Soft hegemony in the shared neighbourhood: EU and Russian co-optation of Moldovan and Armenian societies

Isabell Burmester, University of Geneva

Draft paper to be presented at EUSA Conference 2022, 19-21 May 2022, do not cite

This paper contributes to a new research agenda on comparative neighbourhood policy studies examining how the interaction between two aspiring regional powers affect the countries in their shared neighbourhood. The existing scholarship on regional power and hegemony omitted hitherto to sufficiently conceptualize the ways in which major powers interact and the effects these interactions have on other regional actors. This paper zooms in on soft hegemony as a key strategy of regional powers focusing on how regional powers co-opt neighbourhood countries by modifying and re-shaping basic societal norms and values. It conducts a cross-sectional case study analysing EU and Russian strategies of co-optation and the effects on Moldovan and Armenian societies. The analysis is based on documental evidence, survey data, and semi-structured elite interviews conducted in Brussels, Moscow, Moldova, and Armenia between 2019 and 2021. The analysis shows the differences and similarities of EU and Russian soft hegemony and their effect on societies in the shared neighbourhood.

Word count: 9’910

Introduction

The escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian war in February 2022 marked an intensification of the conflict between Russia and the West. In Europe this conflict manifested itself over the last 20 years in a competition over influence in the 'shared neighbourhood' with the advancement of exclusive EU and Eurasian integration projects. In the scholarly literature, neighbourhood countries' engagement in either the EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative or the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are explained not only by material factors but also domestic actors' ideas and values[1]. A recent survey experiment of EaP country's preferences for political cooperation has shown that identification with Europe was a strong predictor for respondents' support for cooperation with the EU whereas the subscription to tradition values predicted support for cooperation with Russia[2]. Strikingly, the survey did not reveal a negative correlation between the importance respondents attributed to traditional and liberal values associated with Russian and the EU respectively. These findings suggest the co-existence of both these value-sets neighbourhood countries' societies.

The literature that looks at the ideational elements of this contest uncovered a clash of narratives between the EU's 'normative discourse' emphasizing liberal democratic values and the Russian 'conservative counter-narrative' stressing cultural, religious, and historical ties[3]. By exporting its internal rules, the EU constructs a normative identity[4] gaining legitimacy[5] and even becoming a 'normative power'[6]. In the 'shared neighbourhood' the political norms promoted by the EU are juxtaposed with the diffusion of authoritarianism by Russia[7]. Yet, a recent study shows that instead of promoting political authoritarian norms, Russia is externalizing conservative ideas and "cannot simply be approached as the mirror image of the norms upheld by the EU or the West"[8]. Indeed, Moscow's soft power strategy includes the development of a national ideology that emphasizes its own values distinctive from - but not opposite to - Western standards[9].

However, critical theorists attest the study of soft power a 'liberal democratic bias' leading to the underestimation of Russia's soft power by IR scholars[10]. This paper seeks to overcome this bias and fill the research gap on ideational aspects of regional powers' policies and strategies in overlapping neighbourhoods[11] by applying a more generic and critical concept. Taking up Destradi's ideal-type of 'soft hegemony' – a strategy that is "based on the hegemon's efforts to modify and reshape the norms and values of subordinate states"[12], I develop a mechanism of co-optation whereby regional powers extend the ideational boundaries of the Self to the societies of countries in their shared neighbourhood. Its empirical application to Moldovan and

---

[1] Delcour, 'Between the Eastern Partnership and Eurasian Integration'.
[2] Dimitrova, Mazepus, and Toshkov, 'Report on the Findings of Survey Experiments Assessing the Effectiveness of the EU's Communications'.
[3] Bechev, 'Understanding the Contest Between the EU and Russia in Their Shared Neighborhood'.
[4] Del Sarto, 'Normative Empire Europe'.
[5] Pänke, 'The Fallout of the EU's Normative Imperialism in the Eastern Neighborhood'.
[6] Manners, 'Normative Power Europe Reconsidered'.
[7] Tolstrup, *Russia vs. the EU : The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States.*
[8] Casier, 'Russia and the Diffusion of Political Norms', 12.
[9] Morozov, 'Sovereignty and Democracy in Contemporary Russia'.
[10] Keating and Kaczmarska, 'Conservative Soft Power'.
[11] Schunz, Gstöhl, and Van Langenhove, 'Between Cooperation and Competition'; Averre, 'Competing Rationalities'.
[12] Destradi, 'Regional Powers and Their Strategies', 920.

Armenian cases seeks to answer the following research question: *By which means and with which effects did the EU and Russia (re-)shape the ideas and beliefs of neighbourhood countries' societies?*

Co-optation as a mechanism of hegemonic power

By re-shaping the ideas, values, and beliefs of actors in neighbouring countries, regional hegemons rely on ideology to secure consent (as opposed to coercion). In the Gramscian understanding of hegemony consent "is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class"[13]. Ideology is defined as a "spontaneous philosophy" contained in language (determined notions and concepts), common and good sense (conventional wisdom and empirical knowledge), and popular religion (system of beliefs)[14]. Building on this 'Gramscian hegemony' and bringing it to the study of IR, Cox defined international hegemony as "an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant social class. The economic and social institutions, the culture, the technology associated with this national hegemony become patterns for emulation abroad"[15]. Actors thus have the ambition to imitate the hegemon's institutions, culture, and technology. This ambition implies consent because actors believe it is beneficial to emulate these patters. In other words, actors seek to emulate because it is in line with their own beliefs and thus preferences. There is no conflict (overt or covert) between the hegemon's and the other actors' interests.

A behaviouralist methodology is inadequate to examine this type of power relation in which conflict is not observable. Rather, the focus is shifted to the social practices that discursively construct and shape preferences absorbing actors into the hegemon's ideology. By shifting ideational boundaries, the hegemon *co-opts* social actors and makes them part of its own collective identity. According to theories of identity formation, identities are discursively constructed by delimiting 'the Self' and defining 'the Other'[16]. Co-optation takes place when this boundary is discursively shifted "altering a particular discourse and creating a dominant discourse through the use of symbols and rhetoric"[17] to include actors in 'the Self'. In other words, a regional power's hegemonic ideas and beliefs expressed in a collective identity are extended through the discursive inclusion of other actors in the Self.

The outcome of this third face of power - "the capacity to secure compliance to domination through the shaping of beliefs and desires"[18] – is always partial and limited. This 'radical view' of power acknowledges the complexity of social actors and the fact that they "do not have unitary or dual, but multiple and conflicting interests"[19]. This is what Gramsci called 'contradictory consciousness' viewing consent as "a complex mental state […] mixing approbation and apathy, resistance and resignation"[20]. Hence, conceptualizing the outcome of co-optation as outright adoption or rejection of the regional power's ideas is not helpful. Rather,

[13] Bates, 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony'.
[14] Lears, 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony', 570.
[15] Cox, 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations', 171.
[16] Lebow, 'Identity and International Relations'.
[17] Bakalov, 'Whither Soft Power?', 59.
[18] Lukes, *Power*, 143–44.
[19] Lukes, 145.
[20] Lears, 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony', 570.

attention should be paid to different degrees of resistance[21]. Looking at how ideas spread across borders, the norm diffusion literature has defined different types of contestation[22] such as modification[23] or localization[24]. Therefore, a shift in the ideational boundary of the hegemon is not only observed when another actor takes up und re-produces the hegemon's discourse. Attention should also be paid to traces or elements of the hegemon's beliefs and ideas that are woven into local identities.

Lastly, the 'contradictory consciousness' of consent also refers to the multiplicity of preferences of the individual social actors that constitute the collective. Because of their prominent role in national decision-making, political elites have been in the focus of ideational hegemony[25]. Indeed, studies show how political elites act as gatekeepers for external ideas[26] and how their own ideas shape the foreign policy behaviour of small states[27]. However, Hopf makes a compelling case for the need to focus on the 'masses' and not just elites[28] when it comes to hegemony. Societal groups that have internalized external ideas and norms can play an important role in national policy-making processes[29] by exerting pressure on their leaders[30]; hence shaping national preferences and interests.

Cross-sectional case study design and data collection

Shared neighbourhoods encompass only a limited number of diverse cases; hence a small-N research design is most adequate for this type of study. The effect of regional powers' simultaneous co-optation of neighbourhood countries' societies is determined by way of a cross-sectional case study[31] with a spatial variation across units. A unit is defined as "a spatially bounded phenomenon […] observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time"[32]. For the purpose of this study the power relation between one regional hegemon and one small state in the shared neighbourhood constitutes a unit. The comparison is made between cases that are most-similar on all relevant factors except the ones of interest to this study. Following the Gramscian understanding of ideology, the three factors of interest in the power relation between a potential hegemon and a small neighbourhood state are: language, conventional wisdom and empirical knowledge, and popular religion. Other factors that impact the capacity of a potential hegemon to shape the ideas and beliefs of a neighbourhood country are – as in any type of power relation – the country's relative size and the historical legacies it shares with the potential hegemon.

In the EU-Russia shared neighbourhood four power relations have been selected as most-similar controlling for the impact of their relative size and EU and Russian historical legacies:

---

[21] Hannah, Ryan, and Scott, 'Power, Knowledge and Resistance'.
[22] Wiener, *A Theory of Contestation*; Zimmermann, 'Same Same or Different?'
[23] Dandashly and Noutcheva, 'Conceptualizing Norm Diffusion and Norm Contestation in the European Neighbourhood'.
[24] Acharya, 'How Ideas Spread'.
[25] Ikenberry and Kupchan, 'Socialization and Hegemonic Power'.
[26] Khakee, 'Opening up the Notion of "Closing Space"'.
[27] Gvalia et al., 'Thinking Outside the Bloc'.
[28] Hopf, 'Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics'.
[29] Baltag and Burmester, 'Quo Vadis, Moldova?'
[30] Bakalov, 'Whither Soft Power?', 6.
[31] Gerring, 'What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?'
[32] Gerring, 342.

EU-Moldova, Russia-Moldova, EU-Armenia, and Russia-Armenia. Furthermore, their juxtaposition allows for the analysis of simultaneous EU and Russian co-optation in Moldova and Armenia. In all four cases the neighbourhood country is small state in relation to the regional power and of comparable size to the other small state. When it comes to historical legacies, norm diffusion studies point to the analytical challenge of disentangling Russian ideas from the ones that can be attributed to the shared Soviet history[33]. However, instead of a persisting Soviet legacy[34] Soviet norms have merged with European ones creating a post-Soviet *modus operandi* in the shared neighbourhood[35]. Thus, both the EU and Russia can be said to have pre-existing historical ties with Moldova and Armenia that had an ideational impact on their societies, but unlike in the other neighbourhood countries none are dominant so as to be a determinant for EU or Russian hegemony.

The four cases are different in terms of the ideological factors of interest to this study: language, conventional wisdom and empirical knowledge, and popular religion. In Moldova, the Russian language has an official status as 'language of interethnic communication' and schooling is offered in both Moldovan and Russian from kindergarten to higher education. Unlike in Moldova, the Russian language has no official status in Armenia and schooling in Russian is not as widely available. Nevertheless, almost all Armenians report that they have some knowledge of Russian (93% in 2019[36]). Language is also a factor in the EU-Moldova relation with the official state language being linguistically very similar to Romanian, an official language of the EU. No such language ties exist in the EU-Armenia case.

Conventional wisdom, or what counts as 'common sense', is a shared understanding of how to perceive, judge, and act upon everyday matters. As such it is engrained in the customs and common understandings regarding social behaviour that make up a society (i.e., its culture). In international relations the mobilization of cultural resources is often referred to as cultural diplomacy[37] or soft power[38]. Looking at culture as expressed through art, literature, music, and film, Russian culture plays a relevant role in the Russo-Moldovan and the Russo-Armenian cases. Because Armenians and Moldovans are largely proficient in Russian, Russian films and literature are widely available. Armenians relate European culture to enlightenment thinkers and their writings[39] whereas a large part of Moldovan society shares a cultural identity with neighbouring Romania – an EU member state[40].

