MOLDOVA

Gagauz

Activity: 1991-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The Gagauz movement was both active and nonviolent prior to Moldova's independence (see Gagauz under Russia/Soviet Union). The movement remained active in independent Moldova (Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Lexis Nexis; Marshall & Gurr 2003; Minahan 1996, 2002; MAR).
- An autonomous Gaguaz region was created in 1995; regional elections were held and rebels joined the Moldovan armed forces. MAR suggests that the Gagauz are satisfied with this arrangement; however, other sources suggested continued separatist mobilization.
- A problem that remained was that Gagauzia's autonomy was relatively ill-defined. After the establishment of Gagauz autonomy in 1995, there were various disputes between Gagauzia and the central government over competency distribution and the extent of Gagauzia's fiscal autonomy (Katchanovski 2020: 9; Protysk 2011). The central government used the vague nature of the autonomy law to reduce Gagauzia's autonomy over time using a salami tactic of reducing the scope of autonomy bit by bit (Protysk 2011). Katchanovski (2020) reports that Gagauz leaders wanted to elevate the region's constitutional status after 2001 as a result and Protysk (2011: 8) reports several other initiateves aimed at codifying and increasing Gagauzia's autonomy.
- In 2014, Moldova signed an association agreement with the European Union, after which 99% and 98% of Gagauz voters expressed support for independence if Moldova were to lose its sovereignty and for joining the Russian-dominated Eurasian Union (Katchanovski 2020: 9; Harrington 2022). Roth (2015: 130) describes the movement as ongoing. Relations between Gagauzia and the central government remained tense in subsequent years (Harrington 2022). [start date: 1989; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There are some indications that the Gagauz claim radicalized after the failed August coup in 1991. An independence referendum was held in December 1991, turning out a wide majority for independence (Katchanovski 2005: 885). King (2000: 217), on the other hand, argues that the effective demand was for autonomy. There is thus some ambiguity concerning the dominant claim following the August Coup, which arguably is when Moldova won independence. Given that a referendum was held only a couple of months after, we code an independence claim for 1991 (and 1992, see below). Minahan (2002: 634) notes that extreme nationalists were outflanked in 1992, moving the dominant claim back to territorial autonomy within Moldova. The main focus of the Gagauz movement remains on gaining more autonomy (Katchanovski 2005: 85, 2020; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 192). Hence, we code an autonomy claim for 1993 onwards. [1991-1992: independence claim; 1993-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- Demands for independence emerged in 1991, but were quickly subdued in 1992.

- In 2014, Gagauzia voted expressed support for independence if Moldova were to lose its sovereignty in a referendum. The referendum was held in the context of fears of Modlova merging with Romania and Moldova accessing the EU (Calus 2014). We do not code a restart of the independence movement because the question was framed in conditional terms. [start date: 1991; end date: 1992]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Gagauz consists of small territories known as the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (Roth 2015: 130). We code this claim using data on admin units from the Global Administrative Areas Database.

Sovereignty declarations

- Gagauzia declared its independence on August 19, 1991 (Chinn & Roper 1995: 301). This is coded under the header of Moldova since Moldova was effectively independent after the failed August coup. [1991: independence declaration]

Separatist armed conflict

- Marshall & Gurr (2003) suggest an armed confict in 1991-1992 and the MAR rebellion score is three during those years, suggesting a "local rebellion". Minahan (2002: 634) also suggests that there was violence, but it appears to have been comparatively minimal and we found no indications that the 25 deaths threshold was met in qualitatives sources. MAR's rebellion score remains at 3 also for 1993-1995; the most likely explanation is that Gagauzia was de facto independent during those years. MAR sometimes assigns a code of 3 in such cases. We found no evidence for violence above the threshold.
- This coding has been confirmed through personal communication with Keith Harrington (Maynooth University), an expert in Moldovan politics (May 15, 2023).
    - According to Keith, there were only two notable instances. First, "in late October 1990, members of the Popular Front of Moldova, encouraged by the Moldovan PM, Mircea Druc, organised a march on Comrat to prevent elections to the separatist Gagauz Supreme Soviet. Reports claim anywhere from 30,000 to 60,000 participated in the march. In Comrat, local Gagauz fighters (known as the Budjak Brigade) and volunteers from Transnistria gathered to defend the city. However, violence was avoided, as troops from the Soviet Union's Ministry of the Interior stationed in the Ukrainian city of Bolhrad intervened and prevented members of the Popular Front from accessing the city."
    - Second, "on May 24, 1992, a Moldovan police officer, Georgy Syrtmach was killed in the town of Ceadir-Lunga. I have seen nothing in the primary sources about this. I only became aware of it because the thirtieth anniversary was last year. However, the media reports were very vague as to what actually happened. I think he was killed by members of the Budjak Brigade though."
    - Additional information/context: "I believe violence was avoided because the Gagauz did not have the means (or the will) to fight. Gagauzia was (and still is) the poorest region in Moldova (which itself is very poor). Moreover, when I analysed local newspapers from Gagauzia from the time, it was clear that local political elites were not as hostile towards the government as their counterparts in Transnistria. Even though they unilaterally declared autonomy (in Nov 1989) and independence (in Aug 1990), local political elites

