of local population and actual efficiency of the existing format of mission in terms of people’s peaceful coexistence of the two banks of the Dniester river; the discourses of Russian and Transdniestrian officials and media about the crucial importance of the presence of Russian soldiers for people’s peaceful life and strong belief in the inadmissibility of change of the format before a political settlement of the conflict.

The legal foundation of the operation highlights the fact that the Russian *peacekeeping* forces on the territory of Moldova are not ‘occupational troops’. However, this is not to say that the peacekeepers are not safeguarding Moscow’s (geo)political ends. First, the presence of the peacekeeping forces upholds Moscow’s preferred option of the political settlement namely the creation of a con/federal state with a neutral status. Second, the Russian position of the provider of peacekeeping forces repels efforts of the Western countries to get ground in the conflict settlement and take a leading role in the process. Third, Russian peacekeeping troops are generally a deterrent factor to the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the Moldovan leadership. Thus, the presence of peacekeeping forces can be considered to be a representation of a soft leverage: a military presence

has not been translated into an action directly affecting the sovereignty of the target state but rather has been an instrument to achieve Russia's associated political and security objectives.

To create political discourses and also to influence domestic politics, Russian politicians may also use their close ties with Moldova's political elite, especially in the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova (PCRM) that currently enjoys the highest public support. According to the poll, the party's leader Vladimir Voronin, is the most trusted compared to his competitors, Iurie Leanca (Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova), Marian Lupu (Democratic Party of Moldova), or Vlad Filat (Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova). Moldovan citizens associate Voronin primarily with Eurasian integration, while Filat, who is strongly associated with the European vector, is much less trusted as a political leader. The public opinion poll of April 2014 shows that in the next presidential elections the citizens would prefer to vote for Vladimir Voronin, rather than such pro-EU politicians as Iurie Leanca, Marian Lupu or Vlad Filat.¹⁸¹ However, the Kremlin is suspicious about Voronin as he withdrew the decision to sign the Kozak's memorandum for final resolution of the conflict. It was also Voronin who after these events initiated integration to the EU and since then the relations between Moscow and Chisinau have significantly worsened.

Although Voronin 'confessed' about his deeds and publicly supports integration to the Eurasian Union, the initiative to organize a referendum on the foreign policy orientation of the country within the entire republic today comes not from PCRM but mainly from the Socialist Party of Moldova (SPM). SPM criticizes PCRM for insincerity of their declared position about the Eurasian Union as a priority for the country's development: potentially having enough votes in the parliament PCRM does not want to initiate the national referendum on the issue. Reportedly, the chairman of SPM is currently absconding to Russia as in Moldova he is accused of prejudice in the public budget.¹⁸² The leader of another left-wing party, the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova (PSRM), Igor Dodon, announced his plans to organize national referendum on the Eurasian integration vector or at least local referendums or citizens' assemblies in each region of Moldova. He initiated the collection of signatures of the citizens supporting Eurasian integration.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Public Opinion Barometer, *Institute for Public Policy*, April 2013, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=655> and April 2014, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=681>.

¹⁸² «Социалистическая партия Молдовы предлагает конституционный референдум» [“Socialist Party of Moldova proposes Constitutional referendum”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People's Assembly*, 13.02.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-moldovy/3583-sotsialisticheskaya-partiya-moldovy-predlagaet-konstitutsionnyj-referendum>; «Ещё одна социалистическая партия выступает за национальный референдум об интеграции в Евразийский Союз» [“Another socialist party supports national referendum on integration to the Eurasian Union”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People's Assembly*, 28.02.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-moldovy/3736-eshche-odna-sotsialisticheskaya-partiya-vystupaet-za-natsionalnyj-referendum-ob-integratsii-v-evrazijskij-soyuz>.

¹⁸³ «Кишинев призвал подконтрольные ему районы выступить против «сепаратистской» Гагаузии» [“Chisinau called for government-controlled areas to speak out against 'separatist' Gagauzia”], *Regnum*, 05.02.2014,

The Gagauz referendum had a serious impact on the political life of Moldovan regions. It should once again be underlined that Gagauzia held two referendums simultaneously – consultative on the foreign policy vector of the country and legislative on the “deferred status of autonomy”, which gives Gagauzia the right to self-determination if Moldova loses its independence. If the latter can be seen as a manifestation of separatist aspirations, and so can be considered as an evidence of the ‘hard hand’ of Moscow, the consultative referendum on political orientation of Moldova is rather a result of “attractive” (as Nye would say), soft leverage of Russia. According to the final protocols of the Central Electoral Committee of Gagauzia, 70 355 (70.04%) of citizens of Gagauzia eligible to vote took part in the plebiscite. The course of the foreign policy vector of the development of the Republic of Moldova which is directed to join the Customs Union (Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan) was approved by 68 182 voters, while 1 057 voters voted against. The course of the foreign policy vector of the development of the Republic of Moldova aimed at joining the EU was approved by 1 718 voters, while 66 643 voters voted against. The plebiscite was observed by representatives of PCRM, Party of Regions of Moldova (Chairman is Mikhail Formuzal, who is actually the Head of Gagauz administration), PSRM as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and media. In addition, the voting was observed by a representative of the LDPR faction, deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, Roman Khudyakov, and deputy of the Rada of Odessa Oblast of Ukraine Yurii Dimchoglo.¹⁸⁴

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that many representatives of the Russian diaspora are deputies of the republican Parliament and local councils and officials of different levels; naturally, many of them support Russian policy. The Russian political linkage to Moldova is constituted largely by informal or semi-formal political contacts and ties with different Moldovan politicians who support integration toward the Eurasian Union. Formal political contacts are held mostly within the dialogue on the political settlement of the Transdnestrian conflict, economic cooperation between Russia and Moldova, and through some Russia-led institutions and organizations, in which Moldova takes part. The most important of such organizations is, of course, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Although Moldova avoids participation in its security structures, some platforms for political discussion remain. For example, Moldovan parliamentarians participate in the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the CIS, through which the close contacts between Russian and Moldovan members of parliament can also

<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1763258.html>; «Молдавские социалисты обещали собрать миллион подписей за вступление в Таможенный союз» [“Moldovan Socialists promised to collect one million signatures for the entry into the Customs Union”], *Regnum*, 28.03.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1784173.html>.

¹⁸⁴ «Результаты референдумов подтверждены» [“Results of the referendums confirmed”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly*, 14.02.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-nsg/3597-rezultaty-referendumov-podtverzhdeny>.

be maintained. In any case, well-established links between Russia’s and Moldova’s politicians provide for the channels of promotion of the Russian policy among elites and population, and this contributes to a strong leverage that poses a serious obstacle of the current Moldovan government and their pro-EU direction, though without undermining the state sovereignty as such.

4.1.3. Summary table

Table 1. Russian military and political linkage-leverage nexus

ACTIVITY	IMPACT ON SOVEREIGNTY	
	HARD	SOFT
POTENTIAL (creating a favourable atmosphere in the region for the external influence on domestic decision-making)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of military depots in Transdnistria → possible means for warfare • Political statements on Transdnistria (particularly, of State Duma, its representatives and Dmitry Rogozin) → openly expressed threat to recognize the de-facto state if Moldova does not change the foreign policy course • Demonstration of political support for separatist aspirations of Transdnistrian people and elite → threat to recognize the de-facto state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political statements on negotiation and peacekeeping formats → threat with destabilization of the peacekeeping operation in case of change of the formats • Creating and fuelling discourses about Russian soldier as the only guarantor of peace → consolidation of Russian position in the settlement process • Use of different formats of inter-state dialogue → intensification of ties with political elite
ACTUAL (foreign policy acts influencing the decision-making in practice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of troops → military and political support for the separatist Transdnistrian region and factor for the survival of its statehood • The critical role in the settlement process → conditionality power (synchronization strategy, principle of neutrality, (con)federation, etc.) • Use of contacts with regional political elite that support Russian policy and Russia-led integration projects → promotion of separatist tendencies in Moldovan regions • Appeal to supportive opinion of people (regional referendums) → legitimization of military and political activity violating the Constitution of Moldova 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of peacekeeping forces → preservation of position in the settlement process • Use of its critical role in the settlement process → channel for political influence in the region • Maintenance of <i>status quo</i> → preservation of its critical role in the regional security • Demonstration of support for pro-Eurasian political initiatives → pressure on the foreign policy course of the ruling elite • Intensification of close ties with opposition political elite → creation of the necessary incentives in domestic politics

4.2. Economic dimension

4.2.1. Soft leverage

Trade relations with CIS countries, and particularly, with Russia, are essential for the Moldovan economy. On this basis the Russian government uses this opportunity to influence Moldova's foreign policy decisions. In 2005, Russia imposed a ban on the import of some Moldovan agricultural products and in spring 2006 an embargo on Moldovan and Georgian wine imports, but already in 2007 the import from Moldova had resumed. The wine embargo was imposed allegedly due to health concerns, though the true motives of this decision are far from protecting the health of Russian citizens. It is unlikely also that Moldova was just an accidental target while the real one was Georgia (the Russian relations with which were seriously heated at that time) and the simultaneous embargo on Moldova's wine products was just an attempt to create an image of a 'healthcare campaign' in the Russian wine market.

The reason behind the embargo clearly was an effort to push Moldova in regard to Transdniestrian settlement and as a response to active actions of the EU in this process. In 2005 the Ukrainian president proposed the so-called "Yuschenko plan", but Russia, while supporting it in words, in deeds did not show real interest, being concerned about the introduction of Ukrainian peacekeepers in the security zone, supplanting the Russians. Therefore, Moscow proposed its own plan for the settlement of the conflict, which was denied by the Moldovan side on the ground that it reminded them of the Kozak Memorandum, while the Yuschenko plan was used by Chisinau to adopt the 2005 law belittling the status of Transdniestria.¹⁸⁵ The EU, in its turn, by pressuring Ukraine into accepting Moldovan jurisdiction over Transdniestrian export transactions and using its Border Assistance Mission to Moldova (EUBAM), managed practically to reintegrate the custom zone of Moldova.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, Chisinau together with Tbilisi attempted to use the WTO negotiations on accession of Russia to influence them to limit Moscow's economic interaction with their breakaway regions.

In such a situation the Russian leadership decided to bring into play economic means of pressure. Some experts argued that this resulted in a way opposite to Russian desires and since the mid 2000s Moldova has reoriented its trade relations towards the EU but such judgments are made without considering the actual statistics.¹⁸⁷ It is true that in 2006 and 2007 the EU's total share (including all member states) in Moldova's total trade reached its maximum of 46.9 %. We should not disregard the fact that at that time new countries became members of the EU and naturally it

¹⁸⁵ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – pp. 97-100.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* – pp. 102-104.

¹⁸⁷ See, for example, Sasse, Gwendolyn: "Linkages and the promotion of democracy" (2013).

pushed up the share of the EU slightly. Anyway, it was a temporary effect as already in 2008 it rolled back to 45.1 % and in 2012 it remained still (45.2 %). The real trend is that since 2003 Russia's share (note, not a share of the CIS or Customs Union countries) has slightly decreased from 22.3% to a minimum of 14.5% in 2007 but starting from 2010 it has rapidly restored almost to the position of 2004 (then it was 20.5%) and 2012 was marked by 20%.¹⁸⁸ To understand the scale of the Russian economic linkage to Moldova it should be noted that total trade turnover (as well as separately by export and import) between Russia and Moldova exceeds Moldova's trade turnover with any other country; in this regard individual countries of the EU cannot compete with Russia.

Thus, the real situation was that the use of Russian soft leverage gained from a weighty trade linkage resulted in a way that Moldova enforced political rather than economic rapprochement with the EU. Chisinau signed the Association Agreement with the EU on June 27, 2014. Before it was initiated in November 2013, Russia employed its 'trade cudgel' again. In September 2013 the Russian Federal Service on Customers' Rights Protection and Human Well-being Surveillance (Rospotrebnadzor) made a decision to suspend the import of wine from Moldova until the Moldovan side forms "*a package of measures that will ensure consistent quality and safety of products supplied*".¹⁸⁹ Apparently, in response, Moldova's Constitutional Court stopped the force of the government decree on the transfer of Chisinau International Airport to the concession of a Russian company.¹⁹⁰ Next day, the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhozadzor) asked Moldova to strengthen control over the fruits and vegetables (main export goods of the country) supplied to Russia.¹⁹¹

In the beginning of January 2014 some portion of the vegetables and fruits originating from Moldova were banned from entering the Russian Federation.¹⁹² This happened due to the fact that the importers did not have valid quality certificates for the products transported, as

¹⁸⁸ See annex 1.

¹⁸⁹ On the supply of products from the Republic of Moldova, *Rospotrebnadzor*, 11.09.2013, http://rospotrebnadzor.ru/news?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_w7Ci&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=exclusive&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-3&p_p_col_count=1&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_struts_action=%2Fasset_publisher%2Fexport_journal_article&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_groupId=10156&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_articleId=3081062&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_targetExtension=pdf (in Rus.).

¹⁹⁰ Suspension of the Government Decision on the Airport's concession, Notification No. 39a/2013, *Constitutional Court*, 10.09.2013, <http://www.constcourt.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=7&id=485&t=/Prezentare-generală/Serviciul-de-presă/Noutati/Suspendarea-actiunii-Hotararii-Guvernului-privind-concesionarea-Aeroportului-Chisinau-Sesizarea-nr-39a2013>.

¹⁹¹ Socio-economic situation of Republic of Moldova in 2012, *National Bureau of Statistics*, http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Raport_trimestrial/rus/Raport_anual_2012_rus.pdf (in Rus.) (last access 16.09.2013); "Russia's watchdog asks Moldova to tighten fruit export controls", *Prime* 12.9.2013, http://www.lprime.biz/news/search/Russias_watchdog_asks_Moldova_to_tighten_fruit_export_controls/0/%7BF9B0B066-4ACA-49B4-96BA-4546169950FA%7D.uif.

¹⁹² "Russia bans fruits and vegetables from Moldova and Belgium", *moldova.org* 09.01.2014, <http://www.moldova.org/russia-bans-fruits-and-vegetables-from-moldova-and-belgium-241023-eng/>.

Rosselkhoznadzor announced, though it was also a message to Chisinau of the possible problems it may face in the coming year. The Moldovan government ‘ignored’ the signal. A month after the AA was signed, Rosselkhoznadzor “*due to the systematic violations of international and Russian phytosanitary requirements*” introduced temporary restrictions on the import of fresh fruits from Moldova to Russia.¹⁹³ It hit the country’s economy with a strong impact as during the period between July and October Moldova’s massive harvest of fruits was due for shipment to Russia.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, earlier on July 5, 2014 Rosselkhoznadzor restricted imports of meat from Moldova and on July 18 Rospotrebnadzor suspended import of Moldovan canned fruits and vegetables into the territory of the Russian Federation.¹⁹⁵ Moldova’s agricultural sector generates 12 percent of Moldovan GDP and is overwhelmingly oriented toward Russia.¹⁹⁶ Obviously, restrictions on import of Moldovan agricultural products together with the embargo on wine can heavily hit the country, which even without this faces great economic problems. After all, transportation companies of Moldova are suffering great losses from the embargo on imports.¹⁹⁷ Eventually, such a situation fuels the existing serious discontent among Moldovan people and businessmen about the one-sided foreign policy orientation of the country’s ruling elite toward the EU.¹⁹⁸

The trade sanctions are not the only economic leverage of Moscow. Indeed, the Kremlin is exploiting such traditional economic tools of Russia as energy supplying and energy pricing. In the mid 2000s Moscow announced a move to a market-based gas pricing system with countries of its Near Abroad who follow the European vector of integration. Naturally, the post-Soviet countries, which were used to enjoying preferences in relation with Gazprom during the eternal period of their independent living, were not ready to start paying ‘European’ prices for gas, even though Russia proposed an adaptation period with gradual increases of price. The year 2006 started with a gas war between Gazprom and Moldova, similar to the war with Ukraine in the same period. Moldova

¹⁹³ “О введении временных ограничений на ввоз в Российскую Федерацию растительной продукции из Республики Молдова” [“Temporary restrictions on the import into the Russian Federation of plant products from the Republic of Moldova”], *Rosselkhoznadzor*, 18.07.2014, <http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/news/10699.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Socor, Vladimir: “Moldova’s European Choice Vulnerable to Russian Economic Leverage”, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 11, No. 34, 21.02.2014.

¹⁹⁵ «Об обращении Россельхознадзора к Национальному агентству безопасности пищевых продуктов Республики Молдова» [“On appeal of Rosselkhoznadzor to the National Agency of food safety of the Republic of Moldova”], *Rosselkhoznadzor*, 01.07.2014, <http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/news/10305.html>; «О запрете ввоза молдавской плодоовощной продукции» [“About ban on imports of Moldovan fruit and vegetable products”], *Rospotrebnadzor*, 21.07.2014, http://www.rospotrebnadzor.ru/about/info/news/news_details.php?ELEMENT_ID=2109.

¹⁹⁶ Secieru, Stanislav: “Can Moldova stay on the road to Europe?”, in: *ECFR*, 28.01.2014, http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/can_moldova_stay_on_the_road_to_europe303.

¹⁹⁷ «Транспортные компании Молдовы терпят убытки» [“Transportation companies of Moldova are suffering losses”], *Bessarabskie Novosti*, 25.07.2014, <http://bessnews.ru/economics/10828-perevozchiki-ubytki>.