Empirical knowledge – what Gramsci called 'good sense' – is created and diffused to the wider society mainly through mass media. In Moldova the Russian government has a significant influence on the country's media sector: 10 out of the 15 most watched TV channels in Moldova broadcast programmes in Russian[41]. The Armenian media landscape is less dominated by Russian-language outlets where only three Russian TV channels broadcast their programmes[42]. In the two cases involving the EU there is no media presence. Nevertheless, the

---

[33] Casier, 'Russia and the Diffusion of Political Norms'.
[34] Levada, 'Homo Post-Sovieticus'.
[35] Baltag and Burmester, 'Quo Vadis, Moldova?'
[36] Caucasus Research Resource Centers, 'Caucasus Barometer', 2019.
[37] Clarke, 'Cultural Diplomacy'.
[38] Nye, 'Soft Power'.
[39] Expert Interview, Yerevan, December 2021.
[40] Ohana, 'Culture and Change in Moldova'.
[41] Chyzhova, 'Disinformation Resilience in Central and Eastern Europe'.
[42] Freedom House, 'Disinformation and Misinformation in Armenia'.

EU provides support and funding for projects in the audio-visual sectors of EaP countries through its Creative Europe programme[43].

Lastly, the four cases differ in terms of a shared religion (defined as a belief system) with the regional power. A big part of the post-Soviet space is part of the canonical territory of the ROC; this includes Moldova but not Armenia. Thus, in Moldova - where 92% of Moldovans identify as orthodox[44] - the ROC has more possibilities to promote its traditional values than in Armenia. The national church in Armenia is the Armenian Apostolic Church which is part of Oriental Orthodoxy. 89 % of Armenians identify as Orthodox, yet only 24% of these recognize the patriarch of Moscow as the highest religious authority[45]. The EU, on the other hand, does not build its power relations on a shared religion but on a shared system of beliefs. European integration in itself started as a "value-based project to transform the geostrategic dynamics in post-war Europe"[46]. Despite a shift to a more 'pragmatic' approach to its external relations[47], values and the narrative of 'shared European values' still sustain the EU's ambition to transform its neighbours[48]. These values are defined in the EU documents and discourse as liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. There is a clear emphasis on anti-discrimination and (ethnic and sexual) minority rights. The EU claims that their (interpretation of these) values is universal and that their adoption is a way for other countries to modernize.

Table [1]: The variables of interest in the four cases

	EU-Moldova	**Russia-Moldova**	**EU-Armenia**	**Russia-Armenia**
Language	Official state language	Language of interethnic communication	No shared language	No official status but widely spoken
Culture and Media	Romanian Support	Russian Dominance	Enlightenment Support	Russian Existence
Belief system	Shared liberal values	Shared religion and Church	Shared liberal values	Shared religion

Considering the differences across these relevant factors, it is possible to define expectations about the extent to which the EU and Russia have the capacity to shape ideas and beliefs in Moldova and Armenia. We should expect co-optation to be most present in the Russia-Moldova power relation because Russia and Moldova share a language, culture, media environment, and a religious institution. The least co-optation is expected in the EU-Armenia case where there is only a shared culture and belief system. Simultaneous co-optation is most likely to lead to competition and this less effects in Moldova where most factors are present in both the relation with the EU and the one with Russia.

[43] European Commission, 'Creative Europe'.
[44] Pew Research Center, 'Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe'.
[45] Pew Research Center.
[46] Rabinovych and Novakova, '"Paradigmatic Change" with Much Continuity?', 73.
[47] Barbé and Morillas, 'The EU Global Strategy'.
[48] Delcour, 'The Road to Equality?'

The starting point of this analysis is the beginning of Putin's first mandate as Russian president during which Russian foreign policy became more assertive both in the region and in the international arena[49]. At the same time, the EU was preparing for its Eastern enlargement that brought the countries in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus to its borders and led to the development of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)[50]. 2021 is chosen as the end point because the escalation of the war in Ukraine starting on 24 February 2022 that led Moldova to submit its membership application to the EU signals a significant change in the EU-Russia relationship and the regional order in their shared neighbourhood. Data is therefore collected and analysed for the period between 2001 and 2021.

A frequent criticism of Lukes' third face of power is the methodological challenge of establishing interests independent of behaviour[51] followed by the development of post-positivist theories of power[52]. However, for a coherent framework of hegemonic power mechanisms including other mechanisms (such as coercion and prescription[53]) ontological and epistemological consistency is needed. Here scientific realism provides a middle-way for an investigation of hegemony reconciling structure and agency claiming that "hegemony is not reducible to the activity of agents, but agency is brought back in through the ideas of structural reproduction and occasional transformation through hegemonic activity"[54]. 'Modern critical realism'[55] posits that there is a reality which exists independently of our conception of this reality (as opposed to this reality being socially constructed). Yet, our interpretation of the 'reality' affects outcomes. Conciliating a positivist ontology with an interpretivist epistemology, this position assumes the existence of underlying mechanisms that are not directly observable.

Actors are assumed to be reflexive and strategic agents; however, they do not dispose of perfect information. It follows that they formulate interests and devise strategies to realize these based on the information they have and their *ideas* about a situation. It is the *perception* of their interests that they act upon.[56] The resulting preferences can be inferred from in-depth interviews and textual analysis.[57] Therefore, 47 semi-structured interviews with government, business, and civil society representatives and 2 observations of business and civil society meetings with government officials were conducted in Brussels, Moscow, Moldova, and Armenia between 2019 and 2021. Furthermore, reports and official documents on language policies, cultural programmes, the audio-visual sector, the Orthodox Church, and civil society organisations for the entire 20-year period have been collected. A political discourse analysis[58] was used to uncover 'dominating representations of reality' in the discursive construction of the Self and the Other by the EU and Russia in these materials. Discourse analysis is

---

[49] Haas, *Russia's Foreign Security Policy in the 21st Century*.
[50] Bechev, 'The EU as a Regional Hegemon? From Eastern Enlargement to the European Neighbourhoof Policy'.
[51] Lukes, 'Power and Rational Choice'.
[52] Gaventa, *Power after Lukes: An Overview of Theories of Power since Lukes and Their Application to Development*.
[53] This paper is based on a chapter of my PhD thesis in which I develop a conceptual framework of hegemonic power based on three mechanisms: co-optation, prescription, and coercion.
[54] Joseph, 'Hegemony and the Structure-Agency Problem in International Relations', 128.
[55] Lowndes, Marsh, and Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science*.
[56] Rejecting the assumption of perfect information also implies that at times actors also act intuitively or routinely.
[57] Zürn, 'Assessing State Preferences and Explaining Institutional Choice'.
[58] Fairclough and Fairclough, *Political Discourse Analysis*.

"particularly well suited for studying situations where power is maintained by aid of culture and challenged only to a limited degree - what Gramscians call 'hegemony'"[59]. Shifting the focus from the elite to Moldovan and Armenian societies, the qualitative analysis also included survey and census data on language and media use, religion, and values from the Moldovan and Armenian statistical offices, the World Values Survey, the Caucasus Barometer, and national survey institutes.

Co-opting Moldovan and Armenian societies

This section presents the results of the qualitative analysis comparing co-optation across the four cases and assessing the effects of simultaneous co-optation in Moldova and Armenia. First, this section briefly outlines EU and Russian identity construction and how it relates to the countries in the shared neighbourhood. The four following sub-sections present the findings for co-optation through language, culture, media, and religion.

During the 1990s the EU's 'Self' was clearly defined in opposition to the past looking at how European integration contributed to peace and prosperity on the continent. However, with the turn of the century practices of 'Othering' became more and more geopolitical being directed, for example, at the Islamic world and the US[60]. The practice rests on the EU's claim to the universal validity of its principles that it seeks to export to the rest of the world[61]. These principles (democracy, human rights, rule of law) became an essential part of the EU's Self through codification in the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership. Thus, accession to the EU (and its Self) means the adoption and implementation of its principles. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is based on the extension of EU principles through mechanisms also used for enlargement (political conditionality, democracy support, domestic reforms based on the EU *acquis communautaire*) thereby creating a 'potential we'[62]. With Moldova and Armenia, the ideational boundary was shifted by discursively constructing a 'we' based on common values. The Association Agreement signed with Moldova in 2014 refers to 'common values' as the basis for cooperation[63] and with Armenia the "partnership and cooperation between the Parties [is] based on common values and close links"[64].

By openly contesting the universality of EU principles, Russia externally reinforces the construction of this EUropean identity[65]. Construction of the Self changed over time from a clear European/Western orientation grounded in the modernization discourse under Yeltsin to Eurasianism – a traditionalist philosophy emphasizing Russia's strong link with the post-Soviet space, Asia, and the Islamic world – during the Primakov years. Since Putin came to power the dominant discourse is that of a great power that is culturally European but due to historical legacies still enjoys a special influence in the former Soviet states[66]. The West neglecting

---

[59] Neumann, 'Discourse Analysis', 70.
[60] Diez, 'Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics'.
[61] Diez, 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others'.
[62] Vieira, 'The European Union's "Potential We" between Acceptance and Contestation'.
[63] 'Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the Other Part'.
[64] 'Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the Other Part', 12.
[65] Morozov and Rumelili, 'The External Constitution of European Identity'.
[66] Tsygankov, 'Finding a Civilisational Idea'.

Russia's role and great power status in the post-Cold War international system reinforced Russian 'ressentiment'[67] and its dual nature as a 'subaltern empire'[68]. As a result, Russian identity construction under Putin came to rely on Othering the West[69] and counteracting Western democracy promotion in the post-Soviet space[70] in an attempt to build a 'post-imperial Great Power identity'[71]. The Russian leadership's discourse towards former Soviet countries emphasizes "historical, cultural and simply human ties"[72].

So, both the EU and Russia discursively constructed a Self whose ideational boundary they shift to include Moldova and Armenia. The following sections compare how and to what extent the boundary is shifted through language, culture and media, and religion in the four cases. Attention is paid to the effects the simultaneous co-optation attempts have on Moldovan and Armenian societies.

Shared languages in Moldova and Armenia

In the Russian government's discourse the Russian language is not constructed as essential part of Moldova and Armenian national identity but of its civic identity as multi-ethnic states (like the Russian Federation itself). Moldovan was made the official language in 1989 after years of Russification of the Moldovan society under the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. At that time the ethnic minorities that made up ca. 40% of the population protested the law that made Moldovan the only official state language because many of them used Russian instead of Moldovan in their daily communication. As a result, Russian was attributed the status of 'language of interethnic communication' in the Republic of Moldova[73].

As a result, Russian language education in Moldova is carried out within the public education system. However, the Russian government has expressed its dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching of both Russian in Moldovan schools and Moldovan in Russian schools, which has led to "young people grow[ing] up as if partially linguistically illiterate"[74]. The problem is elevated to the level of integration in the multi-ethnic Moldovan state. In the Russian leadership's view Moldovans should be bi-lingual emphasising the fact that Russian is not merely one of the minority languages in Moldova: It is a language of "international communication" being one of the UN working languages and "uniting the CIS countries" as well as "ethnic communities here in Moldova"[75]. To enhance the quality of Russian language teaching, Rossotrudnichestvo (the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation) regularly organises international workshops on 'modern methods' specifically developed to

[67] Malinova, 'Obsession with Status and Ressentiment'.
[68] Morozov, *Russia's Postcolonial Identity*.
[69] Malinova, 'Russian Identity and the "Pivot to the East"'.
[70] Babayan, 'The Return of the Empire?'
[71] Trenin, 'Russia's Spheres of Interest , Not Influence'.
[72] Putin, 'Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Foreign Ministry Board'.
[73] Transnistria came to recognize Russian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan as official languages and the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia also has three official languages (Gagauzian, Moldovan, and Russian).
[74] 'Interview of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Moldova V.I.Kuzmin [Интервью Чрезвычайного и Полномочного Посла Российской Федерации в Республике Молдова В.И.Кузьмина]', 8.
[75] 'Interview of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Moldova V.I.Kuzmin [Интервью Чрезвычайного и Полномочного Посла Российской Федерации в Республике Молдова В.И.Кузьмина]', 8.

enhance teaching of the Russian language.[76] Although Romanian is widely spoken in Moldova, the shared language is not part of the EU's discourse. Whereas the Russian government co-opts Moldovan society into a Self through the idea of Russian as a language of communication, EU co-optation efforts do not include the language factor.

In Armenia the ideational shift using a shared language was also only attempted by Russia. The 1993 language law made Armenian the sole official language. Available schooling in Russian was significantly reduced and significantly less young Armenians learned Russian. With the 1997 Russian-Armenian Treaty of Friendship the Russian-Armenian University was founded and Russian language instruction resumed. The Armenian government adopted a new policy and Russian was taught in all Armenian secondary schools. There are also ca. 60 schools offering intensive Russian language education.[77] In addition, through its cultural centre the Russian government offers free Russian language courses to 350 children in 21 Armenian cities[78] as well as school text-books and libraries.[79] Like in Moldova there was an attempt to co-opt Armenian society using the idea of Russian as communication language emphasizing the fact that the country's national minorities (i.e. Ukrainian, Georgia, Jewish, Kurdish, Polish, etc.) communicate in Russian and calling to define Russian as the 'language of interethnic communication'[80].