consistently stated that a negotiated settlement with Chisinau was attainable, and the preferred outcome. There wasn't even many articles in their newspapers promoting the Gagauz separatist republic. This was in stark contrast to Transnistria, were local elites consistently claimed a settlement could not be reached, and filled their newspapers with articles aimed at convincing people Transnistrian independence was legal. Another factor was the Transnistrian War itself. After seeing the horrors of war, neither the Gagauz nor the Moldovans wanted to fight." [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The history of the territorial belongings of Gagauzia is relatively complex: it has been part of Russia, Romania, the Ottoman Empire, and Moldova. In 1906, the Gagauz leaders had declared their homeland (then part of Tsarist Russia) an independent state, but the revolt was quelled within two weeks (Minahan 2002: 632). After World War II, Moldova again became part of the Soviet Empire after being part of Romania in the inter-war period. Under Soviet rule, the Gagauz were allowed to use their language, but publications had to use the Cyrillic alphabet. In 1986, there was a concession on the Gagauz demands for protection of Gagauz culture: the Gagauz were granted the right to use their language in TV and radio broadcasting (Minahan 2002: 633-4). [1986: cultural rights concession]
- In 1988 Gorbachev initiated contested elections throughout the Union, a measure tantamount to a reduction of Moscow's control of the regions (see Suny 1993: 118, 141, 461; Linz & Stepan 1992; Brown 1996: 179). However, local choice of leaders had little effect for groups without an autonomous status as the respective regions' decision rights were very limited. Hence, this is not coded as a concession.
- In 1989, Moldova's Supreme Soviet adopted a new language law (Sato 2009: 144; Chinn & Roper 1995: 296-300; Neukirch 2001; Vahl & Emerson 2004). Moldovan (using Romanian script) was made the official language. Public officials as well as those with high positions in the private sector were required to acquire facility in both Russian and Romanian by 1994 (later this was postponed to 1997). The 1989 language law can be considered a decrease in the Gagauz' cultural rights. Arguably the critical provision was that public officials and certain people in the private sector needed to be able to communicate in Romanian within five years (Neukirch 2001); the Gagauz speak their own language, and typically Russian as their second language. We code a (prior) rerstriction. [1989: cultural rights restriction]
- In August 1990 the Gagauz Khalk unilaterally declared the separation from the Soviet Republic of Moldova, and the creation of its own Soviet Socialist Republic (Minahan 2002: 634). In response, the Moldovan Supreme Soviet dissolved and outlawed the Gagauz self-determination organization, the Gagauz Khalk. In addition, troops were sent in to prevent the elections the Gagauz Khalk had unilaterally called for October (Hewitt and Cheetham 2002). These repressive acts do not constitute restrictions as understood here, and hence they are not coded.

Concessions and restrictions

- After independence, Moldova chose the zero-option, meaning that citizenship is automatically granted to all residents of Moldova at the time of independence (if they wish to have Moldovan citizenship). This is not coded as a concession since it concerns the access dimension and not autonomy.
- The Moldovan efforts to bring the Gagauz attempt at secession under control continued after Moldovan independence in 1991, but by early 1992 the Moldovan government's authority in the region had practically ceased to exist. In 1994 Moldova grants Gagauzia far-reaching autonomy. The 1994 constitution contained an article on territorial autonomy in Gagauzia, and in December the organic act establishing the Gagauz autonomy was adopted (Minority Rights Group International). Autonomy was implemented in 1995. The Gagauz legislature was granted law-making competencies in areas of culture, education, and taxation (Minahan 2002: 635). Furthermore, Gagauzia was granted the right to secede from Moldova if Moldova were to lose

sovereignty (i.e. join Romania) (Haines 2014). We code a concession on territorial autonomy in 1994. We do not code an independence concession due to the narrow conditions under which Gagauzia can declare independence. [1994: autonomy concession]