¹⁹⁸ «Правда ли, что молдавские производители консервов обвешивают россиян?» [“Is it true that Moldovan producers of canned food shortweight Russians?”], *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 22.07.2014, <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26258/3137569/>; «Российское эмбарго на фрукты и консервы может больно ударить по грузоперевозчикам» [“Russian embargo on fruit and canned products could hit truckers”], *Publika.md*, 22.07.2014, http://ru.publika.md/link_1388171.html.

refused to pay the offered 'market price' and in January 2006 Gazprom cut off gas supplies. Eventually, it forced Moldova to accept the almost twofold increase in the price of gas and to hand over to Gazprom the Transdnestrian share of the Moldovan energy company, Moldovagaz. This led to the situation in which Gazprom now possesses 63.4 % of shares of the Moldovan gas distribution monopoly.¹⁹⁹ A similar situation happened in the electricity power supply sector earlier in November 2005: Russian-owned Moldavian GRES (the Transdnestrian-based power plant and the main electricity supplier in the region) warned the Moldovan electricity distributor Union Fenosa about its intention to raise the price due to the increase in price on gas it works with to produce electricity. Union Fenosa refused to buy electricity at the stated price, and the Moldavian GRES stopped supplying electricity to Moldova, later the sides came to a consensus and the electricity supplies were resumed.²⁰⁰

Until 2011 the formula of gas pricing for Moldova had a reduction factor on the ground of the gradual transition of Moldova to market gas prices; and since 2011, Moldova pays for gas as a 'European country'.²⁰¹ Since then Moldova has received fuel on temporary contractual obligations as it cannot negotiate a long-term contract with Gazprom. Unlike Ukraine that has a chance to arrange reverse buying of at least some small portion of gas from Europe, projects aimed at diversification of the energy supply to Moldova, such as a pipeline from Romania, are still vague, and there is still no real alternative source of gas: Russia remains Moldova's only source for imported gas.

Today, Moldova seeks to get a long-term and profitable contract from Gazprom. However, the long negotiations did not lead to a consensus between the sides. The situation is complicated by the fact that Moldova has signed up to European Energy Charter and is going to implement its Third Energy Package (TEP), which, as is commonly known, encroaches upon Gazprom's position in the European energy market and seriously harms the energy giant's interests. Therefore, the main Russian precondition for giving a profitable gas contract to Moldova is a refusal of implementing the TEP. Obviously, this does not suit the country's official pro-European aspirations. Nevertheless, acknowledging the seriousness of the situation, in 2012 the Moldovan government announced a delay for implementation of the third energy package until 2020; the EU accepted this. This was an

¹⁹⁹ Sasse, Gwendolyn: "Linkages and the promotion of democracy" (2013); Харитоновна Наталья: «Молдова и Приднестровье в контексте новой глобальной энергетической политики» [Kharitonova, Natalia: "Moldova and Transdnestria in the context of the new global energy policy"], in: *Information and Analytical Center for the Study of the socio-political processes in the post-Soviet space*, 18.06.2006, http://www.ia-centr.ru/archive/public_details5255-2.html?id=9; «Виорел Киврига: Удорожание газа является обычным наказанием за политическую переориентацию» ["Viorel Chivriga: Rise in price of gas is a common punishment for political reorientation"], *All Moldova*, 25.06.2012, <http://www.allmoldova.com/int/interview/viorel-chivriga-250612.html> (in Rus).

²⁰⁰ Kharitonova Natalia: "Moldova and Transdnestria in the context of the new global energy policy" (2006).

²⁰¹ «Юрий Лянкэ уверяет: нет предпосылок для прекращения поставок газа» ["Iurie Leanca says: There are no prerequisites for the termination of gas supply"], *Publica*, 04.09.2013, http://ru.publika.md/link_1022511.html.

attempt to meet Gazprom halfway. Moscow agreed and the relations between Gazprom and Chisinau have somewhat stabilized.

Although Moldova still cannot get a long-term or at least medium-term contract, each year Gazprom extends the existing contract for a year more. On December 25, 2013, Gazprom and Moldovagaz signed a new contract for 2014 and the price for gas was reduced by about 2.7%. By that time Moldova (without Transdnistria) had accumulated half a billion US dollars of debt for Russian gas and the sides agreed to determine the procedure for repayment in the first quarter of 2014. It is possible that Gazprom will go for debt restructuring,²⁰² though the negotiations can easily be conditioned according to the further development of the pro-European vector of the Moldovan government.

The examples of complex energy and trade relations are illustrative to the process of how Russia uses its close and asymmetric economic cooperation with Moldova in order to prevent the country's movement away from Russia toward the EU. Needless to say that Russian and Moldovan businesses have established profitable relations and are not happy about the possible risks the AA brings to Moldovan-Russian economic interaction. The AA includes the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with the EU, while in 2012 Moldova entered the CIS Free Trade Agreement. Russia is using this contradiction in order to create pressure on the Moldovan European choice. For example, Deputy Economic Development Minister of Russia Aleksei Likhachev visited Moldova two weeks before the signing of the AA and on the results of the bilateral consultations in connection with the preparation of Moldova to the Association Agreement with the EU stated:

*Moldova will not be able to combine the two regulatory systems: CIS and EU. It will have to make a choice. And if it is in favour of the European system, the system of CIS will cease to be comfortable.*²⁰³

Such a position is explained by the fact that simultaneous Moldovan existence in the two free trade regimes will affect the Russian market, which can be overflowed with undeclared products originating from the EU. In this regard Moscow promised to take adequate measures to protect its market, and this cannot but worry the economic agents from Moldova, who closely cooperate with Russia. On August 1, 2014, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev signed a resolution on the introduction of customs duties on Moldovan meat, vegetables, fruits, wheat, corn,

²⁰² «Цена российского газа для Молдовы снизится до 365 долларов за кубометр» [“Russian gas price for Moldova will decrease to \$ 365 per cubic meter”], *Moldova Inform*, 26.12.2013, <http://moldovainform.md/ru/news/20131226/20968.html>; «Молдова и «Газпром» разработают план реструктуризации газового долга» [“Moldova and Gazprom to develop a plan to restructure the gas debt”], *Moldova Inform*, 26.12.2013, <http://moldovainform.md/ru/news/20131227/20979.html>.

²⁰³ «Россия предупредила Молдавию о рисках интеграции с ЕС» [“Russia has warned Moldova about the risks of integration into the EU”], *RIA*, 16.06.2014, <http://ria.ru/economy/20140616/1012148037.html>.

sugar, beer, wine, furniture and other goods. The decree shall enter into force on September 1st.²⁰⁴ Moldovan businessmen have reasonable concerns about the future of their businesses as they're afraid that uncompetitive Moldovan products will not find their niche in the EU's market and, in their turn, producers from the EU will supplant Moldovan goods.²⁰⁵ Russia effectively interplays with concerns of the Moldovan business elite oriented at the Russian market in order to 'break through the obstinacy' of the Moldovan pro-EU government.

All in all, trade restrictions, manipulation with gas pricing and pressure from the Moldovan business elite that enjoys profit from preferential economic relations with Russia, as well as a threat of the possible cutting-off of such preferences for conducting business on the Russian market²⁰⁶, are manifestations of Moscow's leverage against the desires of the Moldovan leadership to be politically oriented toward the West. The described mechanism of creating pressure on Moldova from economic asymmetric interdependence represents the process of instrumentalization of economic linkage in order to gain soft leverage. In this case, the leverage is soft because it does not threaten sovereignty of the state and does not directly undermine authority of the centre. However, according to the main hypothesis of the present study, the density of economic ties can be transformed also into a hard type of leverage, especially when such a country as Moldova, characterized by weakness of the state, has a favourable environment for the interference of a powerful external actor on which it economically depends.

4.2.2. Hard leverage

According to the conceptualization given above, hard leverage is related to a threat imposed on a state's political sovereignty. As a rule, the hard leverage received through linkage provokes *stateness issues*, which have been attributed to "tensions arising from incongruence between the state and nation".²⁰⁷ Thus, the task of an actor exploiting this leverage is to create such incongruence. The political state sovereignty of Moldova is linked, first of all, to the territorial integrity of the state. Hence, the hard leverage would exert force aimed at disintegration of the territory or creation of the impression that there is a danger of the full disintegration if the target

²⁰⁴ Resolution of the Russian Government on the introduction of customs duties on goods being imported from the Republic of Moldova, No. 376, 31.07.2014, <http://government.ru/media/files/41d4f6cb7402068ecc9c.pdf>.

²⁰⁵ cf. Varshalomidze, Tamila: "Moldova stuck between Russian and the EU", *Aljazeera*, 05.05.2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/04/moldova-stuck-between-russia-eu-2014426115456162891.html>; "Moldova: Realities of the Association Agreement post-Vilnius Summit", *Market Watch*, 06.02.2014, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/moldova-realities-of-the-association-agreement-post-vilnius-summit-2014-02-06>; Мельник Наталья: «Молдавский бизнес призвали не расслабляться» [Melnik, Natalia: "Moldovan business urged not to relax"], *Kommersant*, 13.06.2014, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/30318>.

²⁰⁶ For an example of such threats in form of representational force, see Speech of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin at the round table "European integration: international experience and perspectives for Moldova" (2013).

²⁰⁷ Sasse, Gwendolyn: "Linkages and the promotion of democracy" (2013).

country continues following ‘the wrongly chosen’ foreign policy direction. In this regard Russia has a special and unique set of tools for Moldova aimed first of all at its separatist region.

Devyatkov notes that when in the mid 2000s due to the efforts of the EU Moldova’s custom space was completely reintegrated, Russia started to be concerned about “losing” Transdniestria, and consequently, the entirety of Moldova. Therefore, Moscow, in addition to rather symbolic and demonstrative humanitarian aid, started directly sponsoring the economy and budget of Transdniestria with stabilizing tranches, loans and, in fact, a free gas supply. Moreover, Moscow formalized this direct interaction with Tiraspol by signing a bilateral protocol.²⁰⁸ Since 2008, for the preservation of controllability of the region Russia has been carrying out humanitarian projects in Transdniestria, within the framework of which the social payments for the most vulnerable population groups has increased. This change in Russia’s policy happened due to the understanding that the poor socio-economic situation of the region may cause potential political destabilization and in the environment of economic crisis the population of Transdniestria could act unpredictably.²⁰⁹

As mentioned above, gas supply and gas price are important components of Russian economic linkage. Moldova has difficulty in bargaining a profitable contract with Gazprom and the reason for this is gas debt. In spite of the fact that Chisinau tries to pay its ‘gas bills’ on time not to provoke Russia, the problem is caused by the left bank of the Dniester river. The unrecognized Transdniestrian state has not paid for gas since 2009 and, according to the Trans-Dniester Republican Bank (TRB), has accumulated debt of \$ 838.9 million by 2012.²¹⁰ In fact, including penalties and interest for late payments this sum is much bigger. Officially, the debtor is a company, Moldovagaz, which is the operator of the gas-transport system in Transdniestria and Moldova. By 2014 the total debt of Moldovagaz for natural gas to Gazprom was approaching \$ 5 billion; \$ 4.5 billion of this amount is for the consumers from the left bank of the Dniester.²¹¹ The steady growth of the debt of Transdniestria for Russian gas is concurrent of a specific form of the Russian humanitarian aid to the region. Under the existing social programmes the population of Transdniestria receives gas at low prices, even lower than the procurement price. Moreover, the Transdniestrian government is directing the proceeds from the public not to settlements with

²⁰⁸ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012).

²⁰⁹ Ibid. – p. 119.

²¹⁰ Balance of Payments of the Prednestrovian Moldavian Republic for 2012, *Trans-Dniester Republican Bank*, <http://www.cbpmr.net/resource/PB2012quarterly.pdf> (last access 16.09.2013). The TRB’s report on the republican international balance of payments in 2013 does not provide information about the gas debt.

²¹¹ «Молдовагаз» и «Газпром» разработают «дорожную карту» для решения проблемы долга за газ Приднестровья» [“Moldovagaz and Gazprom will develop a ‘roadmap’ to solve the gas debt of Transdniestria”], *allmoldova*, 27.12.2013, <http://www.allmoldova.com/moldova-news/1249092385.html>.

Gazprom but to the fulfilment of everyday social commitments and patching the budget “holes”. Russia, however, does not put pressure on Tiraspol to return the debt.

Moscow uses the situation sophisticatedly. Russian officials repeatedly remind Chisinau about the necessity to rid itself of debts for Russian gas and demonstratively state that Moscow recognizes the integrity of Moldova and so, this debt is listed for Chisinau. Dmitry Rogozin unambiguously said: *“If we are talking about a common state, as they say in Chisinau, then the bill should be shared”*.²¹² This phrase is obviously provocative and a manifestation of representational force. It should be interpreted as following: if Chisinau does not want to share the bill, it has no reason to say that Transdnistria is a part of Moldova. Moreover, Rogozin links the resolution of the gas debt issue with Moldovan participation in the European Energy Packages. He stated in this regard that for the restructuring of the debt on gas contracts to Russia, Moldova has to reconsider its commitments in the relation to the second and third Energy Packages of the European Union. The Russian diplomat went further and warned Chisinau against its integration plans with the EU that will lead to a new state of relations with Moscow:

*“Now is capitalism, some people like it, some not so much. But this is predatory capitalism, so you have to be pragmatic. The Republic of Moldova has chosen the path of European integration, it is the capitalist path of development, so we will deal with them as capitalists, [i.e.] the capital is at the basis, first of all, the Russian capital on which the Moldovan side has a debt.”*²¹³

In September 2013 at a press-conference, when the Russian-Moldovan discussions on gas were at their height, Dmitry Rogozin maliciously jested with the Moldovan Minister of Economy, Valeriu Lazar: *“Energy is important, especially in anticipation of a cold winter and autumn... Hopefully, you will not freeze.”*²¹⁴

However, given Russia’s great authority in Transdnistria, and considering that the huge Moldovan gas debt is already a considerable burden for the Russian budget, it is obvious that Russian officials are cunning when saying that they cannot force Tiraspoltransgaz to pay. Apparently, Tiraspol does not pay while Russia shows tacit consent with this. This situation helps Moscow to keep Chisinau agitated and fearing the moment when Russia will seek payment. In 2007, 2011 and 2012, Gazprom filed lawsuits on collecting debts from Moldovagaz. In all cases the International Commercial Arbitration Court at the Chamber of Commerce of the Russian Federation made a decision in favour of the Russian gas monopoly. However, so far Gazprom has decided not to take any further action. In 2013 the company submitted a new lawsuit to the court. Besides this, it

²¹² Briefing by Evgeny Shevchuk and Dmitry Rogozin following results of the meeting in Tiraspol (2012).

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Briefing by Dmitry Rogozin and Valeriu Lazar, Moldova, TSN, 02.09.2013, <http://tsn.md/news/politica/item/1549-no-comment-dmitriy-rogozin-energetika-vazhna-osobenno-v-preddverii-holodnoy-zimy-i-oseni-nadeemsa-vy-ne-zamerzite> (in Rus.).

is important to bear in mind that the ongoing gas contract signed in 2006 has already expired and Russia can simply decide to stop its prolongation and put severe conditions for signing a new one.

An opposite example, when Russian officials do separate the left and right Dniester banks, can be illustrated by the 2013 selective embargo on Moldovan wine imported to Russia. Unlike the embargo of 2006, when Transdnestrrian wine producers suffered no less than producers from the opposite side of the river, the restriction of 2013 does not concern Transdnestrrian companies that proved to be “responsible” wine producers.²¹⁵ A similar situation is observed with Gagauz wineries. The organization of referendum in Gagauzia brought concrete positive results to its economy. Already in the beginning of March 2014, a month after the results of the referendum were announced, Rospotrebnadzor stated that upon request of the head of Gagauzia it would examine the local wine products to address the gradual resumption of supplies to Russia that had been stopped as a part of embargo on import of all Moldovan wine since September 2013.²¹⁶ On March 28, 2014 during the visit of representatives of Gagauzia to Moscow the parties agreed that a joint laboratory will be opened in the autonomous region to control the quality of wine. In its turn Gagauzia promised to provide a five-year tax exemption for Russian businessmen who are willing to invest in the wine sector. The local authorities are considering creation of a single brand *Wines of Gagauzia* to export high-quality products to Russia.²¹⁷ In April, Rospotrebnadzor restated that the quality of wines from Gagauzia rouses no censors.²¹⁸ In May, it was announced that Rospotrebnadzor approved supply of wines from Gagauzia.²¹⁹ Eventually, Moscow lifted a ban on wine export from the main Gagauzian producers, while the embargo on wine export from other regions of Moldova, except Transdnestrria, remained in place. Moreover, in September 2014 delegation of Rosselkhoznadzor visited Gagauzia and assessed the quality and fulfilment of phytosanitary requirements for agricultural products produced in the region at the “highest” level. The Gagauz authorities hope that Rosselkhoznadzor would make an exception for Gagauzian producers and let them export fruits and vegetables to Russia despite the general ban on import of fresh fruits from

²¹⁵ «Онищенко разрешил поставки вина из Приднестровья» [“Onischenko allowed wine import from Transdnestrria”], *Lenta.ru*, 12.09.2013, <http://lenta.ru/news/2013/09/12/wine/>.

²¹⁶ «Роспотребнадзор готов пустить в РФ продукцию пяти молдавских производителей вина» [“Rospotrebnadzor is ready to let production of five Moldovan wine producers in Russia”], *ITAR-TASS*, 05.03.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/ekonomika/1023478>.