There was no simultaneous co-optation because the EU did not use language to co-opt Moldovan or Armenian societies. In Moldovan society, the status of the Russian language was highly politicized indicating contestation of Russian co-optation attempts. Language politics lie as the heart of Moldova's national identity as shown by the discussion over the name of the official state language. According to Art. 13 of its constitution it is Moldovan (Art. 13), whereas the 1991 Declaration of Independence states that it is Romanian. Linguistically very similar, the distinction between the two languages sparked debates over the name of Moldova's official language. In 2013 the Moldovan constitutional court decided that the two languages were identical. Although the EU does not mobilize language in its discourse, the Romanian government urged Moldova to refer to its language as Romanian because "promoting the idea of a Moldovan language distinct from the Romanian one is not only a distortion of a cultural reality and identity, but also an ideological manipulation"[81]. In the 2014 census, 55.1% stated that Moldovan was their native language whereas 22.8% responded with Romanian. According to one interviewee this is closely related to the question of identity: "We don't know yet the name of the language, we don't know how to identify ourselves"[82].

And so, Moldovan speakers reject the idea of Russian as a language of interethnic communication: "why don't they speak Gagauz in Gagauzia? They don't speak Romanian at all, but they all speak Russian!"[83]. Furthermore, the effects of Russian efforts to promote the

---

[76] Rossotrudnichestvo, 'Russian Techniques Will Help to Improve Qualification of the Teachers in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Moldova'.
[77] Mustajoki, Protassova, and Yelenevskaya, *The Soft Power of the Russian Language*.
[78] Rossotrudnichestvo, '"New Generation" Delegate from Armenia'.
[79] 'Free Courses on Russian History Started in Three Cities of Armenia [В Трех Городах Армении Стартовали Бесплатные Курсы По Истории России]'.
[80] 'The Russkiy Mir Foundation and Russian Association of Book Publishers (ASKI) Signed an Agreement to Jointly Promote Books and Printed Products in Russian'.
[81] Crowcroft, 'Moldovans Warned to Stop Calling Romanian Language Moldovan'.
[82] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[83] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, 21.

Russian language among Moldovans were limited: according to the latest national census data[84], the number of Moldovans using Russian for communication decreased from 16% in 2004 to 14.1% in 2014. Russian is mainly used by the country's minorities showing some acceptance of Russian as a communication language. In 2014, 92.8% of Russian native speakers usually communicated in Russian followed by 33.3% of Gagauz, 30.9% of Ukrainian, and 32.6% of Bulgarian native speakers. Only 3.5% of Moldovan and 1.3% of Romanian speakers communicate in Russian. Nevertheless, at the end of 2020 the socialist majority in the Moldovan parliament passed a law enhancing the status of the Russian language requiring the names of goods and services to also be indicated in Russian. However, contestation continued as the law was ultimately revoked by the constitutional court[85].

Russian co-optation of Armenian society through language was rejected by the majority of Armenians. Unlike in Moldova, the 'we' constructed through the idea of Russian as a communication language never gained traction in Armenian national identity construction. One of the interviewees viewed the imposition of the Russian language by the Soviet Union and the resulting need to strengthen the Armenian language as one of the reasons for Armenian independence[86]. Furthermore, Armenian society is more homogenous than the Moldovan one with much less Russian native speakers and other minorities. According to the latest available census data the majority of Armenian citizens reported Armenian to be their mother tongue (99.6%) with only 0.4% stating that it is Russian[87]. Nevertheless, there was some acceptance as the 1993 law allows the Russian minority in the country to organize general education in Russian that include compulsory Armenian classes. In 2013-14, 5'100 students (1.5%) were educated in Russian including children of the Armenian majority, who returned to Armenia after having lived in Russia with their family[88]. Thus, Russian is viewed mainly a foreign language in Armenia whereas in Moldova it is the native or communication language of a much larger part of society.

Like in Moldova, the use of Russian decreased over time: whereas in 2001 85% of Armenians still spoke Russian and 13% of ethnic Armenians even considered it their native language[89], the numbers decreased to 54% and 1% in 2011[90]. Almost all Armenians spoke Armenian at home as a child (97% in 2010[91]), yet they report knowledge of Russian (95% in 2010[92] and 93% in 2019[93]). Russian is taught as a compulsory subject in Armenian schools from second to twelfth grade. Or, as one expert sums up: "we learn Russian in school, everybody speaks Russian"[94]. Another interviewee noted that the Russian efforts promoting language and culture have increased over time, but they are less effective than the EU's because Russia lacks an attractive image: "with the EU it's more or less clear, you are making reforms to live like people

[84] National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 'Population Census', 2014; National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 'Population Census', 2004.
[85] Tanas, 'Moldovan Court Overturns Special Status for Russian Language'.
[86] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[87] Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 'Population Census', 2011.
[88] Mkhoyan, 'Soft Power, Russia and the Former Soviet States'.
[89] Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 'Population Census', 2001.
[90] Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 'Population Census', 2011.
[91] Caucasus Research Resource Centers, 'Caucasus Barometer', 2010.
[92] Caucasus Research Resource Centers.
[93] Caucasus Research Resource Centers, 'Caucasus Barometer', 2019.
[94] Interview with Armenian expert, KB37.

in Europe […] with Russia it is not clear – to have what?”[95]. Thus, in the Armenian society the Russian language is closely tied to the idea of the Russian Self that is perceived as distinct from the Armenian one.

By emphasizing a shared language, Russia sought to co-opt Moldovan and Armenian societies into a constructed ‘we’ that is characterized by diversity. The ethnic-linguistical understanding of this diversity with an important role for the Russian language was contested in Moldova and Armenia. However, in the Moldovan society the idea of Russian as a language of interethnic communication was interwoven with questions of national identity whereas Armenian society views Russian more as a foreign or minority language.

EU and Russian cultural programmes

The EU’s constructed Self as an amalgamation of different cultures and languages is reflected in its motto ‘unity in diversity’[96]. This also means that the EU only has a supporting competence in the cultural sector coordinating and supplementing Member States’ cultural programmes leading to the perception that cultural cooperation with EaP countries is limited and mainly carried out by Member States[97]. Nevertheless, the EU provides financial assistance through projects such as the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme (2015-2018, EUR 4,3 million)[98] and the subsequent EU4Culture programme (2021-2024, EUR 7,85 million)[99]. The projects are implemented by Member States’ cultural organisations – the former by the British Council and the latter by the German Goethe-Institut. The aim is to “support the development of culture as an engine for growth and social development”[100]. With this instrument the EU promotes local and national culture through capacity-building and the development of local Cultural Development Strategies, local and regional festivals, and mobility.[101] The Creative Europe programme (2021-2017, EUR 2,44 billion) in which Moldova and Armenia participate since 2016 and 2018 respectively aims to “safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage”[102].

Thus, the EU co-opts Moldovan and Armenian societies not through the construction of a ‘we’ based on a shared culture. ‘European culture’ is presented through its diversity, for example, with films produced by different member states and not as one unified culture because – as one EU official stated - “this does not exist at the EU-level”[103]. Hence, the EU promotes the idea of a culturally diverse space co-opting Moldovan and Armenian societies into institutions and projects where they can present their own local and national cultures.

This is in contrast to Russian co-optation where Russian culture is diffused through Russian movies and series as well as dubbing of foreign movies. This was especially important in Moldova where the Cyrillic alphabet was abandoned in the 1990s, and Moldovan returned to the Latin-based Romanian alphabet. The Romanian TV channel broadcasted foreign movies

---

[95] Interview with Armenian expert, TB46.
[96] European Union, ‘EU Motto’.
[97] Interview with EU official, NB40.
[98] EU Neighbours east, ‘EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme’.
[99] EU Neighbours east, ‘EU4Culture’.
[100] Goethe Institut, ‘EU4Culture’.
[101] EU Neighbours east, ‘EU4Culture’, 4.
[102] European Commission, ‘About the Creative Europe Programme’.
[103] Interview with EU official, BA02.

and series only with subtitles in the Romanian alphabet, which a majority of Moldovans could not read because they only knew the Cyrillic alphabet[104]. Even until today, this remains a problem in rural areas and thus the consumption of Russian channels for entertainment remains high[105]. In Armenia, the consumption of Russian films and movies is also widespread. Despite the law on Armenian language that limits the distribution of TV programmes in languages other than Armenian, Russian movies and series are popular. Like in Moldova, the dubbing of foreign movies in Armenian is too costly and because most Armenians are proficient in Russian, the Russian-dubbed version is shown along with original Russian movies[106].

In terms of effects, the EU cultural programmes were valued by Moldovan and Armenian political leaders because they served as a platform for the promotion of national and local culture. Cultural projects such as the European Youth Orchestra and joint film festivals are viewed as an opportunity to "bring to the EU citizens the culture of the EaP countries that can show that they are not that different" and that "Europe doesn't end with the EU"[107]. Similarly, Armenian leaders see the main benefit as the "possibilities for young writers to speak loudly about Armenia, making Armenia recognizable, speaking about ourselves, who we are"[108]. There is another cultural element that was mentioned by several Moldovan interviewees and that suggests the existence of a 'cultural attachment' to Russia: humour. One Moldovan speaker stated that "Romanians are not very good at entertainment. I mean, I really don't get the Romanian humour" [109]. Another mentioned the adjustment of jokes in Russian dubbing as an important factor contributing to the popularity of Russian channels[110].

In neither case did the cultural programmes lead to acceptance of the ideational boundary shift. Instead, when asked about a cultural attachment with the EU, Moldovan and Armenian interviewees only mentioned (labour) mobility and the diaspora as drivers of such an attachment[111]. Indeed, in a 2013 survey[112] on what the EU means to Moldovans 33% responded with 'liberty to work anywhere in the EU' followed by travel (28.2%) and economic prosperity (26.9%). Only 13.6% answered 'democracy' and 6.1% 'cultural diversity'. According to a representative of the Moldovan government: "we have more than 1.2 million citizens abroad […] it's about a third of the population which means that this mobility is creating a different perception about the external world"[113].

Survey data shows that 39% of Moldovans have at least one household member living abroad, mainly in Italy (26%), Germany (20%), and Russia (16%)[114]. A study of these migrants' ideas and perceptions showed that living in Italy allowed them to "acquire a 'modern and civilized'

---

[104] Interview with Moldovan think tank representative, QA17.
[105] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[106] Interview with Armenian think tank representative, PB42.
[107] Interview with Moldovan official, KA11.
[108] Interview with Armenian official, FB32.
[109] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[110] Interview with Moldovan think tank representative, QA17.
[111] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21; Interview with Moldovan think tank representative, QA17; Interview with Armenian expert, KB37; Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[112] Institute for Public Policy, 'Public Opinion Barometer: "What Does the European Union Mean to You?"'
[113] Interview with Moldovan politician, PA16.
[114] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Pulbic Opinion Survey'.

mentality"[115]. They associated the EU with economic development and modernity, but also 'libertinism' and 'selfishness'. Certain EU values were transmitted under the 'modernization' paradigm, but at the same time pre-existing 'traditional values' (importance of family and community) were reinforced. Most interviewees also mentioned that most Moldovans view the EU model as attractive because of the higher 'living standards' in the EU[116].

Armenians generally have a positive view of the EU associating it with quality of life[117], rule of law and social protection, but according to one interviewee there were also "some worrying trends with regards to traditional values"[118]. According to available data and estimates, most Armenians abroad are living in Russia (1'182'388[119]), followed by the US (ca. 800'000), and France (ca. 300'000)[120]. In 2019, 87% of Armenians reported to have a close relative living abroad, the majority (56%) in Russia followed by the US (15%) and France (6%)[121]. In the beginning of the 2000s, only few Armenians emigrated permanently (3%), most left Armenia for seasonal work (94%). Per year, ca. 60'000 workers sought employment in Russia (mainly in the construction sector). These migrants regularly returned to visit their families in Armenia, whom they did not want to relocate[122]. This resulted in complex attitudes towards Russia. On the one hand, Russia is viewed as a security provider in the Karabakh conflict and a place for work[123]. However, Armenians that lived in Russia report a nationalist bias, although this is less strong than towards other (Muslim) migrants[124]. A 2009 focus group revealed that Armenian workers in Russia often experienced violence and racism leading them to be more satisfied when returning permanently: "I used to earn more in Russia, but here I am home with my family, I feel safe"[125]. Furthermore, Armenians that have temporarily lived in Europe for education or work have a favourable view of the EU: "The norms and standards in the EU are better and not only that – quality of life is. When I say quality of life mean generally, infrastructure, roads, etc. Everything is better in the Europe!"

The role of mass media

Media as a mean of ideational hegemony is used more by Russia than the EU. Moldovan interviewees in particular thought that the lack of communication from the EU contributed to pro-Russian and anti-European sentiments in the country[126]. In the Russian leadership's view Russian mass media play an important role in promoting Russian culture in Moldova[127] where Russian-language TV programmes are mostly re-broadcasts from Russian TV channels directly importing the Russian discourse. In fact, four of the 10 most viewed news websites advance

[115] Cingolani and Vietti, 'Social Remittances and Local Development in the Republic of Moldova. A Critical Analysis of Migrants as Agents of Change', 632.
[116] Interview with Moldovan think tank representative, RA18; Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[117] Interview with Armenian think tank representative, EB31.
[118] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, GB33.
[119] Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), '2010 Russian Population Census'.
[120] Basar and Swain, 'Diaspora Design versus Homeland Realities: Case Study of Armenian Diaspora'.
[121] Caucasus Research Resource Centers, 'Caucasus Barometer', 2019.
[122] International Labour Office [ILO], 'Migration and Development'.
[123] Interview with Armenian expert, IB35; Interview with Armenian think tank representative, EB31.
[124] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[125] International Labour Office [ILO], 'Migration and Development', 86.
[126] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[127] 'Interview of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Moldova V.I.Kuzmin [Интервью Чрезвычайного и Полномочного Посла Российской Федерации в Республике Молдова В.И.Кузьмина]'.

pro-Kremlin positions[128]. Although the business structure of the Moldovan media landscape is untransparent, it is known that only few of Moldova's media outlets are independent. Public media is heavily influenced by (Russian) oligarchs and even the Russian state. For example, a 2020 report found that Igor Chaika, son of the former prosecutor general of the Russian Federation, owns the majority share in the "Media Invest Service" holding that controls the 'Accent TV' and 'Primul in Moldova' TV channels and the popular websites mail.ru and ok.ru. Furthermore, 'Rosmediakom' controls the 'TV Communicatii Group' that owns the TV channel 'RTR Moldova' and is itself owned by the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company (VGTRK)[129]. The Russian government uses media to distribute its own narratives discrediting the Western-led liberal international order[130] and framing European values – in particular LGBTQ rights – as a threat[131]. Thus, the shifting boundaries of the Self disseminated through mass media relied on the Othering of Europe (and the West).

Since a 2020 bilateral agreement, Russia's leading 'Perviy kanal' (Channel One) and VGTRK's flagship channel 'Rossiya-1' (Russia-1) are broadcasted in Armenia. Like in Moldova, there is little transparency regarding media ownership, yet according to a 2021 Freedom House report when ownership or connections are uncovered, they are mainly related to Armenian political parties and figures and manifest themselves in biased coverage. The report also cites a study showing that Armenian news outlets use Russian media sources when covering international events leading to the amplification of Russian narratives discrediting the West in Armenian media[132]. Like in Moldova, Othering practices take place and are amplified in Armenian society through media.

The EU discourse, on the other hand, links its media support to the values upon which its Self is constructed. For example, the overall objective of its 5.5 million EUR project supporting mass media in Moldova is "the successful implementation of democratic reforms in the Republic of Moldova"[133]. A similar project in Armenia aimed to "contribute to a vibrant Armenian media sector that is able to fulfil its role as a watchdog for Armenian society"[134] – a significant aspect of liberal democracy. Emulating the EU approach, the Russian government launched an international media project in 2017. SputnikPro aims to "promote professional exchange and media cooperation"[135] with a Russian-language edition specifically targeting the CIS countries (SputnikPro CIS).

Looking at the effects, a 2018 survey[136] showed that Russian native speakers in Moldova mainly consume news in Russian whereas Moldovan native speakers follow the news in both languages. Thus, Russian media content reaches a broad spectrum of Moldovan society. TV is the main source of political information for 83% of Moldovans[137]. Prime TV – previously fined by Moldova's Coordinating Council of Audiovisual (CCA) for rebroadcasting Russian

---

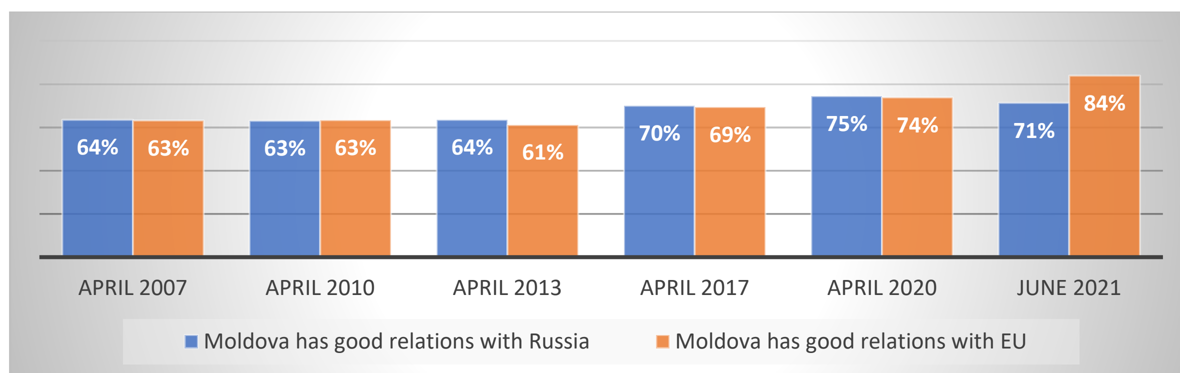
[128] Chyzhova, 'Disinformation Resilience in Central and Eastern Europe'.
[129] Sittig and Fabijanic, 'Rusissche Dominanz Setzt Sich Im Moldauischen Medienmarkt Durch'.
[130] Zakem et al., 'Mapping Russian Media Network: Media's Role in Russian Foreign Policy and Decision-Making'.
[131] The Editors, 'Moldova's LGBT Community Faces a Russia-Inspired Media Crackdown'.
[132] Freedom House, 'Disinformation and Misinformation in Armenia'.
[133] EU Neighbours east, 'Strategic Communication and Support to Mass-Media in the Republic of Moldova'.
[134] EU Neighbours east, 'European Media Facility in Armenia – Building Sustainable and Professional Media'.
[135] Rossotrudnichestvo, 'SputnikPro and the "New Generation" Program'.
[136] USAID and Internews, 'National Survey'.
[137] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', December 2018.

propaganda in 2014 - is the most watched (55%) and the most trusted (32 %) channel for news[138]. Russian-owned RTR Moldova (who has also been fined by CCA) is still watched by 21% for the news and trusted by 12%[139]. In a focus group conducted in 2018 participants said that they considered the channel more accessible and professional than local TV stations[140]. Other sources of information are the internet (44%) and newspapers (17%)[141]. The website jurnal.md and the Russian newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda are most used and trusted for online news and print media[142]. According to several interviewees the narratives that the Moldovan public receives through these channels are propaganda, disinformation, and fake news[143] about "the decay of the West, the aggressive expansion of the West, [and] the Americanisation of European societies"[144]. Several interviewees mentioned how European values are portrayed as negative particularly the European emphasis on LGBTQ rights is framed as threat[145]. According to civil society representatives the prevalence of these Russian narratives is due to two factors: The failure of the CCA to impose harsher sanctions to curtail Russian influence[146] and the lack of EU communication[147].

The Russian Othering of the EU was contested in Moldova's society where opinion polls show that a clear majority considered the country to have good relations with both the EU and Russia throughout the 2000s and 2010s (see Graph [1]). Societal views on Moldova's participation in Russian and EU-led institutions fluctuated significantly over time. The number of respondents that would vote for EU accession dropped from 76% in 2007 to 46% in 2017 and increased again to 65% in 2021. This is partly due to stagnation in the reform process[148] and the uncovering of large-scale corruption cases involving Moldova's pro-European elite[149]. In 2013 and 2017 support for EAEU accession was comparable to the EU but declined sharply in the following years (see Graph [2]) suggesting contestation of Russian co-optation efforts.

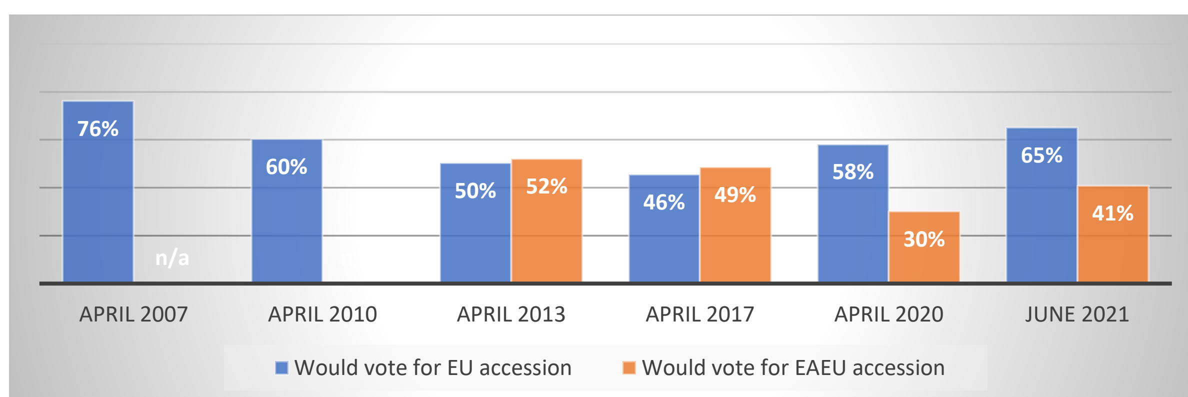
[138] Puiu, 'Moldova'.
[139] USAID and Internews, 'National Survey', 41.
[140] USAID and Internews, 42.
[141] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', December 2018.
[142] USAID and Internews, 'National Survey', 49–52.
[143] Interview with EU official, BA02; Interview with Moldovan think tank representative, RA18.
[144] Interview with Moldovan politician, PA16.
[145] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21; Interview with Moldovan civil society representative, OA15.
[146] Interview with Moldovan think tank representative, QA17.
[147] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[148] Rinnert, 'The Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership: From "Poster Child" to "Problem Child"?'
[149] Tudoroiu, 'Democracy and State Capture in Moldova'.

Graph [1]: Moldovan public opinion on relations with the EU and Russia over time



Source: Data from IPP Public Opinion Barometer

Graph [2]: Moldovan public opinion on accession to the EU and EAEU over time (respondents could choose more than one answer)



Source: Data from IPP Public Opinion Barometer

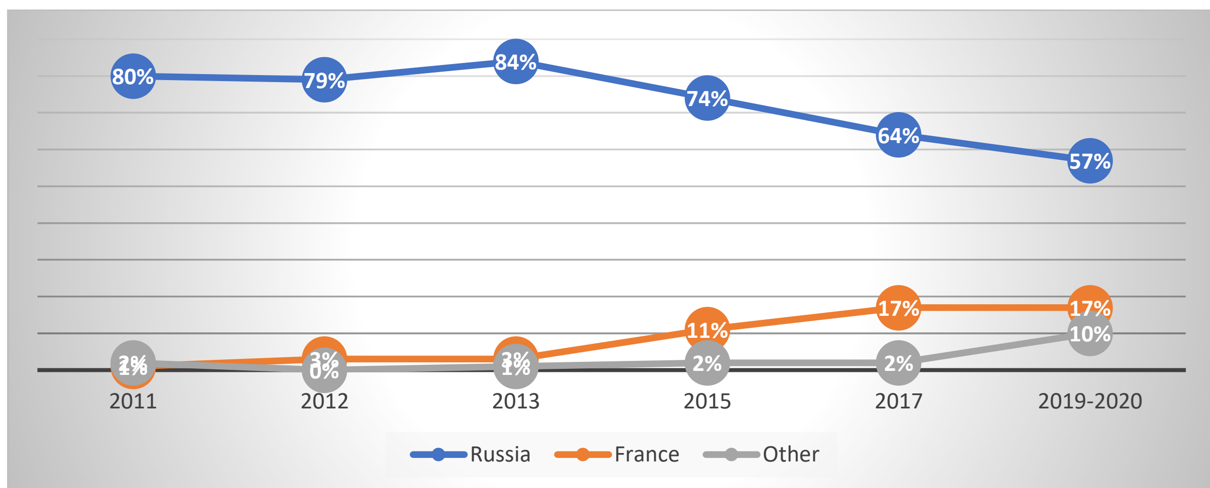
In Armenia, Russian co-optation through mass media was less contested. The majority of Armenians (89%) state that they use Armenian TV as a source of political information compared to 32% using Russian TV. Armenians trust mostly the Armenian TV channel Shant (71%) and its news programme 'Horizone'. The most used online news sources are the Armenian news.am (37%) and Azatutyun.am (28%).[150] Armenians consider national and local radio and international TV channels to be the most reliable and most independent source of information[151]. However, overall trust in media is at only 29% in 2019-2020[152]. Due to limited resources for international news coverage, Armenian outlets mostly rely on Russian sources and media leading to the amplification of Russian narratives. As in Moldova, Armenians are particularly satisfied with the professional reporting in Russian newspapers (72%) and Russian TV (56%)[153]. Also, despite the 2020 Law on Audiovisual Media, there is a lack of transparency on media ownership. The tree Russian channels that were granted slots received these without

[150] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', 2019.
[151] Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia Foundation, 'Media Consumption and Media Coverage of Reforms in Armenia'.
[152] Caucasus Research Resource Centers, 'Caucasus Barometer', 2020.
[153] Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia Foundation, 'Media Consumption and Media Coverage of Reforms in Armenia'.

competition as an exception to the new Law[154]. However, only two Armenian interviewees[155] mentioned the Russian media whereas all Moldovan interviewees highlighted the role of Russian media in Moldovan society. Thus, the perception among Armenians is that the media is not an important instrument of Russian influence and so most Armenians are not aware that they are consuming Russian narratives.