²¹⁷ «Гагаузская автономия Молдавии готова предоставить налоговые каникулы для виноделов из РФ» [“Gagauz autonomy of Moldova is ready to provide tax exemption for winemakers from Russia”], *ITAR-TASS*, 28.03.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/ekonomika/1082490>.

²¹⁸ «Роспотребнадзор: в последнее время качество вин из Гагаузии не вызывает нареканий» [“Rospotrebnadzor: lately the quality of wines from Gagauzia does not cause censures”], *ITAR-TASS*, 21.04.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/ekonomika/1135511>.

²¹⁹ «Роспотребнадзор утвердил поставки вин из Гагаузии» [“Rospotrebnadzor approved supply of wines from Gagauzia”], *vesti.md*, 05.05.2014, <http://vesti.md/?mod=news&id=28103>.

Moldova.²²⁰ Such actions point at Russia's efforts to eventually separate economically both Gagauzia and Transdnistria from Chisinau.

More generally, contacts with political and business elites between Russia and Gagauzia play an important role in promoting Russian interests. The example of the funding of the Gagauzian referendums illustrates this fact. Although the People's Assembly of Gagauzia approved the 2014 regional budget with special funding for the referendums, the authorities of Moldova were against the plebiscite and ensured that the Court declared their illegal nature. Eventually, respective budgetary and financial operations were blocked. Nevertheless, significant amounts of money were allocated to the purpose of holding the referendum by two Russian businessmen of Moldovan origin, Yuri Yakubov and Renato Usaty.²²¹ Intrinsically, the actions of the businessmen have reinforced the incongruence between the centre and the region; the consolidation of the 'autonomy' of Gagauzia is supported, and the confrontation with Chisinau becomes inevitable. The end effect of their actions corresponds to a threat to the political sovereignty of a state and therefore can be considered as hard leverage. This is not to say that all actions of the referred businessmen are falling within the category of supporting Russia's hard leverage. Both of them, for instance, sponsor various cultural and social projects in Moldova and this can be seen already as a manifestation of soft leverage, since it is not actually aimed at fostering centrifugal tendencies.

All in all, Russian economic hard leverage against Moldova works in a way that provides for greater economic independence of its breakaway region, Transdnistria, as well as of the autonomous territory of Gagauzia. As the statements made by Russian officials show, since 2012 Russia has significantly increased the amount of financial and humanitarian aid for PMR and provides expert support to the unrecognized republic's strategic socio-economic planning.²²² Various social, educational and cultural programmes back up the economic support,²²³ while pursuing two main goals. First, Russia seeks to meet all immediate social and economic needs of its compatriots, which allows maintaining the image of the major provider of critical goods. Second, this policy is aimed at making Transdnistria more developed economically than the right bank of

²²⁰ Speech of the Gagauzian People's Assembly Speaker, Dmitry Konstantinov, gagauzinfo.md, 17.09.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=14122> (in Rus.).

²²¹ «Финансирование референдумов: миллион найден» [“Financing referendums: million found”], *Official website of Gagauzia*, 21.01.2014, <http://www.gagauzia.md/newsview.php?l=ru&idc=390&id=4773>; Манастырлы Сергей: «Гагаузский референдум оплатит российский предприниматель» [Manastyrly, Sergei: “Gagauz referendum to be paid by Russian businessman”], *Kommersant*, 21.01.2014, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/24752> and «Бизнесмен Ренато Усатый передаст на проведение референдума в Гагаузии полмиллиона леев» [“Businessman Renato Usaty will give half a million MDL to hold a referendum in Gagauzia”], *Omega*, 30.01.2014, <http://omg.md/ru/114489/>.

²²² Briefing by Evgeny Shevchuk and Dmitry Rogozin following results of the meeting in Tiraspol (2012).

²²³ Protocol on the results of the meeting of Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on Transdnistria D.O. Rogozin and President of Pridnestrovie E.V. Shevchuk, Moscow 25.10.2013, <http://president.gospmr.ru/ru/news/protokol-po-itogam-rabochey-vstrechi-zamestitelya-predsdatelya-pravitelstva-rossiyskov> (last access 03.06.2014).

the Dniester River, which is expected to attract people of Moldova to the Transdnestrian (Russian) side and to demonstrate to them that only a close cooperation with Russia and the choice of the Eurasian integration guarantee a prosperous future of Moldova within the single state.²²⁴

4.2.3. Summary table

Table 2. Russian economic linkage-leverage nexus

ACTIVITY	IMPACT ON SOVEREIGNTY	
	HARD	SOFT
POTENTIAL (creating a favourable atmosphere in the region for the external influence on domestic decision-making)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indulgence towards growing gas debt of Transdnestria listed for Chisinau and Gazprom's regular winning of lawsuits on collecting debts from Moldovagaz combined with expired long-term contract on gas supply (and respective political statements) → triggering a fear that money for the debt accumulated by the separatist region will be called for at any time, otherwise gas supply can be suspended • Economic support aimed at stabilization of the socio-economic situation in the pro-Russian regions → maintenance of the image of Russia as an important provider of critical social goods in these regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rospotrebnadzor's and Rosselkhozadzor's notices, statements and occasional bans of some consignments to enter Russia → threatening with potential actions against essential sectors of Moldovan economy • Creating discourses of incompatibility of the CIS FTZ and the DCFTA of the AA → threatening with an impossibility to combine two free trade regimes and negative consequences of pro-European choice for bilateral economic relations • Creating discourses of negative consequences of the AA for Moldovan economy → threatening Moldovan business elite with a loose of profit due to the terms and conditions provided in the Agreement • Use of contacts with Russian businessmen of Moldovan origins (funding social and cultural projects and events) → promotion of pro-Russian aspirations within society
ACTUAL (foreign policy acts influencing the decision-making in practice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listing Transdnestrian gas debt for Chisinau → provocation of either-or-decision from Chisinau in regard to Transdnestrian independence • Negotiations on restructuring of the Transdnestrian gas debt → influence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embargo on wine and agricultural products in 2006 → influence upon the joint actions of Moldova and EU to blockade Transdnestrian export • Embargo on wine in 2013 → influence upon the decision to sign the

²²⁴ The good demonstration of this policy is evident, for example, by purposes and results of the visit of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin and Head of the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots Leonid Slutsky to Moldova on 2-3 September 2013. For an overview of results of the visit see Шоларь Евгений: «Болевой прием Дмитрия Рогозина: Москва выставила Молдове полный счет за евроинтеграционный выбор» [Sholar, Eugeny: "A painful hold of Dmitry Rogozin: Moscow has fully billed Moldova for the choice of the European integration"], *Kommersant*, 04.09.2013, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/20299>.

	<p>upon implementation of the EU's Third Energy Packages through provocation of either-or decision from Chisinau in regard to the Transdnestrian independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian aid, social projects and subsidies for Transdnestria → stabilization of socio-economic situation in the separatist region of Moldova • Humanitarian aid, social projects and subsidies for Transdnestria → widening the gap of social welfare between left and right banks to make the separatist region attractive for people of Moldova • Selective embargo on import → economic separation of Transdnestria and Gagauzia from the centre • Use of contacts with Russian businessmen of Moldovan origins → activities aimed at reinforcement of the incongruence between the centre and regions (funding the referendum) 	<p>Association Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embargo on agricultural products and introduction of customs duties following the signing the Association Agreement in 2014 → pressure on Moldovan economy triggering further discontent among businessmen and people about one-sided foreign policy orientation of the country • Gas and electricity cut off due to non-payment of 'European' market-based price in 2005-06 → influence upon the start of active approximation of Moldova with Western countries • Gas pricing policy and negotiations about a long-term gas contract and debt restructuring → influence upon the implementation of the EU's Third Energy Package
--	--	---

4.3. Socio-cultural dimensions

4.3.1. Soft leverage

Intensive flow of people from one country to another is an obvious result of the aggregate of social and cultural links. At the same time, migration has an important economic effect, and therefore it is reasonable to continue analysis of the Russian linkage-leverage nexus with this type of social linkage that constitutes potentially strong leverage on Moldovan political orientation. Migration remains an important factor influencing relations between the countries. According to even modest official statistics of Moldova, 223 400 people aged 15 years and over were working or looking for work in Russia in 2012. Compared with other countries Russia is receiving the lion share (68.1 %) of Moldovan labour migrants and since 2010 after the drop followed the crisis of 2008-2009 the share has been again rapidly growing.²²⁵ The real number of Moldovan labour migrants in Russia, according to different Moldovan and Russian experts and officials, varies from

²²⁵ Population aged 15 years and over, working or looking for work abroad by country of destination, level of education, age groups, level of education, sex and area, 2000-2012, *National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova*, http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MUN0702_en&ti=Population+aged+15+years+and+over%2C+working+or+looking+for+work+abroad++by+country+of++destination%2C+level+of+education%2C+age+groups%2C+level+of+education%2C+sex+and+area%2C+2000-2012&path=../Database/EN/03%20MUN/MUN07/&lang=3 (last access 15.09.2013).

300 000 to 1 000 000 people. The number which is the most commonly referred to is 700 000-750 000 people.²²⁶ Such a high number is a result of various factors. Moldovan workers enjoy a preferential regime for labour migrants in Russia as their country is a member of the CIS and signed the corresponding agreements regulating migration with Moscow in multilateral and bilateral formats. However, the most important factor that facilitates migration flows is cultural linkage: most of the Moldovans who go to Russia for work speak Russian, they are well-adapted to the Russian way of living, as the two nations have a long history of coexistence in a single state and are representatives of the Russian Orthodox culture, and, simply, many workers from Moldova are ethnic Russians. In addition, the common Soviet past left a developed transport and communication infrastructure that connects people and facilitates travel and cooperation between Russia and Moldova.

In 2012, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that Moldova is one of the largest recipients of personal transfers (remittances and workers' compensation) in the world relative to GDP. By 2012, the personal transfers accounted for almost a quarter of Moldova's GDP, and more than half of them originated from Russia (followed by the EU).²²⁷ According to Forbes estimates based on data of IMF and Central Bank of Russia, in 2012, personal transfers from Russia to Moldova amounted to \$ 1.18 billion that accumulated 15 % of Moldovan GDP.²²⁸ Russian official estimates indicate the Russian share as being up to 30 % of Moldova's GDP.²²⁹ Having such a significant linkage Moscow may employ it to create a leverage aimed at the suspension of further Europeanization spill-over in Moldova. For instance, by restricting overall migration legislation, which is now relatively liberal and still has enough room for additional restricting measures, Russia may try to make the Moldovan leadership reconsider relations with Moscow and Brussels in favour of the former. Starting on January 1, 2014 the Russian government has introduced a number of changes in immigration laws. The main change that concerns Moldovan labour migrants concerns a term limit (90 days within six months) for immigrants who are not holders of patents for a guest worker or do not have permission to work. Another legislative change that affects Moldovan

²²⁶ See, for example, Interview with Chairman of the Congress of the Moldovan diaspora, Alexander Kalinin, *Puls*, 05.02.2014, <http://puls.md/ru/content/curovaya-legalizaciya> (in Rus.).

²²⁷ "Moldova: Selected Issues", *IMF Country Report*, No. 12/289, October 2012, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12289.pdf>.

²²⁸ Васильев Иван: «Рекордный заработок: сколько денег мигранты отправляют из России домой» [Vasilyev, Ivan: "Record earnings: how much money migrants sent home from Russia"], *Forbes*, 18.06.2013, <http://www.forbes.ru/infographics/sobytiya/obshchestvo/240714-rekordnyi-zarabotok-skolko-deneg-migranty-otpravlyayut-iz-r>.

²²⁹ «Соглашение о трудовой миграции выгодно для российско-молдавских отношений – Мухаметшин» ["Agreement on labour migration is beneficial for the Russian-Moldovan relations – Muhametshin"], *Novosti Moldavii*, 13.02.2013, <http://www.newsmoldova.ru/newsline/20130213/193013213.html>.

workers is related to the ban on the use of driver's licenses except Russian ones. These changes already closed the way back to Russia for some Moldovan working migrants.²³⁰

Eventually, it allows Moscow to exert conditionality power that can be seen as one of the forms of soft leverage generated through migration linkage. In 2013, Russian and Moldovan authorities signed an agreement on labour migration covering the protection of rights of migrant workers. In parallel with this agreement, the sides were compiling another document regarding readmission. The negotiations about the latter agreement are making difficult progress most likely because of the Russian position that the new agreements between Moldova and the EU are hardly compatible with the existing agreements between Moldova and the CIS and will affect Russia's cooperation with Moldova. The Russian experts are taking this development into consideration while compiling a text of any new cooperation agreements with Moldova.²³¹ According to Russia's embassy in Moldova, the two governments are due to sign three new agreements on migration during 2014 and, as Vladimir Socor notes, "this opens scope for Moscow to instrumentalize the issue politically". It is expected that Russia can introduce entry visa requirements for citizens of countries that did not join the Eurasian Union, reserving the privilege of visa-free entry to Russia for citizens of the member-countries and this would cause serious economic and social problems in Moldova.²³²

Dmitry Rogozin often refers in his statements regarding the future of Moldova in the EU to statistics, underlining that more than 700 000 Moldovans work in Russia and this number is at least double the number of Moldovans working in the EU. In his opinion, this highlights the fact that the Moldovan people have already made their choice in favour of integration with Russia, while 'myopic' ruling politicians in Chisinau mislead the country in another direction.²³³ Subsequently, Russian officials have openly connected the introduction of new migration restrictions for Moldovan workers with the signing of the AA between Chisinau and Brussels. Today, Moldovans enjoy preferential terms for working in Russia but Russia can cancel these terms after Moldova signed the AA. The Head of the Department for Cooperation with the CIS countries under the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, Alexander Tsybulsky, who is participating in negotiations with Moldova on future trade and economic relations of the countries, said that if

²³⁰ See interview with Chairman of the Congress of the Moldovan diaspora, Alexander Kalinin, 05.02.2014.

²³¹ «Москва обуславливает подписание Соглашения о защите молдавских мигрантов» ["Moscow conditions the signing of the Agreement on the Protection of Moldovan migrants"], *Teleradio Moldova*, 29.08.2013, <http://www.trm.md/ru/politic/moscova-pune-conditii-la-semnarea-acordului-privind-protectia-migrantilor-moldoveni>.

²³² Socor, Vladimir: "Moldova's European Choice Vulnerable to Russian Economic Leverage" (2014).

²³³ For an example of such statements, see Press-conference of Dmitry Rogozin and Evgeny Shevchuk held at the end of a ceremony to lay a memorial capsule at the construction site of pediatric hospital of the Republican Center for Mother and Child in Tiraspol, *PSP_PMR*, 03.09.2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvYK7Oasitg>; Speech of Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin at the round table "European integration: international experience and perspectives for Moldova", 03.09.2013.

Moldovans “*simplify visa relations with the EU, then there are risks of the cross-flow of migrant labour; so [...] we can get away from the preferential treatment and move to a normal one, with the registration*”.²³⁴ He also, not without purpose, noted that the share of personal transferences of migrant workers in Moldova’s GDP, according to some experts, reaches 40 %.²³⁵

A common and rich historical past as well as cultural proximity of Russia and Moldova form a natural linkage of a particular nature. This is because the cultural linkage relies upon aspirations of local population traditionally supporting Russia, as a result of shared historical and cultural experience. The instrumentalization of this linkage is especially relevant if the economic and political pressure is not sufficiently effective. It can be transformed into leverage by intensifying its dialogue with local people traditionally favourably disposed toward the intervening external actor. Through visits of Russian officials, parliamentarians, public figures and experts as well as through special programmes of Rossotrudnichestvo, Russkiy Mir Foundation and other assistance organizations, Moscow has maintained and enhanced social linkage between Russia and its compatriots in Moldova. Both ethnic Russians (6 % of total population) and people who speak Russian as their native language (11.3 %) of Moldova are playing the leading role in this socio-cultural dialogue. A well-developed infrastructure of communication and interaction within the Russian diaspora, comprising numerous pro-Russian organizations and media, has successfully contributed to the creation of a particular discourse influencing the whole population, of which 16 % speak Russian in their daily life and a lot more understand it very well and use it as a language of inter-ethnic communication.²³⁶

Orthodox religion is an intangible but appreciable ‘string’ that connects Moldovan society with the Russian, and Moscow’s politicians are trying to ‘strike a right chord’ that would resonate with Russia’s desire of empowering the Eurasian Union.²³⁷ Russian official and semi-official representatives are keen to underline common Christian values uniting different ethnic groups and nations under the Orthodox religion, while contrasting them with Western ‘liberalist approaches’ portrayed as undermining the traditional foundations. The Russian Orthodox Church became a main messenger in this ‘spiritual dialogue’. An illustration of this fact was the visit of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in September 2013 to Moldova, which was devoted to the 200th

²³⁴ Cit. in: Малышева Елена: «Россия готова отменить льготный миграционный режим для Молдавии» [Malysheva, Elena: “Russia is ready for abolishment of preferential migration regime for Moldova”], *RBC*, 06.06.2014, <http://top.rbc.ru/politics/06/06/2014/928881.shtml>.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Data is according to Population census 2004: “Demographic, national, language and cultural characteristics: Population by nationalities, mother tongue and language usually spoken”, *National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova*, <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234> (accessed 15 September 2013).

²³⁷ According to Population census 2004, 93.3 % of Moldova’s population are orthodox which makes it one of the most orthodox countries in the world.