The majority of Armenians consider Russia to be the main friend of their country although the number of respondents that share this view has decreased over time (see Graph [3]). In 2019, more Armenians viewed Russia as a political (12%) and economic (19%) threat to Armenia[156] (compared to only 2% in 2007[157]). Trust in the EU has also varied over time with a high of 45% in 2008 and a low of 27% in 2015 and 2017 (see Graph [4]). As in Moldova, these fluctuations suggest that these beliefs are not a result of effective co-optation through mass media.

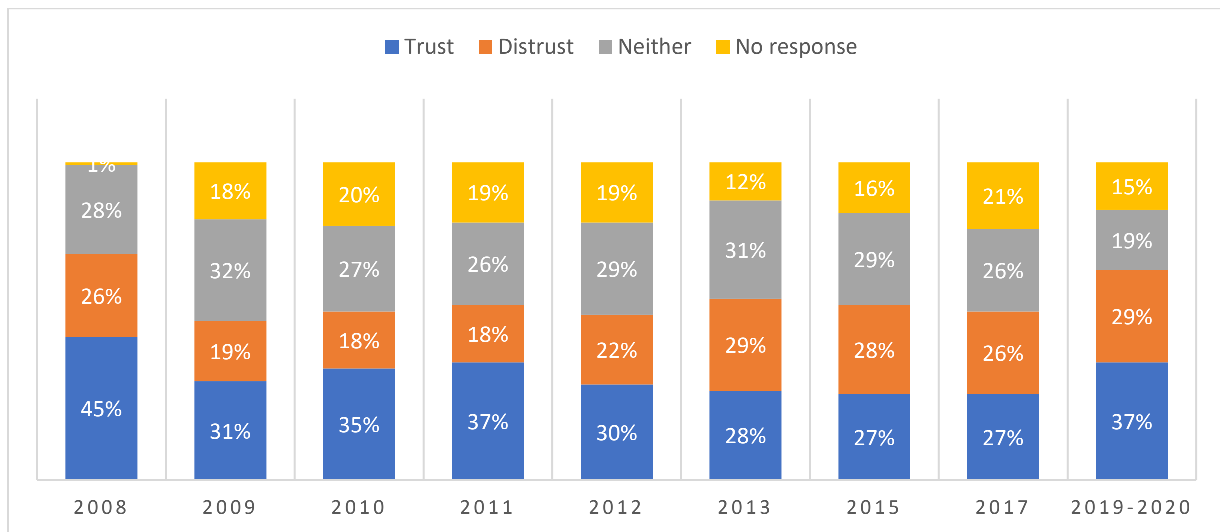
Graph [3]: Armenian public opinion on who is the main friend of the country



Source: Data from Caucasus Barometer

[154] Freedom House, 'Disinformation and Misinformation in Armenia'.
[155] Interview with Armenian think tank representative, PB42; Interview with Armenian expert, KB37.
[156] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', 2019.
[157] IRI et al., 'Armenian National Voter Study'.

Graph [4]: Armenian society's trust in the EU



Source: Data from Caucasus Barometer

Shared values and belief systems

Religion is an element of Russia's cultural diplomacy that promotes and reinforces the idea of common traditional values in Moldova thereby co-opting parts of the Moldovan society. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in particular is an instrument that is often used by the Russian government to promote and legitimize its interests abroad[158]. There are two Orthodox churches in the Republic of Moldova: The self-governing Moldovan Orthodox Church (MOC) under the Patriarchate of the ROC and the Bessarabian Orthodox Church under the Romanian one. Currently, the MOC has six dioceses and unites around 85% of the Moldovan orthodox believers.[159] The discourse employed by the Orthodox Church in Moldova emphasizes spiritual unity based on "the same language of prayer and the same language of religious sentiments"[160] and referring to "our Moldovan flock"[161] thereby co-opting Moldovans into the Russian Self. The discourse is centred around the "traditional moral values preserved by the Church"[162] and the "spiritual and moral principles which every generation of the Moldavians has taken in with their mothers' milk"[163]. According to the ROC what unites Russians and Moldovans, is their common faith while also acknowledging that Moldova is "a unique country that is a bridge between two civilisations – Latin and Orthodox, Western European and Slavic"[164].

The Armenian Apostolic Church is part of Oriental Orthodoxy and hence not part of the ROC's canonical territory. Nevertheless, the ROC's view is that the two churches have "brotherly, close, and regular relations"[165]. ROC representatives frequently meet with representatives of

[158] Blitt, 'Religious Soft Power in Russian Foreign Policy'.
[159] Grigore, 'Gespaltene Orthodoxie in der Republik Moldau'.
[160] Sliusarenco and Foltea, 'The Rise of Illiberal Civil Society in Moldova'.
[161] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'Patriarch Kirill Meets with Moldova's President Igor Dodon'.
[162] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk Has a Talk with Prime Minister of Moldova'.
[163] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'Patriarch Kirill Meets with Moldova's Acting President M. Lupu'.
[164] Interview with representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, DB30.
[165] Interview with representative of the Russian Orthodox Church.

the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian government and on his visits to Armenia, the Russian Patriarch also visits the Parishes of the ROC in Armenia. According to the ROC, "Armenian believers [are] united with the believers of the Russian Orthodox Church by profound spiritual and value bonds"[166]. One interviewee from the ROC noted that the common faith that they share with the Armenian and the Moldovan people has "penetrated the cultural stratum of these societies as shown by their commitment to the traditional fundamentals of life"[167].

Reinforcing the traditional values in Moldovan and Armenian society, the ROC reiterates the Russian leaderships discourse that creates a contrast with the West where "a systemic destruction of family values is happening […] under the banner of liberalization, the emancipation of people, and the democratization of society"[168]. Accordingly, the neo-liberal transformations in the world that lead people to abandon their moral foundations are viewed as a common challenge that unites all Christian and even non-Christian people. The interviewee mentions, for example, "the norm according to which marriage is a union between a man and a woman, according to which abortions should be understood as a deprivation of life" as "absolutely unshakable for all our confessions"[169]. This includes Europe which was founded on Christianity and just like Armenia, Moldova, and Russia is facing new ideologies that undermine these traditional values. It follows that the ROC does not consider these "new liberal ideas" European because "for almost 20 centuries, European values have been the traditional understanding of family and marriage, very strict morality, [and] deep faith in Christ"[170]. In addition to this discourse, the ROC also openly endorsed Moldovan politicians that support close ties with Russia, such as Igor Dodon, by declaring him "an Orthodox man who openly declares his attitude to the Church, to the moral Christian principles"[171] and awarding him a religious order "in consideration of his active support of the initiatives of the Orthodox Church of Moldova"[172].

The EU, on the other hand, promotes its values through civil society which it deems important for communication with Moldovans and Armenians: "civil society organisations are crucial for disseminating EU-positive messages outside of the capitals"[173]. Moldova's civil society developed with the support of international donors such as the World bank and the Soros Foundation. The sector started to flourish at the end of the 1990s with the implementation of the 1996 Law on Public Association[174]. However, only a small amount of the registered Moldovan CSOs is active. One of the main issues is access to funding which is mainly provided by (Western) external donors through Official Development Assistance[175]. Civil society cooperation takes place to ensure "a better knowledge and understanding of the EU in the Republic of Moldova […] with a non-exclusive focus on the values on which the EU is

---

[166] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Completes His Official Visit to Armenia'.
[167] Interview with representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, DB30.
[168] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'Metropolitan Hilarion: The Unique Role of the Russian Orthodox Church Is That It Unites the Peoples of the Post-Soviet Space'.
[169] Interview with representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, DB30.
[170] Interview with representative of the Russian Orthodox Church.
[171] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'Patriarch Kirill Meets with Moldova's President Igor Dodon'.
[172] The Russian Orthodox Church, 'His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Meets with President of Moldova Igor Dodon'.
[173] European Commission, 'Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020', 17.
[174] Cukrowski, Gortat, and Kazmierkiewicz, 'Moldova'.
[175] European Commission, 'Annex 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision'.

founded"[176]. The EU supports the development of civil society through financial assistance and capacity-building projects. However, the amount of assistance is limited compared the EU's overall support to Moldova. For the 2017-2020 period merely 5% of the overall European Neighbourhood Instrument was allocated to complementary support for civil society development[177]. None of the interviewees mentioned civil society support when asked about the EU's most successful instruments in Moldova. Yet, according to the EU civil society plays an important role in democratic processes. It co-opted Moldovan CSOs not only discursively, but also included in institutional processes such as the monitoring of the association implementation. They were also co-opted into the EU-Moldova Civil Society Platform, a forum for regular exchange of views between EU and Moldovan civil society representatives, "in order to keep them informed of, and gather input for, the implementation of this Agreement"[178]. During the annual platform meetings, they monitor implementation of the AA, report on different aspects of Moldovan reform processes, and issue recommendations.

A similar approach is used in Armenia where Armenian civil society developed in the 1990s due to Western donor support. The number of CSOs grew from 500 in 1997 to 2'585 in only four years and by 2010 5'700 Armenian CSOs were registered[179]. Yet, according to the same report, only a small amount (977) of those registered CSOs were active. Armenian civil society was co-opted into various consultations by the EU. In 2013, for example, the EU Delegation in Erevan created a website aimed at enhancing its dialogue with Armenian civil society. With this platform, the EU sought to better understand Armenian CSO interests and to facilitate their consultation thereby co-opting them discursively and in practice into the decision-making processes.[180] Overall, there are regular bi-monthly meetings between the EU Delegation and CSOs where various aspects of EU assistance are discussed, and Armenian civil society contribute to the ENP Progress reports. However, Armenian CSOs have raised concerns over the slow progress with regards to the establishment of an EU-Armenia Civil Society Platform under the CEPA[181]. As in Moldova, the EU dedicates a small part of its financial assistance to civil society development: In 2013, 1.7 million EUR were granted to train civil society in budget monitoring and improving its capacity to act as a watchdog in the fight against corruption[182]. In 2015, the ENI funding for civil society support to Armenia was 5 million EUR "to strengthen and build capacity of Armenian civil society to effectively contribute to democratic decision-making processes"[183]. Yet, the EU views this assistance as successful: "assistance to civil society and young people has helped to create a vibrant civil society […] these people have been exposed to the West, often undergone Western education, and have now come to power. Civil society has proven to be a good investment for the EU, and it is not

[176] 'Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the Other Part', Title IV Ch. 26, Art.134c.
[177] European Commission, 'Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2017-2020'.
[178] 'Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the Other Part', Art. 442.
[179] Asian Development Bank, 'Civil Society Briefs Armenia'.
[180] European Union, 'EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Armenia for the Period 2014-2017'.
[181] EaP CSF Armenian National Platform, 'Statement on the Implementation of Article 366 of the RA-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)'.
[182] European Union, 'EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Armenia for the Period 2014-2017'.
[183] European Commission, 'Annex 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision', 3.

even the largest part of the assistance."[184] Thus, the EU co-opted civil society actors in discourse and practice whereas the Russian leadership relied on co-opting religious communities through the Russian Orthodox Church.