Anniversary of the establishment of the Moldovan Orthodox Church. The date coincided with a year, when Moldova was going to proceed further with its Western civilization choice, about which the Patriarch was most concerned and urged the faithful Moldovans to preserve the spiritual ties with Saint Rus' and "not to sell the soul".²³⁸

Pro-Russian mass media, broadcasting and publishing both in Moldovan and Russian, reinforces the cultural linkage. This informational dimension generates a powerful instrument for the intention of Russian leadership to shape the preferences of the Moldovan society. According to the public opinion poll conducted in April 2014, the Russian TV channel *Prime TV* is the most watched and most trusted source of information and the situation has not changed much in comparison with previous years.²³⁹ Moldovan expert, Victoria Boian, explains the great support of Moldovan citizens to Russian television and radio by the historical background that makes people "feel more secure and open to receiving information from Russian sources".²⁴⁰ Mass media became a major factor that backs up Russian influence on perceptions of the Moldovan population. This factor combined with the described set of Russia's socio-cultural linkage-leverage actions allows Moscow to maintain the required level of loyalty within Moldovan society. According to the public opinion barometer, when asked how they will vote at a referendum on the accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union, 44 % of the respondents of the sample claimed that they would vote for it and 37 % would vote against it. When requested to express the opinion related to the accession of Moldova to the Customs Union (Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan), 45 % of the sample expressed a positive opinion, 34 % of the sample stated they would vote against it. As for international politicians, Moldovans displayed the out-of-reach level of trust in Vladimir Putin (62 %). Only 44 % of citizens trust in Angela Merkel followed by Barack Obama (35 %).²⁴¹

Against such a favourable background, Russia, however, is concerned about the fact that many representatives of the young generation relate their future with the West.²⁴² This fact is evident from statistics of the IOM showing that in 2010 almost 90 % of Moldovan students studying abroad chose Romanian universities, while Russia had a share of only of 2.7 % (equal to that of Bulgaria and similar to that of Ukraine (2.6%)).²⁴³ Acknowledging the threat of losing an

²³⁸ For an example, see «Святейший Патриарх Кирилл принял участие в торжествах по случаю 200-летия Кишиневско-Молдавской митрополии» ["His Holiness Patriarch Kirill took part in the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Chisinau-Moldovan Metropolitan Church"], *The Moscow Patriarchate*, 07.09.2013, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3216660.html>.

²³⁹ Public Opinion Barometer, April 2013 and April 2014.

²⁴⁰ Boian, Victoria: "Republic of Moldova's security context" (2012) – here p. 13.

²⁴¹ Public Opinion Barometer, April 2014.

²⁴² See speech of a deputy of the Russian State Duma, Roman Khudyakov, in: Transcript of meeting of the State Duma on 18 December 2013, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3982/> (last access 01.02.2014) (in Rus.).

²⁴³ Extended migration profile of the Republic of Moldova, *IOM*, 2012 http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=42&products_id=929 (accessed 14

important linkage, in February 2013, the Russian ambassador to Moldova announced the increase of the number of quotas for free education in Russian universities for students from Moldova.²⁴⁴

The Russian social and cultural links to people of Moldova help to maintain the public opinion supportive for Moscow's political line and integration projects on the high level. These foreign policy actions can be consequently, seen as a representation of soft leverage, which are mainly directed at preventing the ruling authorities from choosing a 'wrong' direction. At least in part, the recognition of the importance of Russia's soft leverage by the government of Moldova triggered the decision of Chisinau to accelerate the process of approximation with the EU, namely the signature and application of the Association Agreement before the parliament elections, which are scheduled for the end of 2014. However, Russian foreign policy tools are not exhausted by the soft leverage that does not undermine authority of Chisinau and legitimacy of the ruling elite directly, and in addition to it, Russia utilizes its socio-cultural linkage in a way that produces hard leverage against the Moldovan state.

4.3.2. Hard leverage

The structure of the present work reasonably dictates the subsequence of aspects of the Russian linkage-leverage nexus with which analysis should proceed next. I have described above how migration links between Moldova and Russia provide Moscow with strong but soft leverage based mostly on conditionality power exerted in the process of signing the new cooperation agreements with Moldova. However, besides resorting to conditionality power Moscow can simply deport Moldovans or refuse them entry to Russia on various legal pretexts, especially considering the fact that at least 60 % of Moldovan labour migrants in Russia are working illegally.²⁴⁵ In 2013, according to official data of the Federal Migration Service of Russia, 562 861 Moldovans were in the country. Out of them more that 288 000 people are labelled as a "risk category" in legal terms, implying that they have violated immigration or other laws.²⁴⁶ 22 000 Moldovan workers have been either repatriated outright, or slapped with interdiction to return to Russia, after breaching labour or residency regulations.²⁴⁷ In September 2013, when the Vilnius summit, where Moldova and

September 2013). It should be noted that IOM data is based on international agreements signed in the education sphere and this indicator is obviously not representative enough, and the respective sample of Moldovans studying abroad is relatively small. In fact, it is very hard to track how many Moldovan students with Romanian or Russian passports are studying in one or another country.

²⁴⁴ «Россия будет увеличивать количество квот на обучение для студентов Молдовы – Мухаметшин», [“Russia to increase the number of quotas on education for students from Moldova – Muhametshin”], *Novosti Moldavii*, 13.02.2013, <http://newsmoldova.ru/rus/20130213/193012367.html>.

²⁴⁵ According to the Head of the Sector of Study of Migration and Integration Processes of the Institute of Sociology of RAS, see his interview to *Rosbalt*, 07.05.2013, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/moscow/2013/05/07/1124414.html> (in Rus.).

²⁴⁶ Press Release of the Congress of the Moldovan diaspora, *IPN*, <http://www.ipn.md/ru/comunicate/3952> (last access 11.06.2014) (in Rus.).

²⁴⁷ Interview with Chairman of the Congress of the Moldovan diaspora, Alexander Kalinin, 05.02.2014.

Georgia initialed the AA, was approaching, the head of the Gagauzian autonomous district of Moldova, Mikhail Formuzal, noticed that the cases of deportation became more frequent and warned that with the signing of the AA Moldovan migrants workers may face even more problems.²⁴⁸ Vladimir Socor notes that in January 2014, the Russian government announced long-overdue measures to bring some order to the foreign workers' employment system. He expects that Moscow can enforce such measures selectively, "reflecting at least in part political considerations" and "might well imply a wave of repatriations from Russia and interdictions to return", and Moldova could be the prime target for selective enforcement. Eventually, mass unemployment would hit the country in that case.²⁴⁹

According to estimations of the investigation made by *Expert-Grup*, deportation of the "risk category" workers from Russia would lead to the following consequences: reduction of personal remittances by around 35 %, decrease in amount consumed by 9.4 %, slump in budget revenues by 8.3 %, decrease in on-budget expenditures by 10.5 %, and outflow of investments by 4 %.²⁵⁰ In addition to negatively impacting the economic growth of the country, this type of leverage affects the family budget of Moldovan citizens and may cause social discontent against the pro-EU government of the state. Many experts consider the threat of mass expulsion of Moldovan workers currently employed in Russia as Moscow's intention to influence the electoral campaign (scheduled for autumn 2014) in favour of opposition forces.²⁵¹ Some experts, like Ruslan Shevchenko, even suppose that after the election a 'Maidan-like' situation could take place in Moldova and the deported Moldovan labour migrants can be used as a driving force in these developments.²⁵² At the same time, there is an expert opinion that Russia is unlikely to opt for mass deportations of Moldovan migrant workers and rather "it may expel smaller groups of Moldovan citizens and publicize those cases through the Russian media in order to unsettle the public in Moldova".²⁵³ One way or another, migration as a socio-economic as well as socio-cultural link can be transformed into a hard leverage that would undermine pillars of the incumbent pro-EU leadership in Chisinau: this

²⁴⁸ «Михаил Формузал заявил о депортации молдавских гастарбайтеров из России» ["Mikhail Formuzal said on deportation of Moldovan migrant workers from Russia"], *Kommersant*, 11.09.2013, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/20556>; "Тысячи молдавских гастарбайтеров депортированы из России на родину" ["Thousands of Moldovan guest workers deported from Russia back home"], *Allnews.md*, 20.09.2013 <http://allnews.md/sotsialnie/1049-deportatsia>.

²⁴⁹ Socor, Vladimir: "Moldova's European Choice Vulnerable to Russian Economic Leverage" (2014).

²⁵⁰ "Aspectul migrational in securitatea economica a Republicii Moldova: Analiza institutional" ["The migration aspect in Moldova's economic security: institutional analysis"], *Expert-Grup*, February 2014, http://s5.stc.all.kpcdn.net/f/13/attached_file/31/55/3085531.pdf.

²⁵¹ Socor, Vladimir: Ibid. and Шевченко Руслан: «Гастарбайтеры и выборы-2014 в Молдове» [Shevchenko, Ruslan: "Migrant workers and the 2014 elections in Moldova"], *Actualitati.md*, 25.02.2014, <http://www.actualitati.md/ru/analitika/gastarbaytery-i-vybory-2014-v-moldove>.

²⁵² Shevchenko, Ruslan: Ibid.

²⁵³ Klaus, Kamil: "Russia announces new sanctions on Moldova", *OSW*, 02.10.2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-10-02/russia-announces-new-sanctions-against-moldova>.

can lead to a deep political crisis, in which the opposite sides will be supported either by Russia or the EU. In this case, sovereignty and subsequently territorial integrity of the Moldovan state would be seriously challenged.

Close economic and socio-cultural links to Russian compatriots living within the entire post-Soviet space have been widely used by Moscow for the purpose of legitimization of its foreign policy actions toward the Near Abroad countries.²⁵⁴ Moreover, the high density of such ties in countries with serious *stateness issues* contributes to production of powerful Russian hard leverage. In the case of Moldova, the stateness problems are primarily related to the Transdnistrian region which hosts about 200 000 people with Russian passports. The right bank of the Dniester River also harbours a populous Russian diaspora, and many of its representatives are Russian citizens. The Russian officials are keen to highlight this fact and to stress that the Russian citizens will be protected by any possible means.²⁵⁵ As both the actions and statements made by Russian and Transdnistrian officials show, the idea of the protection of Russian citizens has been fundamental to the Kremlin, including when it decided to significantly increase the amount of financial and humanitarian aid for PMR and provide expert support to the unrecognized republic's strategic socio-economic planning in 2012.²⁵⁶

The problem of the rights of compatriots, especially in Transdnistria, is included in the process of the domestic politics in Russia, and therefore Russia's accusations of Moldova being in violation of the rights of Russian compatriots have been a permanent issue in dialogue between the two countries. Different Russian public figures, 'patriotic' organizations, experts and media attentively monitor the situation in the post-Soviet space. If Moscow makes serious concessions without guarantees securing its interests and interests of its compatriots, they will voice against the possible "surrender" of Transdnistria and Russians living in the region.²⁵⁷

Various political figures, especially members of the State Duma and the Federal Council, as well as Russian experts, appreciate and support strong Eurasianist aspirations of the Transdnistrian leadership. In November 2012, the non-profit organization "Eurasian Integration" was established in Moscow with the support of Dmitry Rogozin, Representative of the Russian President on Transdnistria, and with a purpose of "the development and implementation of the financial assistance for PMR" under the implementation of the initiative "Eurasian region 'Pridnestrovie'", (a

²⁵⁴ For a description of such policy see, for example: Kudors, Andis: " 'Russian World' " (2010); for a legal embodiment of this policy see the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, 2013.

²⁵⁵ See, for example, «Провал миссии Рогозина в Кишиневе» ["The failure of Rogozin's mission in Chisinau"], *Pravda.ru*, 21.11.2012, <http://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/other/21-11-2012/1135522-rogozin-0/>; Interview with Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, 12.05.2014.

²⁵⁶ Briefing by Evgeny Shevchuk and Dmitry Rogozin following results of the meeting in Tiraspol, December 2012.

²⁵⁷ Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization* (2012) – p.108.

response to the Euroregion “Dniester”).²⁵⁸ More than \$ 100 million are earmarked for implementation of various humanitarian projects aimed at the socio-economic development of Transdnistria for 2013-2015.²⁵⁹ To spread information about Transdnistrian desire to integrate the Eurasian project as well inform about the advantages of the Eurasian Economic Union for Moldova, Moscow provides pro-Russian mass-media on both Dniester’s banks with technical support and journalist training.²⁶⁰ There is therefore a continuous and purposeful policy of activation of a number of the existing links to support the linkage-leverage transformation in the case of Russia’s policy towards its compatriots.

Arguably the most significant instrument supporting this transformation is the Russian policy of ‘passportisation’. This particular ‘compatriot instrument’ employed for legitimization of the policy towards Moldova, has especially caused concerns in Chisinau. The claim that the Russian citizens are under the protection of their state regardless of their place of living became an important guideline for the Kremlin’s foreign policy.²⁶¹ After Receiving Russian citizenship, people form a strong linkage to Moscow, which, coupled with Russia’s proclaimed duty to protect its co-citizens, creates a direct threat to the sovereignty of the respective states, thereupon the high-capacity hard leverage emerges. The presence of a large number of Russian citizens was a *casus belli* for Russia’s vigorous military response to Georgian aggression toward South Ossetia in August 2008 and subsequently legitimate ground for recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The passportisation policy that took place in these two breakaway regions since 2002-2003 and prior to the 2008 Russian-Georgian war is similar to the policy of granting Russian citizenship to Moldovans, particularly, in Transdnistria. From Tiraspol’s point of view, a Russian passport is a deterrent of possible Moldovan aggression, while Chisinau considers this as a soft annexation of its territory. In any event, the present case is a representation of Russia’s active transformation of linkage into leverage.

To consolidate this linkage, Russia has been trying to persuade Chisinau to open a consulate in Transdnistria and other regions of Moldova, while justifying this aspiration by difficulties to

²⁵⁸ About Autonomous Non-profit Organization “Eurasian integration”, see <http://www.eurasianintegration.ru/?q=node/71> (in Rus.) (last access 17.09.2013).

²⁵⁹ «Россия запускает в Приднестровье новый социальный проект стоимостью 3,6 млрд рублей» [“Russia launches in Transdnistria a new social project worth 3.6 billion roubles - Russian Ambassador”], *ITAR-TASS*, 29.08.2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/c13/857803.html>.

²⁶⁰ See, for example and details, Interview with Russian Ambassador to Moldova, Farid Muhametshin, 20.08.2012 and Press-conference of the Chairman of the State Duma committee on property and coordinator of Inter-factional parliamentary group for cooperation with the Supreme Council of PMR, Sergey Gavrilov, in October 2012, <http://vestnik.mfa-pmr.org/index.php?newsid=234> (in Rus.) (last access 25.01.2014).

²⁶¹ For instance, the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (05.02.2010) maintains among others issues that: Russia “considers it legitimate to utilize the Armed Forces and other troops in order... to ensure the protection of its citizens located beyond the borders of the Russian Federation in accordance with generally recognized principles and norms of international law and international treaties of the Russian Federation”. Translation of the document is available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_militaryDoctrine.pdf (last access on 20.08.2014).

provide consulate services for such a large number of Russian citizens. Moldovan leaders have rejected this idea. In 2013, Dmitry Rogozin threatened Chisinau with the opening of an embassy in Tiraspol if Moldova did not agree to open a consulate.²⁶² While advancing his argument, Rogozin (just like some other Russian politicians such as deputies of the Russian state Duma, Roman Khudyakov, Leonid Slutsky and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy) often refers to rhetorical questioning of the sovereignty and integrity of the Moldovan state, highlighting the independence of Transdnistria and its historical roots as a land of Russians. Such rhetoric aims to become a tool of psychological pressure on the Moldovan leadership and functions in a form of “representational force”, as a constructivist would have it. This policy has a favourable historical ground, which allows actors like the Russkiy Mir foundation to reinforce the association with the glorious history of Russian Bessarabia, resonating with the discourse of Russian and pro-Russian politicians and civil society activists.

Russia possesses an extensive and well-established cultural linkage to Gagauzia, which has the potential to be transformed into hard leverage up to the point of directly threatening the territorial and political integrity of Moldova. Historical, cultural and language factors determine Gagauzia’s close ties with Russia. The Russian language is widely used among the Gagauz population, which in spite of its Turkic roots, is orthodox in its religion. Almost all educational institutions of Gagauzia teach in Russian and this language is prevailing in local mass media. Hence, it comes as no surprise that the region has always resisted the expansion of the Romanian language, resulting in deep and frequent tensions between Komrat and Chisinau. Gagauz people are also dissatisfied by its de-facto exclusion from the decision-making process of the republic in regard to foreign policy, though the Law on the Special Legal Status of Gagauzia stipulates this right of Gagauz.²⁶³ Thus, it is not surprising that the Gagauzian region held the abovementioned referendums on the foreign policy vector of the country and on the “deferred status of autonomy”, results of which brought humanitarian aid and political and economic preferences of Moscow to Gagauzia.

Russia is actively using interregional cooperation as an effective way to integrate pro-Russian regions with the Eurasian Union. In the Moldovan context, where the central authorities are focusing on the development of trade and economic relations primarily with the EU, the population is clearly divided on this matter, the socio-economic linkage can be transformed into hard leverage as it may support centrifugal tendencies within the state. This is illustrated by the example of Gagauzia’s close relations with the Russian regions. In recent years Gagauzia has entered into cooperation agreements with more than 10 regions of Russia. After the Gagauzian plebiscites at the

²⁶² Interview with Dmitry Rogozin, *Rossiia* 24, 02.09.2013.

²⁶³ Law on special legal status of Gagauzia (Gagauz-Yeri), 23.12.1994.

end of March 2014, a joint delegation of the People's Assembly and the Executive Committee of Gagauzia visited Moscow region and signed a number of agreements on economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation with one of the economically largest regions of Russia. The agreement as such rather contributes to the production of soft leverage than hard as they are a result of agreements with the government of the Moscow region in the sphere of healthcare and education. In particular, the agreement stipulates each year, for about 350 graduates of Gagauzia to obtain free education and accommodation in Russian universities, and for about 400 teachers to go to Russia to upgrade their qualification and skills. Russia will furthermore receive around 50 Gagauz citizens in need of special treatment as well as provide necessary equipment to all three district hospitals of Gagauzia. Finally, Moscow region authorities intend to deliver ten ambulances to the autonomous region and to train Gagauz doctors in Russia.²⁶⁴

However, the main destination of this delegation was Moscow itself, where they had a productive meeting with the delegates of the State Duma. Reportedly, it was agreed that obtaining Russian passports for the citizens of the autonomous region will be facilitated. The Gagauzian delegation also reported that the parties came to an agreement regarding the issue of subsidizing energy deliveries to the population of Gagauzia, with the gas discount up to 35-50 %.²⁶⁵ Soon after the delegation's return to Gagauzia, the Russian ambassador in Moldova visited the region with humanitarian aid in the form of schools manuals and utensils for an Orthodox church being built in Komrat,²⁶⁶ and in order to discuss implementation of the agreements achieved in Moscow.²⁶⁷

Even before these arrangements with Russia, the example of Gagauzia has inspired other regions of Moldova with close cultural ties to Russkiy Mir. In February 2014, the Party of Socialists of the Republic of Moldova sent an application for holding a Gagauzia-like referendum in the Municipal Council of the second largest predominantly Russian-speaking city of Moldova, Balti. The application was initially registered but in the end the initiative was blocked in the Municipal Council by the Party of Communists of the Republic of Moldova that occupies most of the seats in

²⁶⁴ «Гагаузия идет навстречу России» [“Gagauzia goes towards Russia”], *Gagauzinfo.md*, 06.04.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=11840>.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ «О рабочем визите посла России в Молдавии Ф.М. Мухаметшина в Гагаузии» [“On Working Visit of the Russian ambassador in Moldova, F.M. Mukhametshin, to Gagauzia”], *Russian embassy in Moldova*, 08.04.2014, http://moldova.mid.ru/8?p_p_id=62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_struts_action=%2Fjournal_articles%2Fview&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_returnToFullPageURL=http%3A%2F%2Fmoldova.mid.ru%2F8%3Fp_p_id%3D62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-2%26p_p_col_count%3D1&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_groupId=118515&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_articleId=4441247&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_version=1.0.

²⁶⁷ «Фарид Мухаметшин не видит острой необходимости в открытии консульства в Комрате» [“Farid Mukhametshin sees no urgent need for the opening of the Russian consulate in Comrat”], *Gagauzinfo.md*, 09.04.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=11876>.

the Municipal Council.²⁶⁸ Prior to the referendum in Gagauzia, the local deputies of Tipala commune in Ialoveni district on the behalf of their electorate signed a declaration expressing their “*support and solidarity*” for the citizens of Gagauzia in the organization of a consultative referendum on accession to the Customs Union. They also demanded that the central authorities of Moldova organize an analogous referendum at the national level. In particular, it was stated:

*“We appeal to all citizens of the Republic of Moldova to support this Declaration. If the authorities of countries once again ignore the will of people, we reserve the right to organize and conduct referendum regarding accession to the Customs Union at the local level”.*²⁶⁹

In addition, the head of Taraclia, a Bulgarian-populated district of Moldova, Aleksandr Garanovskiy, and mayor of the capital of Basarabasca, Nikolay Nikolayev, took part in the meeting in Komrat in support of the referendum.²⁷⁰

On February 2, 2014, the meetings in support of the Gagauzian referendum on Moldova’s foreign policy and deferred status of independence took place in a number of localities of Moldova, including Chisinau, Balti, Basarabasca and Taraclia. Importantly, in neighbouring Taraclia and Basarabasca districts there were even assemblies of citizens in support of the issues raised by the Gagauz. In Chisinau, the meeting in support of the Gagauz plebiscite was held in front of the Russian Embassy. According to mayor of Taraclia, Sergey Filipov, assemblies at Taraclia district were attended in total by about seven thousand people and in support of the plebiscite 17 500 signatures were collected.²⁷¹

It is important to understand that the Russian cultural linkage resulting from Russia’s relations with its compatriots and Russian-speaking population generates both powerful soft and hard leverage on Chisinau. The former aims at creating an impact on the pro-European Moldovan orientation. The latter represents an intensified version of the former, and combined with economic

²⁶⁸ «Компартия Молдавии блокирует референдум в Бельцах, а власти преследуют его организаторов» [“The Communist Party of Moldova blocks referendum in Balti and the authorities persecute its organizers”], *Regnum*, 26.02.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1771966.html>.

²⁶⁹ «Советники Яловен поддерживают референдум в Гагаузии, требуя от властей не препятствовать плебисциту» [“Counselors of Ialoveni support the referendum in Gagauzia, demanding the authorities not to prevent the plebiscite”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly*, 30.01.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-moldovy/3460-sovetniki-yaloven-podderzhivayut-referendum-v-gagauzii-trebuya-ot-vlastej-ne-prepyatstvovat-plebistsitu>.

²⁷⁰ «Глава Тараклийского района: Гагаузия и Тараклия наведут порядок в Молдавии» [“Head of Taraclia district: Gagauzia and Taraklia will put things in order in Moldova”], *Regnum*, 28.01.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1759451.html>.

²⁷¹ «В Москве и Кишиневе прошли митинги в поддержку референдума в Гагаузии» [“Moscow and Chisinau held rallies in support of the referendum in Gagauzia”], *Regnum*, 02.02.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1761709.html>; “Chisinau called for government-controlled districts to speak out against ‘separatist’ Gagauzia” (05.02.2014); «Филипов: В поддержку проведения референдума от 2 февраля в Тараклии было собрано 17500 подписей» [“Filipov: In support of the referendum on February 2 17,500 signatures were collected in Taraclia”], *Gagauzinfo.md*, 24.02.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=11295>.

and political pressure, it can trigger internal region-centre confrontations and thus create a direct threat to the authority of Chisinau.

4.3.3. Summary table

Table 3. Russian social and cultural linkage-leverage nexus

ACTIVITY	IMPACT ON SOVEREIGNTY	
	HARD	SOFT
POTENTIAL (creating a favourable atmosphere in the region for the external influence on domestic decision-making)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat of deportation of illegal Moldovan guest workers from Russia → influence on the upcoming elections and formation of critical mass discontented with one-sided foreign policy of the ruling elite (eventually may lead to public unrest) • The declared readiness to protect Russian citizens and compatriots with all possible means wherever they are (particularly in Transdnistria) → threat of the use of force in case of violations of the rights of these people that form a large group of the Moldovan population • Political statements highlighting vital need to open a consulate in Tiraspol; “otherwise an embassy should be opened” → threat of recognizing Transdnistria as an independent state in order to ensure rights of co-citizens • Political statements portraying Transdnistria and the whole historical region of Bessarabia as a land of Russians → threat of recognizing and uniting Transdnistria (and other regions) with Russia • Involvement of Moldovan regions into Eurasian integration → threat of “soft federalization” and “transdnistriaization” of the country or “soft recognition” of Transdnistrian independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions on further restrictions on labour migration → threat with possible economic losses due to the AA with EU • Political statements underlying great dependence of Moldovan socio-economic system on labour migration to Russia and highlighting irrationality of the Moldova decision-makers → threatening with possible consequences following the signing of the AA and introducing visa free regime with the EU • Visits of prominent Russians and special programmes of assistance organizations → mobilization of Russian diaspora and Russian compatriots • Activities of the Russian Orthodox Church and political statements referring to common Orthodox values → mobilization of people supporting traditional Orthodox values • Support for pro-Russian and opposition media → creating discourses aimed at maintaining loyalty within the population and positive image about Eurasian integration contrasting with negative portrait of pro-EU movement
ACTUAL (foreign policy acts influencing decision-making in practice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the organization “Eurasian Integration” that channels financial assistance and coordinates humanitarian projects in Transdnistria → reinforcement of public support for Russian policy in the separatist region of Moldova 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricting migration legislation for countries that have not joined Russia-led integration projects → pressure on the decision of the Moldovan ruling elite to enter visa-free regime with EU • Political instrumentalization of the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The passportisation policy (particularly in Transnistria) and demands to open consulates in Russian-populated regions of Moldova → expanding ‘compatriot instrument’ to exert pressure on foreign policy course of the country • Intensification of socio-cultural activity in Russian-speaking Gagauzia → fuelling the ‘forgotten’ separatist aspirations in the region • Development of cultural and social inter-regional cooperation between Moldova and Russia → involving Moldovan pro-Russian regions into Eurasian integration 	<p>negotiations on new agreements on migration with Moldova → pressure following the signing of the AA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensification of the dialogue with local people favourably disposed toward Russia → creating public incentives influencing domestic politics • Increase of the number of quotas for free education in Russian universities for students from Moldova → creation of technocratic linkage with Moldovan youth
--	--	---

5. Conclusion

Russia's linkage-leverage nexus toward Moldova

After the dissolution of the USSR the Moldovan political leadership made a choice in favour of the EU and integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures and firmly remains in this position. According to the main analytical argument of the present study, in response, Russia's policy toward Moldova has acquired a form of linkage-leverage nexus, which is based on the transformation of the aggregate of highly dense multidimensional links connecting Moldovan and Russian societies into leverage that exerts influence on the political orientation of the elite in Chisinau. The Russian leadership attempts to create a subtle power that would influence the political choice of the Moldovan government based on wide and deep-rooted political, economic, social and cultural ties between the countries.

A study of Moscow's policy toward Moldova, therefore, should consider the whole set of Russian multi-dimensional levers generated from various links to the target country. The analytical approach based on the concept of linkage-leverage nexus perhaps suits best for such a type of research. The linkage-leverage analysis enables a researcher to observe various patterns of Russian-Moldovan relations both at structural and agent levels. The present analysis captures an important aspect of the Russian policy toward Moldova, in which Moscow focuses on the relations with individual social and political groups, including opposition, pro-Russian activists and the Russian diaspora, who promote the Russian vector of Moldova's development. The most promising strategy for Russia to support their aspirations is establishment of inter-regional relations coupled with direct contacts with the leadership from various Moldovan regions and municipalities. This aspect of Russian policy may result in the fostering of centrifugal tendencies within the state, dissolution of Chisinau's authority in regions and triggering separatist aspirations within the society.

The Moldovan *stateness issues*, primarily related to the Transdnistrian conflict and troublesome relations with Gagauzia, represent those vulnerable points of the Moldovan state, through which the intervention of Russian leverage is the most effective in undermining authority of the central power. Transdnistrians made it clear that the unrecognized republic does not support the foreign policy of Chisinau and seeks to integrate into the Eurasian Union. The similar choice has been made by Gagauzia and this creates a new challenge for the ruling elite of the country and may grow into a serious obstacle on the way to further approximation with the West: the de-facto independence of Transdnistria has lasted for 22 years and has already been perceived as something ordinary, but resumption of the forgotten separatism in Gagauzia may bring a damaging effect upon the weak Moldovan state.

The Russian socio-cultural linkage that generates powerful soft and hard leverage against today's Moldovan political orientation lies upon the density of various formal and informal ties with Moldova, which if combined all together and transformed into leverage can trigger serious internal region-centre confrontations. Since the Moldovan regions have serious social and economic problems that have been ignored by the centre for a long time, the Moldovan leadership has little capacity to preserve authority within the state, and its territorial integrity is increasingly threatened. While the country's economy and even more budgets and everyday life of a large number of Moldovan families rely on deep-rooted ties with Russia, the choice in favour of the EU creates serious challenges for the ruling political elite in Chisinau. The public opinion polls show that Moldovan society is divided in half, supporting integration with the EU- or Russia-led organisations. Under such complex conditions the artificially accelerated movement to one direction may result in widespread public discontent that certainly would be heated up by Russia as well as the EU and other Western countries, which would support respectively pro-Russian and pro-EU sentiments. The situation similar to the Ukrainian crisis 2013-2014 might develop. Either way, it means that while there is no consensus between Russia and the EU on how to conduct their mutually exclusive policies toward Moldova, new conflicts will continue to emerge and the incongruence within this country will continue to grow.

For the researchers who study this region it would be especially interesting to apply linkage-leverage analytical framework to Romanian policy toward Moldova, given the fact that there are discussions of the union between Moldova and Romania (while only around 10 % of the Moldovan population supports the idea)²⁷². Romania is a neighbour of Moldova and has strong ethnic and cultural ties with this country. Bucharest is also trying to use these links in order to influence people's minds, including through media propaganda, statements of various officials, politicians and experts. Romania launched social projects in Moldova, offers free education for Moldovan students, increases its consulate presence, and conducts "passportization" policy.²⁷³ That is something that resembles the Russian policy in Moldova. Moreover, the military agreements between Chisinau and Bucharest indicate an emerging military alliance between the two states. By and large, there are many aspects for comparative inquiry of antagonistic and at the same time

²⁷² Moldova National Voter Study, January 24 – February 7, 2011, IRI, <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2011%20June%206%20Survey%20of%20Moldova%20Public%20Opinion.%20January%2024-February%207,%202011.pdf>.

²⁷³ For a general overview of Romanian policy toward Moldova see: «Политика Румынии по отношению к Молдове» ["Romanian Policy toward Moldova"], *Voprosik*, 20.07.2012, <http://voprosik.net/politika-rumynii-v-otnoshenii-moldavii/>; see some information on recent developments in Romanian-Moldovan relations presented by Woehrel, Steven: "Moldova: Background and U.S. Policy", *CRS Report*, 23.04.2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21981.pdf>.

similar Russian and Romanian policies toward Moldova and that can be well captured through the lenses of analysis of linkage and leverage nexus.

Concept of linkage and leverage nexus

The main purpose of the case study of Russian policy toward Moldova approached with a process tracing method was to test the concept of the spiral nexus of linkage and leverage in the context of asymmetric interdependent relations between powerful and weak regional actors. The result of the test can be considered positive as the main hypothesis is proven to be plausible. The task of the empirical research to find a causal mechanism of transformation of linkage into leverage has been achieved. The analysis shows that a multidimensional set of links between Russia and Moldova has been utilized by Moscow in order to create an external direct and indirect influence on the political decision process in Chisinau in regard to the foreign policy orientation of the country. It is important to note, that the research did not put forward a task to decide whether the Russian leverage on Moldova is effective or not, nor did it seek to find an answer to the widely debated question among political scientists of how to measure the effect of power. Instead, the theoretical objective was rather to understand how power in asymmetric interdependent relationships can be produced and what forms it may acquire.

The thesis differentiates between two forms of leverage – soft and hard. However, the two notions have nothing in common with Joseph Nye’s conceptualization of soft and hard power. The terms ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ are used for the convenience of classification and a better understanding of the mechanism of linkage and leverage nexus. The study avoids discrimination between soft and hard as military and economic vs. non-military and non-economic. Instead, of Nye’s attempt to understand ‘softness’ and ‘hardness’ of power according to the nature of the means it uses²⁷⁴ this study defines soft and hard leverage taking into consideration the effect it has in regard to sovereignty exercised by the authority of the target state. Thus, it allows arguing that the ‘threatened sovereignty’ can serve as a differential factor between ‘softness’ and ‘hardness’ of leverage used against a weak state, and the analysis of Russian policy toward Moldova corroborates this conception. This approach may even explain why, for example, such foreign policy tools traditionally attributed to ‘soft power’ as penetration of external values (proclaimed to be ‘attractive’) through means of NGO networks, public diplomacy, media, national branding, etc., may lead to grave consequences for the state building of certain nations.

Some scholars attempt to give a definitive discrimination between ‘bad’ and ‘good’ soft power based on the judgement of its ideological component and use for this purpose a contested

²⁷⁴ See Nye, Joseph S.: *Soft Power* (2004).

notion, “democracy” and associated with it such terms as “human rights”.²⁷⁵ But this approach to comprehend mechanisms of soft power, however, limits the capabilities of a researcher to encompass all dimensions of the foreign policy tools of a powerful state used against its weak partner. Instead, the concept of linkage-leverage nexus takes into consideration Steven Lukes’ appeal to study the ways and mechanisms in which powerful agents “influence others’ conceptions of their own interests”, and shape (not only limiting but also widening) personal reasoning and identity of other actors so that their aspirations, expectations and wants were concurred with the interests and wants of the powerful actor.²⁷⁶ The use of leverage generated from strong Russian linkage to its compatriots abroad demonstrates how power can work not only to limit the scope of one’s self-identity but also to widen it by emphasizing certain aspects of his/her identity important to the external power. I refer to this functional form of linkage-leverage nexus as potential activity.