EU and Russian simultaneous co-optation directed at different groups within Moldovan and Armenian societies resulted in some acceptance of the ideas and belief system they promoted. The church enjoys a high level of trust (70%) among Moldovan citizens[185] and 63% think that being orthodox is important to being a national of the Republic of Moldova[186]. However, only few Moldovans regularly attend church services (10% once a week and 15% once a month). The largest share of respondents only goes to church on special holidays (42%)[187]. Although the majority of Moldovans identify as orthodox and the MOC is part of the ROC, only 51% of those recognize the patriarch of Moscow as the highest religious authority[188]. The Armenian national Church is independent from the ROC and plays an important role in Armenian society: 81% of Armenians believe in God[189] and 82% agree that being orthodox is closely linked to a person's Armenian national identity[190]. Like in Moldova, trust in the church is high 74%[191]. Regular participation in religious services is slightly higher than in Moldova with 11% attending once a week, 20% once a month, and 25% on special holidays[192].

Many Moldovans subscribe to the traditional values promoted by the national churches signalling acceptance into Russian belief system. The MOC took up the Russian discourse Othering the EU and promoting traditional values: "Russia is the guardian of Christian values" and Europe "demands that we pay with our souls, that we alienate ourselves from God"[193]. The Church expressed concern about the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (on preventing and combating violence against women) by the Moldovan Parliament. According to an official MOC statement, the definition of gender is 'socially constructed' and "directly contradicts a fundamental biblical truth"[194]. Furthermore, the MOC claimed that the convention intended to "eradicate traditions" so that "marriage between a man and a woman may be considered an obsolete tradition"[195]. One interviewee associated this narrative with Russia's 'Gayropa' propaganda in response to the EU demanding the adoption of a law on non-discrimination[196]. Survey data shows that the majority of Moldovans accepted the 'traditional values': Homosexuality acceptance remained low at 4% in the late 2000s and 76% did not think that marriage is an outdated institution. The traditional family model where a child needs a home with a father and a mother was supported by 93%[197]. However, the construction of the EU as

[184] Interview with EU official, BA02.
[185] Institute for Public Policy, 'Republic of Moldova Public Opinion Barometer'.
[186] Pew Research Center, 'Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe'.
[187] Ingelhart et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 5 (2005-2009)'.
[188] Pew Research Center, 'Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe'.
[189] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', 2021.
[190] Pew Research Center, 'Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe'.
[191] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', 2019.
[192] Gedeshi et al., 'Joint EVS/WVS 2017-2021 Dataset (Joint EVS/WVS)'.
[193] Higgins, 'In Expanding Russian Influence, Faith Combines With Firepower'.
[194] Orthodox Church of Moldova, 'Message of the Orthodox Church of Moldova Regarding the Ratification of Istanbul Convention by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova'.
[195] Orthodox Church of Moldova.
[196] Interview with Moldovan civil society representative, OA15.
[197] Ingelhart et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 5 (2005-2009)'.

'Other' failed to gain traction in Moldovan society which maintained a largely positive view of the EU (see Graphs [1 and 2] above).

According to the latest available survey data, traditional values also prevail in the Armenian society: homosexuality acceptance is low at only 2%[198], 84% value the institution of marriage and 97% agree that a child needs a home with a father and a mother[199]. The Armenian Church also opposed ratification of the Istanbul Convention for the sake of "our national-spiritual identity and security"[200]. In an official statement the Church raised concerns about the concept of a "third sex apart from female and male" which is "incompatible with the moral understandings of the Church"[201]. Most Armenians agree with this view. In a 2019-2020 survey[202] only 15% of the respondents approved the adoption of the Istanbul Convention whereas 29% disapproved. However, 89% acknowledged that they have not read the text of the Convention at all suggesting that they formed their preference on the basis of dominant societal ideas. Some civil society actors showed that they rejected Russian promoted beliefs stating that conservative groups linked with the Church are opposing non-discrimination measures and associate it with LGBTQ rights in order to discredit the EU [203]. Another one thinks that these groups arguing that the EU is a promoter of LGBTQ rights and of the collapse of the family are "partly paid by Russia"[204]. Although Armenians view both Russia and Europe as Christian[205], there is the perception that the EU went too far from these traditional values[206] suggesting some acceptance of the Russian Othering discourse.

Armenian CSOs show some acceptance of EU beliefs thinking that EU financial and political support has enabled them to play a role in domestic political processes through government monitoring and civic education.[207] One civil society representative noted that "civil society wasn't heard by the government, but the EU somehow forced the government to hear them"[208]. Nevertheless, CSOs see room for improvement: 44% of Armenian CSOs in the EaP CSF think that the EU should "strengthen civil society's role in policy formulation"[209] to support good governance and rule of law reform. The Armenian National Platform (ANP) of the EaP CSF had previously expressed dissatisfaction with their ability to impact policy-making processes due to the government's reluctance to a structured dialogue with civil society. Consisting of 180 Armenian NGOs, the ANP mainly saw their role in monitoring reform processes undertaken in the framework of the EaP. Hence, the decision to not sign the negotiated AA/DCFTA and join the EAEU instead, led many CSOs of the ANP to question their role or even leave the ANP altogether.[210]

---

[198] Haerpfer et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017-2020) Cross-National Data-Set'.
[199] Ingelhart et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 5 (2005-2009)'.
[200] Armenpress, 'Armenian Religious Leaders Urge Authorities to Refrain from Ratifying Istanbul Convention'.
[201] Armenpress.
[202] Caucasus Research Resource Centers, 'Caucasus Barometer', 2020.
[203] Interview with Armenian think tank representative, PB42.
[204] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[205] Interview with Armenian expert, KB37.
[206] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, GB33.
[207] Hovhannisyan and Sahakyan, 'Adopting Experience on Bilateral EU-Moldova and EU-Georgia CS Platforms to Armenia'.
[208] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[209] Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, 'Country Report: Armenia'.
[210] European Union, 'EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Armenia for the Period 2014-2017'.

In fact, CSO ability to co-opt citizens into the European values system was very limited in Armenia. The fact that CSOs had to rely predominantly on external funding meant that CSO activity became donor-driven and detached from the local population. A 2014 survey showed that 54% of Armenians think that CSOs are not able to effectively address social issues and 58% are of the opinion that they are not able to influence policy making[211]. Even after the Velvet Revolution in 2018 only 52% of Armenians have a positive opinion about CSOs[212]. Communication and terminology, however, distort the polling data because "this NGO-speak is a very foreign thing for the Armenian society"[213]. Thus, when asked about specific, local organisations respondents report much higher trust. According to a civil society representative "even the word civil society is not liked, but if you ask who is the change-maker in your community they will usually mention an NGO leader"[214]. There is also some evidence that Armenians accepted the European idea of democracy as a way for modernization: 83% of Armenians view a democratic system as good for their country[215]. However, according to the longitudinal WVS data, this attitude has been stable since the 1990s[216], suggesting that these values already existed in Armenian society and were not significantly shaped by the EU. One interviewee confirms this: "there were a lot of civil society people here who were fighting for these values anyway, but the EU support magnified their voice"[217].

From the view of Moldovan civil society, the role of CSOs in domestic policy-making processes should also be strengthened[218]. Structures were put in place by the Moldovan government (i.e., the National Council for Participation), yet their operation is hampered by the same government[219]. EU assistance is inaccessible to a majority of Moldovan CSOs with the complicated procedures and the lack of English language knowledge constituting the main barriers. A 2014 survey showed that only 25% of CSOs received EU assistance with 43.8% having never applied. As a result, there is a limited number of CSOs with which the EU engages: Less than 50% reported that they have been invited to consultations by the EU Delegation and 40% said that they were invited several times[220]. Also, CSOs are concentrated in the centre and dominated by a small societal elite[221]. As a result, citizen trust in CSOs is low (24% in 2017[222]) and organizations are reporting citizens' indifference as one of the main difficulties in their work[223]. According to one civil society representative the Russian negative framing of European values was able to gain traction in Moldovan society because "civil

[211] Paturyan, 'Armenian Civil Society'.
[212] Center for Insights in Survey Research, 'Public Opinion Survey', 2019.
[213] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[214] Interview with Armenian civil society representative.
[215] Ingelhart et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 6 (2010-2014)'.
[216] Ingelhart et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 3 (1995-1998)'; Ingelhart et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 5 (2005-2009)'.
[217] Interview with Armenian civil society representative, LB38.
[218] Interview with Moldovan expert, SA19.
[219] 'Recommendation No 1/2017 of the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council'.
[220] Chiriac and Tugui, 'Civil Society Organizations from the Republic of Moldova: Development, Sustainability and Participation in Policy Dialogue'.
[221] European Commission, 'Annex 3 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2015 in Favour of the Republic of Moldova to Be Financed from the General Budget of the European Union'.
[222] European Commission, 'Annex 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision'.
[223] Chiriac and Tugui, 'Civil Society Organizations from the Republic of Moldova: Development, Sustainability and Participation in Policy Dialogue'.

society in Moldova failed to explain these [European] values"[224]. Nevertheless, as in Armenia, Moldovans show some acceptance of democracy: 83% view a democratic system as good for their country[225].

Conclusion

By shifting the boundaries of their constructed Self, both the EU and Russia sought to co-opt Moldovan and Armenian societies. There were, however, differences across cases and the ideological factors mobilized by the regional powers. A shared language was only used in the Russian discourse that constructed the Russian language as one of 'interethnic communication'. This was contested in Moldova but taken up in the national identity discourse that centred around the language question. In Armenia, the Russian discourse was less contested. It was accepted by a small group within Armenian society whilst the majority rejected it. In terms of the other factors (a shared culture, media space, and popular religion) simultaneous co-optation efforts were observed. The EU used the discourse of diversity to co-opt Moldovans and Armenians whereas the (shared) Russian culture was promoted through films and series. This allowed for a shift in both ideational boundaries because EU co-optation re-enforced local and national identities that also show traces of Russian culture, such as humour. Mass media was used by the Russian leadership to disseminate narratives Othering the EU that were contested in both societies. Moldovan and Armenian media actors where co-opted by the EU into projects disseminating democratic ideas with little effects during the analysed time period. Simultaneous co-optation was most effective by means of religion. Russia co-opted parts of Moldovan and Armenian – excluding civil society actors - into its belief system of traditional values through the Russian Orthodox Church. Civil society actors accepted the EU's liberal democratic values but faced difficulties diffusing them to the wider society. Thus, both belief systems were somewhat accepted in Moldovan and Armenian societies leading to co-existence in different parts of these societies.

These findings confirm the expectation that co-optation is most present in the Russia-Moldova case where the ideational boundary was extended through language, culture, media, and religion. At the same time, simultaneous co-optation in Moldova did not result in competition and less effective shifting of the ideational boundary, but a co-existence of EU and Russian belief systems in different parts of the societies. Lastly, the results showed that shifts in the cultural boundaries occurred also through international mobility – a factor that was not included in the analytical framework. Thus, future research should pay more attention to the diffusion of culture and values through international mobility and diasporas.

[224] Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives, UA21.
[225] Haerpfer et al., 'World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017-2020) Cross-National Data-Set'.

Bibliography

Acharya, Amitav. 'How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism'. *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (April 2004): 239–75. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818304582024.

Armenpress. 'Armenian Religious Leaders Urge Authorities to Refrain from Ratifying Istanbul Convention'. armenpress.am, 26 July 2019. https://armenpress.am/eng/news/982973.html?+fbclid=IwAR2jFKXtbkURBNVnnJHaH7gXkX4THNbqijm3-++cHBXYJaoDatRN_hPaIHkKA.

Asian Development Bank. 'Civil Society Briefs Armenia', n.d. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29304/csb-arm.pdf.

'Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the Other Part'. Official Journal of the European Union, 30 August 2014. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2014.260.01.0004.01.ENG.

Averre, Derek. 'Competing Rationalities: Russia, the EU and the "Shared Neighbourhood"'. *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10 (December 2009): 1689–1713. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130903278918.

Babayan, Nelli. 'The Return of the Empire? Russia's Counteraction to Transatlantic Democracy Promotion in Its near Abroad'. *Democratization* 22, no. 3 (16 April 2015): 438–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2014.993973.

Bakalov, Ivan. 'Whither Soft Power? Divisions, Milestones, and Prospects of a Research Programme in the Making'. *Journal of Political Power*, 31 January 2019, 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2019.1573613.

Baltag, Dorina, and Isabell Burmester. 'Quo Vadis, Moldova? The Role of Social and Political Elites in the Norm Internalization Process'. *Democratization* 29, no. 3 (2022): 487–506. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1963237.