The analysis of Russian policy in Moldova demonstrates that potential leverage is targeted at individuals and certain social groups such as political and business elite as well as people with pro-Russian sentiments and those supporting traditional values. One of the purposes of potential leverage is to create a fear among the target audience that the beneficial links to them can be cut off and this would damage their social, political or economic situation. Another purpose of potential linkage is to create a discourse that potential widening and densifying of existent links may bring more benefits for these individuals and social groups. The study points to an important finding of the analysis: the links attributed to the cultural dimension are actively engaged in producing soft as well as hard leverage and they are instrumentalized through both potential and actual mechanisms of linkage-leverage nexus. Therefore, they should not be neglected by Foreign Policy analysts, and the thesis invites scholars to include cultural dimensions into the study of linkage and leverage as two factors of external influence and in broader discussions on power.

In this context, the thesis puts forward an assumption that requires comparative study between Russia’s and the EU’s linkage-leverage nexus in the post-Soviet space. I suppose that in terms of socio-cultural links Russia and the EU have a difference that puts the former in an advantageous position: if the EU’s policy is based on spreading and planting overwhelmingly new values within the post-Soviet states, Russia is just intensifying those values that are common to the societies of their partner states due to their shared history and experience. Penetration of new values is more likely to be opposed by local populations and such an attitude of society might be used by alternative powers to antagonize the values of the ‘invader’, while the revival of common values

²⁷⁵ Popescu, Nicu: “Russia’s Soft Power Ambitions” (2006); Roslycky, Lada L.: “Russia’s smart power in Crimea” (2013); Nye, Joseph S.: *Soft Power* (2004).

²⁷⁶ Lukes, Steven: “Power and the battle for hearts and minds: on the bluntness of soft power”, in: Berenskoetter, Felix & Williams, M. J. (eds.): *Power in World Politics*, Routledge, 2007 – pp. 83-97.

and positive experiences from the shared past can make people be well disposed toward a ‘fraternal’ country using such policy.

If a potential mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus threatens the target actor with cutting links beneficial and essential to it, the actual one implements the threats into concrete foreign policy actions really cutting off these links. The summary tables of empirical research of potential-actual and soft-hard leverage generated from linkage present the reinforcing tendencies between causes and outcomes as it is possible to see how a certain outcome of causal mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus transforms into a new linkage that in turn transforms again into leverage. It is also possible to see the high level of inter-connection between activities and impact of the causal mechanism of linkage-leverage nexus that actually creates a solid and integrated structure of the policy based on a spiral nexus of linkage and leverage.

There is also another important difference between potential and actual leverages that has been revealed during the analysis: if potential leverage constructs discourses and threats, often based on common cultural values, and that represents power as such, in actual leverage the power of the dominant actor is projected through policy actions, while the references to common cultural values are aimed only at underpinning and legitimizing such actions. It is important to bear in mind that in the linkage-leverage nexus concept culture is understood as a set of links comprising proximity of language, ethnicity, religion and identities between interacting states as well as their shared past and historical memory that contributes to common patterns of behaviour. The cultural dimension of interdependency is an essential characteristic of the relationships between the post-Soviet republics and Russia. Since the launch of the EaP, Russia has intensified its extensive cultural linkage to the post-Soviet states that fell under the ‘spell’ of the EU, and has activated its leverage produced from cultural links. The case of Moldova illustrates the process of such utilization of cultural linkage.

The linkage-leverage nexus fits in well to the study of Russian foreign policy toward the post-Soviet states, since it is a kind of prism through which patterns and mechanisms of bilateral relations between Russia and a particular post-Soviet state can be captured both as a picture at a certain moment or a set of pictures at a given period of time. In other words, it allows researchers to analyse the Russian policy toward this state in statics and/or dynamics. This approach opens up new perspectives for comparative analysis of Russian foreign policy. The ‘pictures’ of the Russian linkage-leverage nexus from different periods of time can be compared between each other, and so this analytical framework can be useful for historians interested in the development of Russian relations with its neighbours. Since Russian policies vary in accordance with distinctions of the relationships with diverse post-Soviet states, the approaches based on linkage-leverage nexus concept can be employed for comparing Russian policies toward each of these countries to reveal

their sub-regional patterns. Given the accrescent West-vs.-Russia geopolitical rivalry, it is important to look at the similarities and differences between Russian linkage-leverage policy toward the post-Soviet countries and linkage and leverage of the Western countries.

In more general terms, the presented analytical framework, which adjusts the concepts of linkage and leverage to the 'realities' of the post-Soviet space and Russian policies, brings closer structuralist and agent-centred approaches and it is more inclusive than concepts of linkage and leverage originally presented by representatives of the Democratization theory, Levitsky and Way. Thus, the analytical approach developed in this paper can be useful also for the analysis of the Western influence, where the linkage and leverage similarly to the Russian ones could be understood as elements integrated within a single causal mechanism (nexus), in which they appear to be closely interconnected factors of the external influence. At the same time, the thesis demonstrates the fact that the two forms of external influence are not prerogatives of the West alone, as the Democratization theory initially had it, and so the linkage-leverage nexus can be applicable also to other powerful regional states in Asia, Africa or Latin America.

I would suggest the following 10-point guideline for a researcher who intends to analyse asymmetrically interdependent relations between a regional dominant state and its dependent partner/s by employing the linkage-leverage nexus concept:

1. Find a case of asymmetrically interdependent cooperation in the region of interest.
2. Define objectives of the powerful actor in the region and its interests in a certain dependent state or group of states, i.e. role of these states in the region and expectations of the powerful state from their policies.
3. Identify objectives of the dependent state or group of states and their expectations of the policy of the dominant regional player and alternative influential external actors.
4. Indicate the most important dimensions of relations and links between the parties to cooperation, i.e. points of concentration of their linkage.
5. Identify vulnerabilities of the weak state/s dependent on the relations with the powerful counterpart and observe what support they can get from other external actors.
6. Identify domestic agents within the weak state who serve as providers of external influence and/or the target audience of the powerful actor.
7. Gather the relevant research material in accordance with the chosen methodology and time framing.
8. Depict the causal process of transformation of linkage to leverage by the dominant actor given the points of concentration of linkage, vulnerabilities of the target state/s, and involvement of various agents.

9. For the convenience of the research and deeper understanding of the process it would be useful to discriminate between hard and soft effects of leverage possibly on the basis of presence and absence of a threat to the sovereignty of the target state.
10. Discuss the results of analysis and continuity or alterations of the relations between the dominant and dependent parties.

As every newly understood concept, linkage-leverage nexus requires careful employment. A researcher must pay attention to the difficulties of choosing proper methods and setting right framing as a scope of research material depends much on this. If a researcher does not have much time and enough resources at his disposal (for example, a Master student) he should choose a pragmatic method focused on concrete policy practices, for example, in political linguistics it could be “speech acts” of decision-makers. If short on time it would be better for a researcher to employ analytical framework based on linkage-leverage nexus to set a short period for the investigation. I advise that the starting point for the analysis of a regional actor’s foreign policy to be a radical change in the global, regional or internal political environment that pushed the actor to active transformation of linkage to leverage in order to secure its position (influence) and achieve concrete foreign policy goals. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that the density of links is a result of a longstanding multidimensional cooperation among the partners, and therefore a retrospective glance to history is essential for comprehending the process. In this regard, the cultural links, deep-rooted in language, ethnicity, religion, common historical memory, etc. should not be neglected. This is especially important when we analyse asymmetrical interdependence of international actors at a regional scale and meso-level of their relations.

I would also urge future researchers who will use this analytical approach in their study of regional politics to give consideration to further conceptualization of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ leverage. As it was stated above, in my opinion, a proper discrimination between ‘softness’ and ‘hardness’ should be based on the effect the leverage brings rather than merely its nature and sources. However, the IR grand question, what effect can be considered ‘soft’ and which one can be seen as ‘hard’, still requires further elaborations. Obviously, different agents within the state can treat the same external leverage and its effect differently. This thesis proposes to proceed from the factor of threatened (or not threatened) sovereignty, which is based rather on a traditional understanding of sovereignty, i.e. from the perspective of the modern (‘Westphalian’) state. But what a differential factor of soft and hard leverage can be if we look from the perspective of a ‘post-modern’ state whose scope of sovereignty is limited by various external and internal dynamics and the state is not understood anymore as a ‘container’ but a ‘floating’ and non-linear polity? This question is still open, and I hope a differential factor between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ types of leverage that would be more inclusive for these dynamics will be found in future studies on nexus of linkage and leverage.

Bibliography

Theory, Methodology and Concept-building

Books and chapters in an edited volume:

- Beach, Dereck & Pedersen, Rasmus Brun: *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2013.
- Bourdieu, Pierre: *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, London: Routledge, 1989.
- Checkel, Jeffrey T.: “Process tracing”, in: Klotz, Audie & Prakash, Deepa (eds.): *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 – pp. 114-127.
- Douglas, Jack D.: *Creative interviewing*, Beverly Hills, London, New Delhi: SAGE, 1985.
- George, Alexander & Bennett, Andrew: *Case studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.
- Horowitz, Donald L.: *Ethnic groups in conflict*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.
- Keohane, Robert O. & Nye, Joseph S.: *Power and Interdependence* (2nd ed.), New York: Longman, 2001.
- Klotz, Audie: “Case Selection”, in: Klotz, Audie & Prakash, Deepa (eds.): *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008 – pp. 43-58.
- Koselleck, Reinhart: *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Cambridge, London: The MIT Press, 1985.
- Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan: *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Lukes, Steven: “Power and the battle for hearts and minds: on the bluntness of soft power”, in: Berenskoetter, Felix and Williams, M. J. (eds.): *Power in World Politics*, Routledge, 2007 – pp. 83-97.
- Nye, Joseph S.: *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
- Pridham, Geoffrey (ed.): *Encouraging Democracy: the International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991.
- Reilly, Rosemary C.: “Process tracing”, in: *Encyclopedia of case study research*, Los Angeles, London: Sage, 2010.
- Stake, Robert E.: “Case Studies”, in: Denzin, Norman K. et al. (eds.): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2000.
- Vachudova, Milada Anna: *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration After Communism*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Whitehead, Laurence (ed.): *The international Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Бусыгина Ирина: *Политическая регионалистика* [Busygina, Irina: *Political regionalistics*], Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006.
- Гусейнов Гасан: *Карта нашей Родины: идеологема между словом и телом* [Gusejnov, Gasan: *Map of our motherland: Ideologema between word and body*], Moscow: OGI, 2005.

Кортунов Сергей: *Мировая политика* [Kortunov, Sergey: *World Politics*], Moscow: Publishing house of the State University – Higher School of Economics, 2007.

Тишков Валерий: «Конфликт в сложных обществах: предисловие к русскому изданию» // *Этнополитический конфликт: пути трансформации: настольная книга Бергховского центра* [Tishkov Valery: “Conflict in the complex societies: preface to the Russian edition”, in: *Ethnopolitical conflicts: ways to transformation: Berghof Handbook*], Moscow: Nauka, 2007.

Journal articles, working papers, policy briefs and expert viewpoints:

Brezhneva, Anna & Ukhova, Daria: “Russia as a Humanitarian Aid Donor”, *OXFAM discussion paper*, 15.07.2013, <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-russia-humanitarian-donor-150713-en.pdf>.

Donnelly, Jack: “Sovereign Inequalities and Hierarchy in Anarchy: American Power and International Society”, *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2006.

Dubnov, Arkady: “Tashkent Goes, Problems Stay: Will the CSTO Overcome the Conceptual Crisis?”, *Russia in Global Affairs*, 07.10.2012, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Tashkent-Goes-Problems-Stay-15692>.

Gorenburg, Dmitry: “External Support for Central Asian Military and Security Forces”, *SIPRI Working Paper*, January 2014.

Kagan, Robert: “New Europe, Old Russia”, *The Washington Post*, 06.02.2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/05/AR2008020502879.html>.

Krasner, Stephen D.: “Abiding Sovereignty”, *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2001.

Kudors, Andis: “‘Russian World’ – Russia’s Soft Power Approach to Compatriots Policy”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, Vol. 10, No. 81, 16.06.2010.

Landsbergis, Vytautas: “Concepts of ‘abroad’: near and remote neighborhood of Lithuania”, *Geopolitika*, 29.06.2007, <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=915>.

Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “International Linkage and Democratization”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July 2005.

Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide”, *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2007.

Levitsky, Steven & Way, Lukan A.: “Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 4, July 2006.

Mattern, Janice Bially: “Why ‘Soft Power’ Isn’t So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics”, *Millennium-Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2005.

Pop, Adrian & Pascariu, Gabriela & Anglitoiu, George & Purcarus, Alexandru: “Romania and the Republic of Moldova – Between the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Prospect of EU Enlargement”, in: Pre-accession impact studies III, Study No.5, *IER*, http://www.ier.ro/sites/default/files/documente/Studiideimpact_PaisIII/Pais3_studiu_5_en.pdf (last access 07.09.2014).

Popescu, Nicu: “Russia’s Soft Power Ambitions”, *CEPS Policy Brief*, No.115, October 2006.

Sasse, Gwendolyn: “Linkages and the promotion of democracy: the EU’s eastern neighbourhood”, *Democratization*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2013.

Smith, Dan: “Trends and causes of armed conflicts”, *The Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, August 2004, http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/smith_handbook.pdf.

Tolstrup, Jakob: “When can External Actors Influence Democratization? Leverage, Linkages, and Gatekeeper Elites”, *CDDRL working papers*, No. 118, July 2010.

Vysotskaya Guedes Vieira, Alena & Mourato Pinto, João: “EU’s Eastern Partnership, the Russia-led integration initiatives in the post-Soviet Space, and the options of the ‘states-in-between’”, *IPRIS Viewpoint*, No. 127, 2013.

Zayonchkovskaya, Janna: “Migration in Modern Russia”, *RIAC*, 11.06.2013, http://russiancouncil.ru/en/inner/?id_4=1952#top.

Макарычев Андрей: «Метафоры регионализма в международно-политическом дискурсе» [Makarychev, Andrey: “Metaphors of regionalism in international political discourse”], *IPF*, <http://www.policy.hu/makarychev/rus17.htm> (last access 02.09.2014).

Сергунин Александр: «“Восточное партнерство”: вызов российской дипломатии в Восточной Европе» [Sergunin Aleksander: “‘The Eastern Partnership’: a challenge to Russia’s diplomacy in Eastern Europe”], *Vestnik of Voronezh State University: linguistics and intercultural communication*, No.1, 2010.

Толочко Петр: «Цивилизационный выбор?» [Tolochko, Petr: “Civilizational choice?”], 2000, Vol. 576, No. 40, October 7-13, 2011.

Чудиновских Ольга: «Статистика трудовой миграции в странах сети МИРПАЛ» [Chudinovskih, Olga: “Statistics of labour migration in the MiRPAL network countries”], *MiRPAL report*, 2011.

Шевченко Алексей: «Мифологема «цивилизационного выбора» и ее роль в современной пропаганде» [Shevchenko Alexei: “Mythologeme of ‘civilizational choice’ and its role in modern propaganda”], *Dialog.ua*, 19.06.2006, <http://dialogs.org.ua/ru/project/page7752.html>.

Officials and semi-officials:

Agreement on Free Trade Zone of the CIS, St. Petersburg, October 18, 2011, <http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/index.html#reestr/view/text?doc=3183> (last access on 20.02.2014).

CSTO structure, <http://www.odkb-csto.org/structure/> (last access 20.02.2014).

Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation approved by President on February 12, 2013, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D (last access 01.03.2013).

Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation up to 2025 approved by President on June 13, 2012, <http://www.fms.gov.ru/upload/iblock/07c/kgmp.pdf> (last access 18.03.2014).

Interview with Head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Ilarion of Volokolamsk, *Kommersant*, 09.12.2013, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2363789?isSearch=True> (in Rus.).

Interview with Rector of Moscow Lomonosov State University, Victor Sadovnichiy, *Vestnik Kavkaza*, 25.11.2013, <http://www.vestikavkaza.ru/interview/Viktor-Sadovnichiy-U-nas-net-drugoy-skrepy-tolko-mentalitet-i-yazyk.html> (in Rus.).

“Labour Migration as a Factor of Development in Space of the Commonwealth Independent States”, *Background document to the CIS Member States’ Joint Statement on the Regional Position on Migration*, Preparatory Meeting of the Heads of the Migration Agencies of the CIS Member States for the 2013 High-Level Dialogue of the UN General Assembly on International Migration

and Development, <http://iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/What-We-Do/docs/CIS-HLD-Background-document-final-ENG.pdf> (last access 20.02.2014).

Media and other sources:

Aalto, Pami: lecture on “Interview methods” within the course *Major Methodological Orientations in the Social Sciences and Humanities*, lecture, University of Tampere, 28.09.2011.

Birnbaum, Michael: “Ukraine factories equip Russian military despite support for rebels”, *The Washington Post*, 15.08.2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukraine-factories-equip-russian-military-despite-support-for-rebels/2014/08/15/9c32cde7-a57c-4d7b-856a-e74b8307ef9d_story.html.

Busygina, Irina: lecture on “Regional conflicts and method of their resolution” within the course *Regional Development: Risks and Opportunities*, MGIMO-University, Moscow, 29.11.2012.

Erlanger, Steven: “The World; Learning to Fear Putin’s Gaze”, *NYT*, 25.02.2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/25/weekinreview/the-world-learning-to-fear-putin-s-gaze.html>.

List of universities-members of *the Eurasian Universities Association*, <http://www.eau-msu.ru/education> (in Rus.) (last access 02.03.2014).

Monitoring of Mutual Investments in CIS Countries, *MEMO & Centre for Integration Studies of the EABR*, http://www.eabr.org/e/research/centreCIS/projectsandreportsCIS/invest_monitoring/ (last access on 20.02.2014).

Safire, William: “On Language; The Near Abroad”, *NYT*, 22.05.1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/22/magazine/on-language-the-near-abroad.html>

“Ukraine forbids Moscow Mayor to enter to its territory”, *UNIAN*, 12.05.2008, <http://www.unian.info/world/115240-ukraine-forbids-moscow-mayor-to-enter-its-territory.html>.

«В Крыму на деньги Кадырова построили мечеть» [“A mosque was built to Crimea with money from Kadurov”], *Rosbalt*, 23.08.2010, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/ukraina/2010/08/23/764575.html>.

«Для Минобороны актуален вопрос создания на территории Армении корпорации “АрмРостехнологии”» [“Creation of the corporation ‘ArmRostehnologii’ in Armenia a topical issue for the Defense Ministry”], *Novosti-Armenia*, 17.12.2013 <http://www.newsarmenia.ru/defence/20131217/42993152.html>.

«Концепцию проекта «Евразийский регион» на международной научно-практической конференции озвучила Нина Штански» [“Nina Shtanski voiced the concept of the “Eurasian region” at the international scientific-practical conference”], *Perviy Respublikansky Telekanal*, 25.09.2013 <http://tv.pgtrk.ru/news/20130925/11390>

«МГУ рассматривает возможность создания филиалов в КНР и Киргизии» [“MSU is considering the establishment of branches in China and Kyrgyzstan”], *RIA*, 03.12.2013, <http://ria.ru/society/20131203/981656446.html>.

«Украина и Россия договорились о совместном выпуске “Русланов”», [“Ukraine and Russia agreed on a joint release of ‘Ruslans’ “], *LB.ua*, 17.07.2013, http://economics.lb.ua/business/2013/07/17/213352_ukraina_rossiya_dogovorilis.html.

«Форум молодых русскоязычных журналистов стран СНГ открывается в Пензе» [“Forum of young Russian speaking journalists of the CIS countries opens in Penza”], *RIA*, 11.06.2013, <http://ria.ru/society/20130611/942639801.html>.

Case Study

Documents:

Agreement on principles of a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Transdnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, 21 July 1992, translation available at:

<http://www.stefanwolff.com/files/Russian-Moldovan-Ceasefire-Agreement.pdf> (last access 14.09.2013).

Constitution of Republic of Moldova, 29.07.1994,

<http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?id=311496&lang=2>, (last access 01.03.2014).

Joint Declaration Adopted Following Talks between President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, President of the Republic of Moldova Vladimir Voronin and Head of Transdnistria Igor Smirnov, Barvikha, 18.03.2009,

http://www.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/01D19D444863EDD5C325757E00524650?OpenDocument (last access 14.09.2013).

Law No. 173 On the basic principles of the legal status of localities on the left bank of the Dniester (Transdnistria), 22.07.2005,

<http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=313004&lang=2> (last access 28.05.2014).

Law No. 344 On special legal status of Gagauzia (Gagauz-Yeri), 23.12.1994,

<http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=311656&lang=2> (last access 01.09.2013).

Memorandum (Meeting of the Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Dmitry Medvedev on June 4-5 2010 in Meseberg), <http://www.russianmission.eu/sites/default/files/user/files/2010-06-05-meseberg-memorandum.pdf> (last access 29.05.2014).

Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 05.02.2010, translation of the document:

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf (last access 20.08.2014).

Minutes No. 304 of the State Duma Session, 06.10.2006.

Protocol on the results of the meeting of Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation on Transdnistria D.O. Rogozin and President of Pridnestrovie E.V. Shevchuk, Moscow, 25.10.2013,

<http://president.gospmr.ru/ru/news/protokol-po-itogam-rabochey-vstrechi-zamestitelya-predsedatelya-pravitelstva-rossiyskoy> (last access 03.06.2014).

Resolution of the Russian Government On the introduction of customs duties on goods being imported from the Republic of Moldova No. 376, 31.07.2014,

<http://government.ru/media/files/41d4f6cb7402068ecc9c.pdf>.

Suspension of the Government Decision on the Airport's concession, Notification No. 39a/2013, *Constitutional Court*, 10.09.2013,

<http://www.constcourt.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=7&id=485&t=/Prezentare-generală/Serviciul-de-presă/Noutăți/Suspendarea-actiunii-Hotararii-Guvernului-privind-concesionarea-Aeroportului-Chisinau-Sesizarea-nr-39a2013> (last access 16.09.2013).

Official speeches, statements, interviews and press releases:

About Autonomous Non-profit Organization “Eurasian integration”,

<http://www.eurasianintegration.ru/?q=node/71> (last access 17.09.2013) (in Rus.).

Appeal of the PMR Supreme Council to the President, the State Duma, the Council of Federation of the Russian Federation, OUN, OSCE, President of PMR, 16.04.2014, <http://www.vspmr.org/News/?ID=8843> (in Rus.).

Briefing by Dmitry Rogozin and Valeriu Lazar, Moldova, 02.09.2013, <http://tsn.md/news/politica/item/1549-no-comment-dmitriy-rogozin-energetika-vazhna-osobenno-v-preddverii-holodnoy-zimy-i-oseni-nadeemsiya-vy-ne-zamerznite> (in Rus.).

Congratulations on the 22nd Anniversary of introduction of Russian peacekeepers to Transdnistria of the PMR President, Evgeniy Shevchuk, *Novosti Pridnestrov'ya*, 29.07.2014, <http://novostipmr.com/ru/news/14-07-29/prezident-pmr-mirotvorcheskaya-operaciya-segodnya-kak-nikogda>.

Congratulations on the 22nd anniversary of the beginning of the peacekeeping operation in Transdnistria of the PMR Co-Chair of the JCC, Oleg Belyakov, <http://www.okk-pridnestrovie.org/p0384.htm> (last access 01.08.2014).

Interview transcript: Traian Basescu, president of Romania, *Financial Times*, 31.12.2010, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/2f1b77e8-06e0-11e0-8c29-00144feabdc0.html#axzz336GCHrPI>.

Interview with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Moldova, Valery Kuzmin, 09.12.2010, *AllMoldova*, <http://www.allmoldova.com/int/interview/valerii-kuzmin-091210.html> (in Rus.).

Interview with Russian Ambassador to Moldova Farid Muhametshin, *ITAR-TASS*, 20.08.2012, <http://itar-tass.com/opinions/interviews/1278> (in Rus.).

Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, No. 71 (4856), 20.04.2012 (in Rus.).

Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, *Kommersant*, 12.05.2014, <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2468545> (in Rus.).

Interview with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, *Rossiia 24*, 02.09.2013, <http://www.vesti.ru/videos?vid=534252> (in Rus.).

Interview with Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador for Special Assignments, Sergey Gubarev, *Kommersant*, 28.05.2013, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/17258> (in Rus.).

Interview with State Secretary - Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Grigory Karasin, *RIA*, 18.06.2013, <http://old.rian.ru/interview/20130618/944201121.html> (in Rus.).

Meeting between President of the PMR Evgeny Shevchuk and Deputy Chairperson of the Government of the Russian Federation, Special Representative of the Russian President for Pridnestrovia Dmitry Rogozin and Briefing by Evgeny Shevchuk and Dmitry Rogozin following results of the meeting in Tiraspol, *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik Pridnestrov'ya*, No. 2 (8), December 2012 (in Rus.).

“Moldova may reunite with Romania in next 25 years – Basescu”, *RIA*, 30.11.2010, <http://en.ria.ru/world/20101130/161565516.html>.

“Moldovan Behavior on Victory Day Inadequate – Russian Foreign Ministry”, *RIA*, 12.05.2014, <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140512/189769210/Moldovan-Behavior-on-Victory-Day-Inadequate--Russian-Foreign.html>.

On the supply of products from the Republic of Moldova, *Rospotrebnadzor*, 11.09.2013, http://rospotrebnadzor.ru/news?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_w7Ci&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=exclusive&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-3&p_p_col_count=1&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_struts_action=%2Fasset_publisher%2Fexport_jour

[nal_article&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_groupId=10156&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_articleId=3081062&_101_INSTANCE_w7Ci_targetExtension=pdf](#) (in Rus.).

Press-conference of Dmitry Rogozin and Evgeny Shevchuk held at the end of a ceremony to lay a memorial capsule at the construction site of pediatric hospital of the Republican Center for Mother and Child in Tiraspol, *PSP_PMR*, 03.09.2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvYK7Oasitg>.

Press-conference of the Chairman of the State Duma committee on property and coordinator of Inter-factional parliamentary group for cooperation with the Supreme Council of PMR, Sergey Gavrilov, in October 2012, <http://vestnik.mfa-pmr.org/index.php?newsid=234> (in Rus.) (last access 25.01.2014).

Population census 2004: Demographic, national, language and cultural characteristics: Population by nationalities, mother tongue and language usually spoken, *National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova*, <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&id=2234> (last access 15.09.2013).

Rogozin, Dmitry: «Молдавские евроинтеграторы в бешенстве», [“Moldovan eurointegrators are furious”], 02.02.2014, <https://www.facebook.com/dmitry.rogozin?fref=ts>.

Rogozin, Dmitry: «Так или иначе провокация Кишинева будет иметь серьезные последствия для наших двусторонних отношений» [“Anyway, provocation of Chisinau will have serious consequences for our bilateral relations”], 11.05.2014, <https://www.facebook.com/dmitry.rogozin?fref=ts>.

Romanian Foreign Minister criticizes President Basescu’s remarks on Moldova, *ITAR-TASS*, 30.11.2013, <http://en.itar-tass.com/world/709623>.

Speech of a deputy of the Russian State Duma, Roman Khudyakov, *Transcript of meeting of the State Duma*, 18.12.2013, <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3982/> (in Rus.) (last access 01.02.2014).

Speech of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly Speaker, Dmitry Konstantinov, *gagauzinfo.md*, 17.09.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=14122> (in Rus.).

Speech of Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Dmitry Rogozin, at the round table “European integration: international experience and perspectives for Moldova”, *TSN*, 03.09.2013, <http://tsn.md/news/politica/item/1552-rogozin-pered-tem-kak-vstupit-v-es-vam-prividetsya-vstupit-v-nato-i-otrabotat-eto-pravilo> (in Rus.).

Speech of the Head of Gagauzia, Mikhail Formuzal, at the International Conference “The modern integration processes: experience and prospects” in Chisinau on 28.06.2013, *Vse.md*, <http://vse.md/novosti/item/2466-moldove-ne-nuzhen-bezvizovyy-rezhim-s-es-bashkan-gagauzii> (in Rus.).

Statement of the Head of the Department for Cooperation with the CIS countries under the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, Alexander Tsybulsky, (cit. in: Малышева Елена: «Россия готова отменить льготный миграционный режим для Молдавии» [Malysheva, Elena: “Russia is ready to abolish preferential migration regime for Moldova”], *RBC*, 06.06.2014, <http://top.rbc.ru/politics/06/06/2014/928881.shtml>).

Statement of the State Duma of the Russian Federation On the Results of the Referendum in Transdnistria on September 17, 2006, adopted on 06.10.2006, *Parlamentskaya gazeta*, No. 171, 12.01.2006 (in Rus.).

Statements of PMR President, Evgeniy Shevchuk, at a rally devoted to the 22nd Anniversary of introduction of Russian peacekeepers to Transdnistria in Bendery, *Novosti Pridnestrov’ya*, 29.07.2014, <http://novostipmr.com/ru/news/14-07-29/v-benderah-sostoyalsya-miting-v-chest-22-y-godovshchiny-vvoda> (in Rus.).

Statements of Russian Foreign Ministry Ambassador for Special Assignments, Sergey Gubarev, *RIA*, 13.10.2010, <http://ria.ru/politics/20121013/773361328.html> (in Rus.).

Statements of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov, 03.10.2006, http://mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/F825D0C283952DACC32571FF002D50C2?OpenDocument (in Rus.).

Transcript of Remarks and Replies to Media Questions by Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov at Joint Press Conference with Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Luis Amado After Their Talks, Lisbon, 18.09.2006, http://mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/59107B3E4741BA2EC32571EE003667B0?OpenDocument.

Vladimir Putin's speech at Russian Popular Front conference, 5.12.2013, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/6371> (last access 10.12.2013).

«Лавров: референдум в Приднестровье – реакция на фактическую блокаду» [“Lavrov: referendum in Transdnistria reaction to virtual blockade”], *RIA*, 15.09.2006, <http://ria.ru/politics/20060915/53909153.html> (last access 28.05.2014).

«МИД РФ «видит» будущее Приднестровья в качестве «особого района» Молдавии» [“Russian Foreign Ministry ‘sees’ the future of Transdnistria as a ‘special district’ of Moldova”], *Regnum*, 29.07.2012, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/ukraina/1556184.html>.

«МИД РФ выступил за «переформатирование» миротворчества в Приднестровье» [“Russian Foreign Ministry called for “reformatting” peacemaking in Transdnistria”], *RIA*, 29.03.2011, <http://ria.ru/politics/20110329/358935791.html>.

«Михаил Формузал заявил о депортации молдавских гастарбайтеров из России» [“Mikhail Formuzal said on deportation of Moldovan migrant workers from Russia”], *Kommersant*, 11.09.2013, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/20556>.

«Москва обуславливает подписание Соглашения о защите молдавских мигрантов» [“Moscow conditions the signing of the Agreement on the Protection of Moldovan migrants”], *Teleradio Moldova*, 29.08.2013, <http://www.trm.md/ru/politic/moscova-pune-conditii-la-semnarea-acordului-privind-protectia-migranilor-moldoveni>.

«Об обращении Россельхознадзора к Национальному агентству безопасности пищевых продуктов Республики Молдова» [“On appeal of Rosselkhozadzor to the National Agency of food safety of the Republic of Moldova”], *Rosselkhozadzor*, 01.07.2014, <http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/news/10305.html>.

«О введении временных ограничений на ввоз в Российскую Федерацию растительной продукции из Республики Молдова» [“Temporary restrictions on the import into the Russian Federation of plant products from the Republic of Moldova”], *Rosselkhozadzor*, 18.07.2014, <http://www.fsvps.ru/fsvps/news/10699.html>.

“О запрете ввоза молдавской плодоовощной продукции” [“About ban on imports of Moldovan fruit and vegetable products”], *Rospotrebnadzor*, 21.07.2014, http://www.rospotrebnadzor.ru/about/info/news/news_details.php?ELEMENT_ID=2109.

«О рабочем визите посла России в Молдавии Ф.М. Мухаметшина в Гагаузии» [“On Working Visit of Russian ambassador in Moldova F.M. Mukhametshin to Gagauzia”], *Russian embassy in Moldova*, 08.04.2014, http://moldova.mid.ru/8?p_p_id=62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_struts_action=%2Fjournal_articles%2Fview&_62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_returnToFullPageURL=http%3A%2F%2Fmoldova.mid.ru%2F8%3Fp_p_id%3D62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-

[2%26p_p_col_count%3D1& 62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_groupId=118515& 62_INSTANC E_FiPy7V4hKnTR_articleId=4441247& 62_INSTANCE_FiPy7V4hKnTR_version=1.0.](http://www.newsmoldova.ru/rus/20130213/193012367.html)

«Россия будет увеличивать количество квот на обучение для студентов Молдовы – Мухаметшин» [“Russia will increase the number of quotas on education for students from Moldova – Muhametshin”], *Novosti Moldavii*, 13.02.2013, <http://newsmoldova.ru/rus/20130213/193012367.html>.

«Россия предупредила Молдавию о рисках интеграции с ЕС» [“Russia has warned Moldova about the risks of integration into the EU”], *RIA*, 16.06.2014, <http://ria.ru/economy/20140616/1012148037.html>.

«Роман Худяков предложил признать Приднестровье независимым государством» [“Roman Khudyakov suggested recognize Transnistria as an independent state”], *LDPR*, 03.03.2014, http://ldpr.ru/events/roman_khudyakov_suggested_recognize_transnistria_as_an_independent_state/?is_print=1.

«Святейший Патриарх Кирилл принял участие в торжествах по случаю 200-летия Кишиневско-Молдавской митрополии» [“His Holiness Patriarch Kirill took part in the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Chisinau-Moldovan Metropolitan Church”], *The Moscow Patriarchate*, 07.09.2013, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3216660.html>.

«Советники Яловен поддерживают референдум в Гагаузии, требуя от властей не препятствовать плебисциту» [“Counselors of Ialoveni support the referendum in Gagauzia, demanding the authorities not to prevent the plebiscite”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly*, 30.01.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-moldovy/3460-sovetniki-yaloven-podderzhivayut-referendum-v-gagauzii-trebuya-ot-vlastej-ne-prepyatstvovat-plebistsitu>.

«Соглашение о трудовой миграции выгодно для российско-молдавских отношений – Мухаметшин» [“Agreement on labour migration is beneficial for the Russian-Moldovan relations – Muhametshin”], *Novosti Moldavii*, 13.02.2013, <http://www.newsmoldova.ru/newsline/20130213/193013213.html>.

«Фарид Мухаметшин не видит острой необходимости в открытии консульства в Комрате» [“Farid Mukhametshin sees no urgent need for the opening of the Russian consulate in Comrat”], *Gagauzinfo.md*, 09.04.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=11876>.