Barbé, Esther, and Pol Morillas. 'The EU Global Strategy: The Dynamics of a More Politicized and Politically Integrated Foreign Policy'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 6 (2 November 2019): 753–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2019.1588227.

Basar, Bahar, and Ashok Swain. 'Diaspora Design versus Homeland Realities: Case Study of Armenian Diaspora'. *International Journal on World Peace* 25 (2008): 7–28.

Bates, Thomas R. 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36, no. 2 (1975): 351–66. https://doi.org/10.2307/2708933.

Bechev, Dimitar. 'The EU as a Regional Hegemon? From Eastern Enlargement to the European Neighbourhoof Policy'. In *The EU and Its Neighbours: Values versus Security in European Foreign Policy*, edited by Gergana Noutcheva, Karolina Pomorska, and Giselle Bosse, 25–45. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2013.

———. 'Understanding the Contest Between the EU and Russia in Their Shared Neighborhood'. *Problems of Post-Communism* 62, no. 6 (2 November 2015): 340–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1067751.

Blitt, Robert C. 'Religious Soft Power in Russian Foreign Policy: Constitutional Change and the Russian Orthodox Church'. Geopolitics of Religious Soft Power Policy Brief. Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, Brookings Institution, May 2021. https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/religious-soft-power-in-russian-foreign-policy-constitutional-change-and-the-russian-orthodox-church.

Casier, Tom. 'Russia and the Diffusion of Political Norms: The Perfect Rival?' *Democratization* 29, no. 3 (3 April 2022): 433–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1928078.
Caucasus Research Resource Center-Armenia Foundation. 'Media Consumption and Media Coverage of Reforms in Armenia'. Analytical Report. Yerevan: Media Initiatives Center, August 2019. https://www.crrc.am/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MICE-Report-2019_.pdf.
Caucasus Research Resource Centers. 'Caucasus Barometer', 2010. http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/.
———. 'Caucasus Barometer', 2019. http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/.
———. 'Caucasus Barometer', 2020. http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer/.
Center for Insights in Survey Research. 'Public Opinion Survey: Residents of Armenia'. Armenia: International Republican Institute, 2019. https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/wysiwyg/iri_poll_armenia_september-october_2019.pdf.
———. 'Public Opinion Survey: Residents of Armenia'. Armenia: International Republican Institute, 2021. https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/final_for_publication_armenia_electoral_reform_march_8_2021.pdf.
———. 'Public Opinion Survey: Residents of Moldova'. Moldova: International Republican Institute, December 2018. https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/iri_moldova_poll_december_2018-january_2019.pdf.
———. 'Public Opinion Survey: Residents of Moldova'. Moldova: International Republican Institute, 2021. https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/new_iri_march_21_slide_deck_descriptive_public_release_2.pdf.
Chiriac, Liubomir, and Eduard Tugui. 'Civil Society Organizations from the Republic of Moldova: Development, Sustainability and Participation in Policy Dialogue'. Mapping Study. Chisinau: Europen Union, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and Viitorul, 2014. http://www.viitorul.org/files/4684299_en_civil_society_.pdf.
Chyzhova, Olga. 'Disinformation Resilience in Central and Eastern Europe'. Kyiv, 2018. http://prismua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DRI_CEE_2018.pdf.
Cingolani, Pietro, and Francesco Vietti. 'Social Remittances and Local Development in the Republic of Moldova. A Critical Analysis of Migrants as Agents of Change'. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19, no. 4 (2 October 2019): 625–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2019.1657685.
Clarke, David. 'Cultural Diplomacy'. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies, 19 November 2020. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.543.
'Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and Their Member States, of the One Part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the Other Part'. Official Journal of the European Union, 26 January 2018. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A22018A0126%2801%29.
Cox, Robert W. 'Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations : An Essay in Method'. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 2 (June 1983): 162–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298830120020701.
Crowcroft, Orlando. 'Moldovans Warned to Stop Calling Romanian Language Moldovan'. *Euronews*, 30 January 2020, sec. news_news.

https://www.euronews.com/2020/01/30/moldova-warned-to-stop-calling-romanian-moldovan.
Cukrowski, Jacek, Radzislawa Gortat, and Piotr Kazmierkiewicz. 'Moldova: Assessment of Civil Society and Democratic Institutions'. Studies & Analyses. Warsaw: Center for Social and Economic Research CASE, November 2003. http://www.case-research.eu/en/moldova-assessment-of-civil-society-and-democratic-institutions.
Dandashly, Assem, and Gergana Noutcheva. 'Conceptualizing Norm Diffusion and Norm Contestation in the European Neighbourhood: Introduction to the Special Issue'. *Democratization* 29, no. 3 (3 April 2022): 415–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.2012161.
Del Sarto, Raffaella A. 'Normative Empire Europe: The European Union, Its Borderlands, and the "Arab Spring"'. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54, no. 2 (2016): 215–32. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12282.
Delcour, Laure. 'Between the Eastern Partnership and Eurasian Integration: Explaining Post-Soviet Countries' Engagement in (Competing) Region-Building Projects'. *Problems of Post-Communism* 62, no. 6 (2 November 2015): 316–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1057075.
———. 'The Road to Equality? EU Diffusion of Anti-Discrimination Norms in Armenia'. *Democratization* 29, no. 3 (3 April 2022): 469–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1952571.
Destradi, Sandra. 'Regional Powers and Their Strategies: Empire, Hegemony, and Leadership'. *Review of International Studies* 36, no. 04 (October 2010): 903–30. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510001361.
Diez, Thomas. 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering "Normative Power Europe"'. *Millennium : Journal of International Studies* 333 (2005): 613–36.
———. 'Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (July 2004): 319–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757042000245924.
Dimitrova, Antoaneta, Honorata Mazepus, and Dimiter Toshkov. 'Report on the Findings of Survey Experiments Assessing the Effectiveness of the EU's Communications'. EU-STRAT Report Series. Berlin: Freie Universität, March 2018.
EaP CSF Armenian National Platform. 'Statement on the Implementation of Article 366 of the RA-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)', 14 June 2019. https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/CEPA-AR-NP-Statement.pdf.
Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. 'Country Report: Armenia – Structured Consultation on the Eastern Partnership beyond 2020 Civil Society Perspective', April 2020. https://eap-csf.eu/project/country-report-armenia-structured-consultation-on-the-eastern-partnership-beyond-2020/.
EU Neighbours east. 'EU4Culture'. EU project page. Accessed 29 April 2022. https://euneighbourseast.eu/projects/eu-project-page/.
———. 'EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme'. EU project page. Accessed 29 April 2022. https://euneighbourseast.eu/projects/eu-project-page/.
———. 'European Media Facility in Armenia – Building Sustainable and Professional Media'. EU project page. Accessed 29 April 2022. https://euneighbourseast.eu/projects/eu-project-page/?id=1529.
———. 'Strategic Communication and Support to Mass-Media in the Republic of Moldova'. EU project page. Accessed 29 April 2022. https://euneighbourseast.eu/projects/eu-project-page/?id=476.
European Commission. 'About the Creative Europe Programme'. Culture and Creativity. Accessed 28 April 2022. https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/about-the-creative-europe-programme.

———. ‘Annex 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision Amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2017) 7533 of 8.11.20017 on the Annual Action Programme 2017 in Favour of the Republic of Moldova to Be Financed from the General Budget of the Union’. C(2018) 8292 final, 5 December 2018.
———. ‘Annex 3 of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2015 in Favour of the Republic of Moldova to Be Financed from the General Budget of the European Union’. C(2015) 7150 final, 16 October 2015.
———. ‘Creative Europe’. Culture and Creativity. Accessed 28 April 2022. https://culture.ec.europa.eu/node/821.
———. ‘Eastern Partnership Policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership That Delivers for All’. Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Brussels, 18 March 2020.
———. ‘Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2017-2020: Single Support Framework for EU Support to Moldova (2017-2020)’, n.d. https://mf.gov.md/sites/default/files/UE%20CUS%20single_support_framework_2017-2020_0.pdf.
European Union. ‘EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society in Armenia for the Period 2014-2017’, 2 July 2014. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20141027_eu_armenia_cs_roadmap_en_0.pdf.
———. ‘EU Motto’. Accessed 29 April 2022. https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols/eu-motto_en.
Fairclough, Norman, and Isabela Fairclough. *Political Discourse Analysis*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat). ‘2010 Russian Population Census’. Федеральная служба государственной статистики. Accessed 20 October 2021. https://www.gks.ru/bgd/free/b00_25/IssWWW.exe/Stg/d000/I000150R.HTM.
Moscow cultural and business center ‘House of Moscow’ in Yerevan [Московский культурно-деловой центр ‘Дом Москвы’ в Ереване]. ‘Free Courses on Russian History Started in Three Cities of Armenia [В Трех Городах Армении Стартовали Бесплатные Курсы По Истории России]’, 4 October 2021. https://dommoskvy.am/news/04.10.2021_v-treh-gorodah-armenii-startovali-besplatnie-kursi-po-istorii-rossii/.
Freedom House. ‘Disinformation and Misinformation in Armenia: Confronting the Power of False Narratives’, June 2021. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Disinformation-in-Armenia_En-v3.pdf.
Gaventa, Jonathan. *Power after Lukes: An Overview of Theories of Power since Lukes and Their Application to Development*. Brighton: Participation Group, Institute of Development Studies, 2003.
Gedeshi, Ilir, Merab Pachulia, David Rotman, Sylvia Kritzinger, Georg Poghosyan, Georgy Fotev, Jadranka Kolenović-Đapo, et al. ‘Joint EVS/WVS 2017-2021 Dataset (Joint EVS/WVS)’. SPSS, Stata, SAS, R. World Values Survey Association, 2021. https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.11.
Gerring, John. ‘What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?’ *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 341–54.
Goethe Institut. ‘EU4Culture’. Fostering culture in the Eastern Partnership countries. Accessed 29 April 2022. https://www.goethe.de/ins/ua/en/kul/sup/e4c.html.
Grigore, Mihai-D. ‘Gespaltene Orthodoxie in der Republik Moldau’. *Religion und Gesellschaft in Ost und West*, no. 11 (2018): 12–14.

Gvalia, Giorgi, David Siroky, Bidzina Lebanidze, and Zurab Iashvili. 'Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States'. *Security Studies* 22, no. 1 (1 January 2013): 98–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2013.757463.

Haas, Marcel de. *Russia's Foreign Security Policy in the 21st Century: Putin, Medvedev and Beyond*. Contemporary Security Studies. London ; New York: Routledge, 2010.

Haerpfer, Christian, Ronald Inglehart, Alejandro Moreno, Christian Welzel, Kseniya Kizilova, Jaime Diez-Medrano, Marta Lagos, Pippa Norris, Eduard Ponarin, and Bi Puranen. 'World Values Survey Wave 7 (2017-2020) Cross-National Data-Set'. World Values Survey Association, 2020. https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.1.

Hannah, Erin, Holly Ryan, and James Scott. 'Power, Knowledge and Resistance: Between Co-Optation and Revolution in Global Trade'. *Review of International Political Economy* 24, no. 5 (3 September 2017): 741–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2017.1324807.

Higgins, Andrew. 'In Expanding Russian Influence, Faith Combines With Firepower'. *The New York Times*, 13 September 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/14/world/europe/russia-orthodox-church.html.

Hopf, Ted. 'Common-Sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics'. *International Organization* 67, no. 2 (April 2013): 317–54. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818313000040.

Hovhannisyan, Mikayel, and Julya Sahakyan. 'Adopting Experience on Bilateral EU-Moldova and EU-Georgia CS Platforms to Armenia: Report on Armenia'. Eurasia Partnership Foundation, 2017.

Ikenberry, G. John, and Charles A. Kupchan. 'Socialization and Hegemonic Power'. *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (1990): 283–315.

Ingelhart, Ronald, Christian W. Haerpfer, Alejandro Moreno, Christian Welzel, Kseniya Kizilova, Jaime Diez-Medrano, Marta Lagos, Pippa Norris, Eduard Ponarin, and Bi Puranen. 'World Values Survey Wave 3 (1995-1998)'. World Values Survey Association, 2020. https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.5.

———. 'World Values Survey Wave 5 (2005-2009)'. World Values Survey Association, 2018. https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.7.

———. 'World Values Survey Wave 6 (2010-2014)'. World Values Survey Association, 2014. https://doi.org/10.14281/18241.8.

Institute for Public Policy. 'Public Opinion Barometer: "What Does the European Union Mean to You?"', November 2013. http://bop.ipp.md.

———. 'Republic of Moldova Public Opinion Barometer', 2019. http://bop.ipp.md/en.