«Филипов: В поддержку проведения референдума от 2 февраля в Тараклии было собрано 17500 подписей» [“Filipov: In support of the referendum on February 2 in Taraclia were collected 17500 signatures”], *Gagauzinfo.md*, 24.02.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=11295>.

Expert opinions, reports and statistics:

Balance of Payments of the Prednestrovian Moldavian Republic for 2012, *Trans-Dniester Republican Bank*, <http://www.cbpmr.net/resource/PB2012quarterly.pdf> (last access 16.09.2013).

Boian, Victoria: “Republic of Moldova’s security context: challenges and future perspectives”, in: Rytövuori-Apunen, Helena, et.al (eds.): *Security and Development in a Complex Policy Environment: Perspectives from Moldova, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan*, Yerevan: Limush Printhouse, 2012 – pp. 8-34.

Extended migration profile of the Republic of Moldova, *International Organization for Migration*, 2012, http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=42&products_id=929.

External Trade 2012, National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, <http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=en&idc=336> (last access 14.09.2013).

Hill, William H.: *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West: Lessons from the Moldova-Transdnistria Conflict*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press & Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012.

Interview with Chairman of the Congress of the Moldovan diaspora, Alexander Kalinin, *Puls*, 05.02.2014 <http://puls.md/ru/content/curovaya-legalizaciya> (in Rus.).

Interview with Head of the Sector of Study of Migration and Integration Processes of the Institute of Sociology of RAS, Vladmiri Mukomol, *Rosbalt*, 07.05.2013, <http://www.rosbalt.ru/moscow/2013/05/07/1124414.html> (in Rus.).

Klaus, Kamil: “Russia announces new sanctions on Moldova”, *OSW*, 02.10.2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-10-02/russia-announces-new-sanctions-against-moldova>.

Moldova National Voter Study, January 24 – February 7, 2011, *IRI*, <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2011%20June%206%20Survey%20of%20Moldova%20Public%20Opinion,%20January%2024-February%207,%202011.pdf>.

Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transdnistria, *ICG Europe Report*, No.157, 17 June 2004.

Moldova: Selected Issues, *IMF Country Report*, No. 12/289, October 2012.

Moldovan Expert M, 29.05.2012, Tampere, Finland.

Moldovan Expert W, 29.05.2012, Tampere, Finland.

Morocotilo, Iurie & Fala, Alexandru: “Aspectul migrational in securitatea economica a Republicii Moldova: Analiza institutional” [“The migration aspect in economic security of the Republic of Moldova: institutional analysis”], *Expert-Grup*, February 2014, http://s5.stc.all.kpcdn.net/f/13/attached_file/31/55/3085531.pdf.

Population aged 15 years and over, working or looking for work abroad by country of destination, level of education, age groups, level of education, sex and area, 2000-2012, *National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova*, http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MUN0702_en&ti=Population+aged+15+years+and+over%2C+working+or+looking+for+work+abroad++by+country+of++destination%2C+level+of+education%2C+age+groups%2C+level+of+education%2C+sex+and+area%2C+2000-2012&path=../Database/EN/03%20MUN/MUN07/&lang=3 (last access 15.09.2013).

Public Opinion Barometer, *Institute for Public Policy*, April 2013, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=655> (last access 25.08.2013).

Public Opinion Barometer, *Institute for Public Policy*, April 2014, <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=156&id=681> (last access 23.05.2014).

Socio-economic situation of Republic of Moldova in 2012, *National Bureau of Statistics*, http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Raport_trimestrial/rus/Raport_anual_2012_rus.pdf (in Rus.) (last access 16.09.2013).

Secrieru, Stanislav: “Can Moldova stay on the road to Europe?”, *ECFR Policy Memo*, 28.01.2014, http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR93_MOLDOVA_MEMO_AW.pdf.

Socor, Vladimir: “Moldova’s European Choice Vulnerable to Russian Economic Leverage”, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 11, No. 34, 21 February 2014.

Woehrel, Steven: “Moldova: Background and U.S. Policy”, *CRS Report*, 23.04.2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21981.pdf>.

«Виорел Киврига: Удорожание газа является обычным наказанием за политическую переориентацию» [“Viorel Chivriga: Rise in price of gas is a common punishment for political

reorientationton”], *All Moldova*, 25.06.2012, <http://www.allmoldova.com/int/interview/viorel-chivriga-250612.html> (in Rus).

Девятков Андрей: «Перед вызовом европеизации: политика России в Приднестровском урегулировании (1992-2012)» [Devyatkov, Andrey: *Facing the challenge of Europeanization: Russia's policy in the Transnistrian settlement (1992-2012)*], Tyumen: Publishing house of the Tyumen State University, 2012.

«Политика Румынии по отношению к Молдове» [“Romanian Policy toward Moldova”], *Voprosik*, 20.07.2012, <http://voprosik.net/politika-rumynii-v-otnoshenii-moldavii/>.

Харитоновна Наталья: “Молдова и Приднестровье в контексте новой глобальной энергетической политики” [Kharitonova Natalia: “Moldova and Transdnistria in the context of the new global energy policy”], *Information and Analytical Center for the Study of the socio-political processes in the post-Soviet space*, 18.06.2006, http://www.ia-centr.ru/archive/public_details5255-2.html?id=9.

Media:

“Moldova: Realities of the Association Agreement post-Vilnius Summit”, *Market Watch*, 06.02.2014, <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/moldova-realities-of-the-association-agreement-post-vilnius-summit-2014-02-06>.

“Moldova seizes lists of signatures for Transdnistria’s accession to Russia”, *ITAR-TASS*, 10.05.2014, <http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/731112>.

Press Release of the Congress of the Moldovan diaspora, *IPN*, <http://www.ipn.md/ru/comunicate/3952> (last access 11.06.2014) (in Rus.).

“Russia bans fruits and vegetables from Moldova and Belgium”, *moldova.org*, 09.01.2014, <http://www.moldova.org/russia-bans-fruits-and-vegetables-from-moldova-and-belgium-241023-eng/>.

“Russia’s watchdog asks Moldova to tighten fruit export controls”, *Prime*, 12.9.2013, http://www.1prime.biz/news/search/Russias_watchdog_asks_Moldova_to_tighten_fruit_export_controls/0/%7BF9B0B066-4ACA-49B4-96BA-4546169950FA%7D.uif.

Varshalomidze, Tamila: “Moldova stuck between Russian and the EU”, *Aljazeera*, 05.05.2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/04/moldova-stuck-between-russia-eu-2014426115456162891.html>.

«Безопасность в Приднестровье гарантируется российскими миротворцами» [Security in Transdnistria is guaranteed by Russian peacekeepers”], *Aktualnye Kommentarii*, 15.10.2013, <http://actualcomment.ru/news/17100/>.

«Бизнесмен Ренато Усатый передаст на проведение референдума в Гагаузии полмиллиона леев» [“Businessman Renato Usaty will give half a million MDL to hold a referendum in Gagauzia”], *Omega*, 30.01.2014, <http://omg.md/ru/114489/>.

Бочарова Светлана и Бирюкова Лидия: «Приднестровье как Крым» [Bocharova, Svetlana & Biryukova, Lidia: “Transdnistria like Crimea”], *Vedomosti*, No. 46 (3550), 18.03.2014.

Васильев Иван: «Рекордный заработок: сколько денег мигранты отправляют из России домой» [Vasilyev, Ivan: “Record earnings: how much money migrants sent home from Russia”], *Forbes*, 18.06.2013, <http://www.forbes.ru/infographics/sobytiya/obshchestvo/240714-rekordnyi-zarabotok-skolko-deneg-migranty-otpravlyayut-iz-r>.

«В Москве и Кишиневе прошли митинги в поддержку референдума в Гагаузии» [“In Moscow and Chisinau rallies were held in support of the referendum in Gagauzia”], *Regnum*, 02.02.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1761709.html>.

«Гагаузия идет навстречу России» [“Gagauzia goes towards Russia”], *Gagauzinfo.md*, 06.04.2014, <http://gagauzinfo.md/index.php?newsid=11840>.

«Гагаузская автономия Молдавии готова предоставить налоговые каникулы для виноделов из РФ» [“Gagauz autonomy of Moldova is ready to provide tax exemption for winemakers from Russia”], *ITAR-TASS*, 28.03.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/ekonomika/1082490>.

«Глава Тараклийского района: Гагаузия и Тараклия наведут порядок в Молдавии» [“Head of Taraclia region: Gagauzia and Taraklija will put things in order in Moldova”], *Regnum*, 28.01.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1759451.html>.

«Ещё одна социалистическая партия выступает за национальный референдум об интеграции в Евразийский Союз» [“Another socialist party supports national referendum on integration to the Eurasian Union”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly*, 28.02.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-moldovy/3736-eshche-odna-sotsialisticheskaya-partiya-vystupaet-za-natsionalnyj-referendum-ob-integratsii-v-evrazijskij-soyuz>.

Зайченко Сергей: «Ситуация под контролем, или кто у кого на коротком поводке?» [Zaichenko, Sergey: “Situation under control or who keeps who on a short leash?”], *Pridnestrovie*, 12.10.2010, <http://www.pridnestrovie-daily.net/gazeta/articles/view.aspx?ArticleID=16010>.

Ивашкина Ирина: «Россия поставила статус Приднестровья под вопрос» [Ivashkina, Irina: “Russia questions the status of Transdnistria”], *Kommersant*, 05.02.2014, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/25346>.

«Кишинев призвал подконтрольные ему районы выступить против «сепаратистской» Гагаузии» [“Chisinau called for government-controlled districts to speak out against ‘separatist’ Gagauzia”], *Regnum*, 05.02.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1763258.html>.

«Компартия Молдавии блокирует референдум в Бельцах, а власти преследуют его организаторов» [“The Communist Party of Moldova blocks referendum in Balti and the authorities persecute its organizers”], *Regnum*, 26.02.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1771966.html>.

Манастырлы Сергей: «Гагаузский референдум оплатит российский предприниматель» [Manastyrly, Sergei: “Gagauz referendum to be paid by Russian businessman”], *Kommersant*, 21.01.2014, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/24752>.

Мельник Наталья: «Молдавский бизнес призвали не расслабляться» [Melnik, Natalia: “Moldovan business urged not to relax”], *Kommersant*, 13.06.2014, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/30318>.

«Молдавские социалисты обещали собрать миллион подписей за вступление в Таможенный союз» [“Moldovan Socialists promised to collect one million signatures for the entry into the Customs Union”], *Regnum*, 28.03.2014, <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1784173.html>.

«Молдова и «Газпром» разработают план реструктуризации газового долга» [“Moldova and Gazprom to develop a plan to restructure the gas debt”], *Moldova Inform*, 26.12.2013, <http://moldovainform.md/ru/news/20131227/20979.html>.

«Молдовагаз» и «Газпром» разработают «дорожную карту» для решения проблемы долга за газ Приднестровья» [“Moldovagaz and Gazprom will develop a ‘roadmap’ to solve the gas debt of Transdnistria”], *allmoldova*, 27.12.2013, <http://www.allmoldova.com/moldova-news/1249092385.html>.

«Онищенко разрешил поставки вина из Приднестровья» [“Onischenko allowed wine import from Transdnistria”], *Lenta.ru*, 12.09.2013, <http://lenta.ru/news/2013/09/12/wine/>.

«Парламент Гагаузии утвердил итоги референдума об интеграции в Таможенный союз» [“Parliament of Gagauzia approved the results of the referendum about integration into the Customs Union”], *ITAR-TASS*, 14.02.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/968324>.

«Правда ли, что молдавские производители консервов обвешивают россиян?» [“Is it true that Moldovan producers of canned food shortweight Russians?”], *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 22.07.2014, <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26258/3137569/>.

«Приднестровье должно быть включено в состав России» [“Transdnistria should become a part of Russia”], *Kommersant Plus*, 30.03.2012, <http://arhiv.kommersant.press.md/russia/5204-1-r.html>.

«Применение политических и экономических положений договора об ассоциации может начаться в Молдове уже в октябре» [“Application of political and economic provisions of the Association Agreement may begin in Moldova in October”], *moldnews*, 27.06.2014, <http://www.moldnews.md/rus/news/68497>.

«Провал миссии Рогозина в Кишиневе» [“The failure of Rogozin’s mission in Chisinau”], 21.11.2012, <http://www.pravda.ru/world/formerussr/other/21-11-2012/1135522-rogozin-0/>.

«Результаты референдумов подтверждены» [“Results of the referendums confirmed”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly*, 14.02.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-nsg/3597-rezultaty-referendumov-podtverzhdeny>.

«Роспотребнадзор: в последнее время качество вин из Гагаузии не вызывает нареканий» [“Rospotrebnadzor: lately the quality of wines from Gagauzia does not cause censures”], *ITAR-TASS*, 21.04.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/ekonomika/1135511>.

«Роспотребнадзор готов пустить в РФ продукцию пяти молдавских производителей вина» [“Rospotrebnadzor is ready to let production of five Moldovan wine producers in Russia”], *ITAR-TASS*, 05.03.2014, <http://itar-tass.com/ekonomika/1023478>.

«Роспотребнадзор утвердил поставки вин из Гагаузии» [“Rospotrebnadzor approved supply of wines from Gagauzia”], *vesti.md*, 05.05.2014, <http://vesti.md/?mod=news&id=28103>.

«Российское эмбарго на фрукты и консервы может больно ударить по грузоперевозчикам» [“Russian embargo on fruit and canned products could hit truckers”], *Publika.md*, 22.07.2014, http://ru.publika.md/link_1388171.html.

«Россия запускает в Приднестровье новый социальный проект стоимостью 3,6 млрд рублей» [“Russia launches in Transdnistria a new social project worth 3.6 billion roubles – Russian Ambassador”], *ITAR-TASS*, 29.08.2013, <http://www.itar-tass.com/c13/857803.html>.

«Социалистическая партия Молдовы предлагает конституционный референдум» [“Socialist Party of Moldova proposes constitutional referendum”], *Press-Service of the Gagauzian People’s Assembly*, 13.02.2014, <http://info.halktoplushu.com/index.php/novosti-moldovy/3583-sotsialisticheskaya-partiya-moldovy-predlagaet-konstitutsionnyj-referendum>.

«Транспортные компании Молдовы терпят убытки» [“Transportation companies of Moldova are suffering losses”], *Bessarabskie Novosti*, 25.07.2014, <http://bessnews.ru/economics/10828-perevozchiki-ubytki>.

«Тысячи молдавских гастарбайтеров депортированы из России на родину» [“Thousands of Moldovan guest workers deported from Russia back home”], *Allnews.md*, 20.09.2013 <http://allnews.md/sotsialnie/1049-deportatsia>.

«Финансирование референдумов: миллион найден» [“Financing referendums: million found”], *Official website of Gagauzia*, 21.01.2014, <http://www.gagauzia.md/newsview.php?l=ru&idc=390&id=4773>.

«Цена российского газа для Молдовы снизится до 365 долларов за кубометр» [“Russian gas price for Moldova will decrease to \$ 365 per cubic meter”], *Moldova Inform*, 26.12.2013, <http://moldovainform.md/ru/news/20131226/20968.html>

«ЦИК Приднестровья обнародовал окончательные итоги референдума» [”Transnistrian SEC announces final referendum results”], 26.09.2006,
<http://ria.ru/politics/20060926/54271059.html>.

Шевченко Руслан: «Гастарбайтеры и выборы-2014 в Молдове» [Shevchenko, Ruslan: “Migrant workers and the 2014 elections in Moldova”], *Actualitati.md*, 25.02.2014,
<http://www.actualitati.md/ru/analitika/gastarbaytery-i-vybory-2014-v-moldove>.

Шоларь Евгений: «Болевой прием Дмитрия Рогозина: Москва выставила Молдове полный счет за евроинтеграционный выбор» [Sholar Eugeniy: “A painful hold of Dmitry Rogozin: Moscow has fully billed Moldova for the choice of the European integration”], *Kommersant*, 04.09.2013, <http://www.kommersant.md/node/20299>.

«Юрий Лянкэ уверяет: нет предпосылок для прекращения поставок газа» [“Iurie Leanca says: there are no prerequisites for the termination of gas supply”], *Publica*, 04.09.2013,
http://ru.publika.md/link_1022511.html.

Annex 1: Share of Russia, CIS and the EU in Moldova's trade turnover (2003-2012)

Thousand US dollars

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total trade turnover	2192280,7	2753707,5	3383210,1	3743545,4	5029574,8	6489875,1	4561250,5	5396775,2	7408085,6	7374808,3
CIS	1016917,0	1267187,4	1456434,8	1444427,5	1882586,7	2360255,0	1632197,8	1880854,8	2632680,9	2551840,7
EU	940882,1	1175534,1	1481961,4	1755416,4	2359912,4	2925336,1	2088524,4	2433178,5	3339297,6	3332032,0
Russia	491333,9	565613,4	615195,9	598951,5	731339,0	979829,1	661004,4	990455,7	1448470,4	1472014,1
CIS (%)	46,4	46,0	43,0	38,6	37,4	36,4	35,8	34,9	35,5	34,6
EU (%)	42,9	42,7	43,8	46,9	46,9	45,1	45,8	45,1	45,1	45,2
Russia (%)	22,4	20,5	18,2	16,0	14,5	15,1	14,5	18,4	19,6	20,0
Russia (% within CIS)	48,3	44,6	42,2	41,5	38,8	41,5	40,5	52,7	55,0	57,7

Source: Calculations based on the data from the *National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova*, External Trade, 2012, <http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=en&idc=336> (accessed 14.09.2013)