International Labour Office [ILO]. 'Migration and Development: Armenia Country Study'. Yerevan: Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2009. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---sro-moscow/documents/publication/wcms_308849.pdf.

'Interview of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Moldova V.I.Kuzmin [Интервью Чрезвычайного и Полномочного Посла Российской Федерации в Республике Молдова В.И.Кузьмина]'. ITAR-TASS news agency, 3 June 2009. https://www.mid.ru/ru/publikacii/-/asset_publisher/nTzOQTrrCFd0/content/id/291474.

Interview with Armenian civil society representative. GB33. Armenia, 14 December 2021.

Interview with Armenian civil society representative. LB38. Armenia, 16 December 2021.

Interview with Armenian expert. IB35. Armenia, 15 December 2021.

Interview with Armenian expert. KB37. Armenia, 16 December 2021.

Interview with Armenian expert. TB46. Armenia, 22 December 2021.

Interview with Armenian official. FB32. Armenia, 10 December 2021.

Interview with Armenian think tank representative. EB31. Armenia, 9 December 2021.
Interview with Armenian think tank representative. PB42. Armenia, 20 December 2021.
Interview with EU official. BA02. Brussels, 10 September 2019.
Interview with EU official. NB40. Armenia, 20 December 2021.
Interview with Moldovan civil society representative. OA15. Moldova, 3 February 2020.
Interview with Moldovan civil society representatives. UA21. Moldova, 12 February 2020.
Interview with Moldovan expert. SA19. Moldova, 10 February 2020.
Interview with Moldovan official. KA11. Brussels, 7 November 2019.
Interview with Moldovan politician. PA16. Moldova, 7 February 2020.
Interview with Moldovan think tank representative. QA17. Moldova, 7 February 2020.
Interview with Moldovan think tank representative. RA18. Moldova, 7 February 2020.
Interview with representative of the Russian Orthodox Church. DB30. Moscow, 2 December 2021.
IRI, USAID, Baltic Surveys/The Gallup Organization, and ASA. 'Armenian National Voter Study', July 2007. https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2007%20September%2017%20Survey%20of%20Armenian%20Public%20Opinion,%20July%205-12,%202007.pdf.
Joseph, Jonathan. 'Hegemony and the Structure-Agency Problem in International Relations: A Scientific Realist Contribution'. *Review of International Studies* 34, no. 1 (January 2008): 109–28. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210508007936.
Keating, Vincent Charles, and Katarzyna Kaczmarska. 'Conservative Soft Power: Liberal Soft Power Bias and the "Hidden" Attraction of Russia'. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 11 May 2017. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-017-0100-6.
Khakee, Anna. 'Opening up the Notion of "Closing Space": Accounting for Normative, Actor, and Political System Diversity'. *Democratization* 29, no. 3 (3 April 2022): 525–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.2008360.
Lears, T. J. Jackson. 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities'. *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (June 1985): 567. https://doi.org/10.2307/1860957.
Lebow, Richard Ned. 'Identity and International Relations'. *International Relations* 22, no. 4 (December 2008): 473–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117808097312.
Levada, Iurii A. 'Homo Post-Sovieticus'. *Russian Social Science Review* 44, no. 1 (1 January 2003): 32–67. https://doi.org/10.2753/RSS1061-1428440132.
Lowndes, Vivien, David Marsh, and Gerry Stoker. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2017.
Lukes, Steven. *Power: A Radical View*. Studies in Sociology. London ; New York: Macmillan, 1974.
———. 'Power and Rational Choice'. *Journal of Political Power* 0, no. 0 (28 March 2021): 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2021.1900494.
Malinova, Olga. 'Obsession with Status and Ressentiment: Historical Backgrounds of the Russian Discursive Identity Construction'. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47, no. 3–4 (1 December 2014): 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2014.07.001.
———. 'Russian Identity and the "Pivot to the East": An Analysis of Rhetorical References to the American and Chinese "Others" in Political Elite Discourse'. *Problems of Post-Communism*, 24 August 2018, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2018.1502613.
Manners, Ian. 'Normative Power Europe Reconsidered: Beyond the Crossroads'. *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 2 (March 2006): 182–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760500451600.

Mkhoyan, Anna. ‘Soft Power, Russia and the Former Soviet States: A Case Study of Russian Language and Education in Armenia’. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 23, no. 6 (2 November 2017): 690–704. https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2016.1251426.
Morozov, Viatcheslav. *Russia’s Postcolonial Identity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137409300.
———. ‘Sovereignty and Democracy in Contemporary Russia: A Modern Subject Faces the Post-Modern World’. *Journal of International Relations and Development* 11, no. 2 (June 2008): 152–80. https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2008.6.
Morozov, Viatcheslav, and Bahar Rumelili. ‘The External Constitution of European Identity: Russia and Turkey as Europe-Makers’. *Cooperation and Conflict* 47, no. 1 (March 2012): 28–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836711433124.
Mustajoki, Arto, Ekaterina Protassova, and Maria Yelenevskaya. *The Soft Power of the Russian Language: Pluricentricity, Politics and Policies*. Routledge, 2019.
National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova. ‘Population Census’, 2004. https://statistica.gov.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295&#idc=205&.
———. ‘Population Census’, 2014. https://statistica.gov.md/pageview.php?l=en&id=4162&idc=479.
Neumann, Iver B. ‘Discourse Analysis’. In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*, edited by Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 61–77. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230584129.
Nye, Joseph S. ‘Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept’. *Palgrave Communications* 3 (21 February 2017): 17008. https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.8.
Ohana, Yael. ‘Culture and Change in Moldova’. East European Reflection Group (EE RG): Identifying Cultural Actors of Change in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. Bratislava: European Cultural Foundation and GMFUS, August 2007. https://culturalfoundation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/culture_and_change_moldova.pdf.
Orthodox Church of Moldova. ‘Message of the Orthodox Church of Moldova Regarding the Ratification of Istanbul Convention by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova’. Metropolitan of Chisinau and All Moldova, 12 October 2021. https://en.mitropolia.md/message-of-the-orthodox-church-of-moldova-regarding-the-ratification-of-istanbul-convention-by-the-parliament-of-the-republic-of-moldova/.
Pänke, Julian. ‘The Fallout of the EU’s Normative Imperialism in the Eastern Neighborhood’. *Problems of Post-Communism* 62, no. 6 (2 November 2015): 350–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2015.1093773.
Paturyan, Yevgenya Jenny. ‘Armenian Civil Society: Consolidated but Detached from the Broader Public’. Rapid Assessment. Yerevan: CIVICUS Civil Society Index, 2014. https://www.civicus.org/images/Civicus-Armenia-Policy-Brief.pdf.
Pew Research Center. ‘Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe’, 10 May 2017.
Puiu, Victoria. ‘Moldova: Does Russian TV Threaten National Security?’ *Eurasianet*, 6 February 2015. https://eurasianet.org/moldova-does-russian-tv-threaten-national-security.
Putin, Vladimir. ‘Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Foreign Ministry Board’, 18 November 2021. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67123.
Rabinovych, Maryna, and Zuzana Novakova. ‘“Paradigmatic Change” with Much Continuity? EU’s Approach to Values in External Policies in the Age of Contestation’. *Global Affairs* 5, no. 1 (1 January 2019): 73–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2019.1584538.

‘Recommendation No 1/2017 of the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Council of 4 August 2017 on the EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agenda [2017/1489]’. Official Journal of the European Union, 2017. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:22017D1489.

Rinnert, David. ‘The Republic of Moldova in the Eastern Partnership: From “Poster Child” to “Problem Child”?’ Perspective. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, August 2013.

Rossotrudnichestvo. ‘“New Generation” Delegate from Armenia: “Our Humor Is Smart and Politically Correct”’. Accessed 23 October 2021. https://www.rs.gov.ru/en/news/52679.

———. ‘Russian Techniques Will Help to Improve Qualification of the Teachers in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Moldova’, 2016. https://www.rs.gov.ru/en/news/182.

———. ‘SputnikPro and the “New Generation” Program: Expanding the Horizons’, 2019. https://www.rs.gov.ru/en/news/69701.

Schunz, Simon, Sieglinde Gstöhl, and Luk Van Langenhove. ‘Between Cooperation and Competition: Major Powers in Shared Neighbourhoods’. *Contemporary Politics* 24, no. 1 (January 2018): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1408174.

Sittig, Hendrik, and Darija Fabijanic. ‘Rusissche Dominanz Setzt Sich Im Moldauischen Medienmarkt Durch’. Länderbericht Medienprogramm Südosteuropa. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, March 2020.

Sliusarenco, Dumitru, and Ion Foltea. ‘The Rise of Illiberal Civil Society in Moldova’. *The Foreign Policy Centre*, 18 July 2018. https://fpc.org.uk/the-rise-of-illiberal-civil-society-in-moldova/.

Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia. ‘Population Census’, 2001. https://armstat.am/en/?nid=22.

———. ‘Population Census’, 2011. https://armstat.am/en/?nid=21.

Tanas, Alexander. ‘Moldovan Court Overturns Special Status for Russian Language’. *Reuters*, 21 January 2021, sec. Emerging Markets. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-moldova-language-idUSKBN29Q2J0.

The Editors. ‘Moldova’s LGBT Community Faces a Russia-Inspired Media Crackdown’. World Politics Review, 16 August 2017. https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/22967/moldova-s-lgbt-community-faces-a-russia-inspired-media-crackdown.

The Russian Orthodox Church. ‘His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Completes His Official Visit to Armenia’. Department for External Church Relations, 2010. https://mospat.ru/en/news/57575/.

———. ‘His Holiness Patriarch Kirill Meets with President of Moldova Igor Dodon’. Department for External Church Relations, 2018. https://mospat.ru/en/news/47008/.

———. ‘Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk Has a Talk with Prime Minister of Moldova’. Department for External Church Relations, 2010. https://mospat.ru/en/news/57564/.

———. ‘Metropolitan Hilarion: The Unique Role of the Russian Orthodox Church Is That It Unites the Peoples of the Post-Soviet Space’. Department for External Church Relations, 2013. https://mospat.ru/en/news/52127/.

———. ‘Patriarch Kirill Meets with Moldova’s Acting President M. Lupu’. Department for External Church Relations, 2011. https://mospat.ru/en/news/55119/.

———. ‘Patriarch Kirill Meets with Moldova’s President Igor Dodon’. Department for External Church Relations, 2017. https://mospat.ru/en/news/48643/.

Russkiy Mir Foundation. ‘The Russkiy Mir Foundation and Russian Association of Book Publishers (ASKI) Signed an Agreement to Jointly Promote Books and Printed Products in Russian’, n.d. https://russkiymir.ru/en/magazines/article/144527/.

Tolstrup, Jakob. *Russia vs. the EU : The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States*. Boulder, Colo.: FirstForum Press, 2013. http://data.rero.ch/01-R007618603/html?view=GE_V1.
Trenin, Dmitri. 'Russia's Spheres of Interest , Not Influence'. *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (October 2009): 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/01636600903231089.
Tsygankov, Andrei P. 'Finding a Civilisational Idea: "West," Eurasia," and "Euro-East" in Russia's Foreign Policy'. *Geopolitics* 12, no. 3 (31 July 2007): 375–99. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040701305617.
Tudoroiu, Theodor. 'Democracy and State Capture in Moldova'. *Democratization* 22, no. 4 (7 June 2015): 655–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.868438.
USAID and Internews. 'National Survey: Perceptions of the Population of the Republic of Moldova on Mass Media', November 2018. https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/2019-02/03_INTERNEWS_Final%20report_25.10.18_EN-web.pdf.
Vieira, Alena. 'The European Union's "Potential We" between Acceptance and Contestation: Assessing the Positioning of Six Eastern Partnership Countries*'. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 59, no. 2 (2021): 297–315. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13069.
Wiener, Antje. *A Theory of Contestation*. SpringerBriefs in Political Science. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2014. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-55235-9.
Zakem, Vera, Paul Saunders, Umida Hashimova, and P Kathleen. 'Mapping Russian Media Network: Media's Role in Russian Foreign Policy and Decision-Making'. CNA Analysis & Solutions, January 2018.
Zimmermann, Lisbeth. 'Same Same or Different? Norm Diffusion Between Resistance, Compliance, and Localization in Post-Conflict States'. *International Studies Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2016): 98–115. https://doi.org/10.1111/insp.12080.
Zürn, Michael. 'Assessing State Preferences and Explaining Institutional Choice: The Case of Intra-German Trade'. *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1 June 1997): 295–320. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2478.00043.