- A problem that remained was that Gagauzia's autonomy was relatively ill-defined. After the establishment of Gagauz autonomy in 1995, there were various disputes between Gagauzia and the central government over competency distribution and the extent of Gagauzia's fiscal autonomy (Katchanovski 2020: 9; Protysk 2011). The central government used the vague nature of the autonomy law to reduce Gagauzia's autonomy over time using a salami tactic of reducing the scope of autonomy bit by bit. For example, new normative acts passed by the national parliament and executive bodies in the period after 1994 routinely ignored the special status of Gagauzia (Protysk 2011). Probably due to the salami tactic nature of the curtailing of autonomy, we were unable to find a specific instance that seemed significant enough to code a restriction.
- In the 2000s the Gagauz autonomy was granted the right of legislative initiative in national parliament. However, this had little effect given that such an initiative requires a majority in the national parliament so that it becomes national law (Protsyk 2011: 8). We do not code it as a concession.
- In 2003, Gagauzia's autonomous status was enshrined in the national constitution; however, according to Protysk (2011): "the content of this article as well as mentioning of the autonomy in Article 110 did little to strengthen the autonomy's claims for greater control over its own affairs."
- At the same time, the Gagauz' right to declare independence if Moldova loses sovereignty (i.e. joins Romania) was abolished (Haines 2014). Because we do not code the recognition of this right as a concession, we also do not code the abolishment as a restriction.
- In 2004, the central government agreed that Gagauzia has full control over the spending of certain types of national taxes including VAT. However, at the same time, the central government adopted a law that reduced contributions to Gagauzia's budget proportionally to the additional tax revenues Gagauzia could now retain (Protysk 2011). We do not code a concession.
- In 2013, the central government almost passed an amendment to the public finance law that would have reduced the share of personal income taxes over which Gagauzia has control from 100% to 25% and from other taxes including corporation tax and VAT to 50%. The amendment was ultimately not passed, however (Katchanovski 2020: 10).
- The 2014 referendum (see above) was declared illegal by the central government, but as the referendum was unilateral, this is not coded as a restriction (Minzarari 2014).

Regional autonomy

- Gagauzia was de-facto independent from 1991 onwards. Since the establishment of de-facto independence coincided with Moldova's independence, we code de-facto independence from 1991 onwards. Moldova granted far-reaching autonomy in 1994, and the autonomy was established in early 1995 after a referendum in March (Minority Rights Group International). Though formally there was no autonomy between late 1994/early 1995, the autonomy legislation was on its way and hence we code autonomy throughout. [1991-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

- Gagauzia was de-facto independent from 1991 onwards. Since the establishment of de-facto independence coincided with Moldova's independence, we code de-facto independence from 1991-1994. [1991-1994: de facto independence]

Major territorial changes

- Moldova attained independence in 1991, implying a host change. [1991: host change (new)]
- [1991: establishment of de facto state]
- [1994: revocation of de facto state]

- [1995: establishment of regional autonomy]

EPR2SDM

Movement	Gagauz
Scenario	1:1
EPR group(s)	Gagauz
Gwgroupid(s)	35904000

Power access

- We follow EPR. Self-exclusion = powerless. [1991-2020: powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [1991-2014: 0.038; 2015-2020: 0.046]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 630) approx. 95% of all Gagauz in Moldova are located in the Republic of Gagauzia, where they make up more than 80% of the local population. This matches with information from MAR. Note that the Gagauz republic is not spatially contiguous as there are some exclaves, but the threshold is very likely to be met also if we just considered the main body. [concentrated]

Kin

- No kin according to EPR.
- The Minorities at Risk data (MAR V), on the other hand, codes "close kindred in more than one country which adjoins its regional base." This appears to Gagauz groupings in Ukraine (35,000), Bulgaria (20,000), Greece (20,000), and Russia (10,000) mentioned by Minahan (2002: 630). None of these groupings crosses the threshold. We found no other evidence for close kindred. [no kin]

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Trans-Dniester Slavs

Activity: 1991-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- In the late 1980s Moldovan nationalists took a series of mostly symbolic steps that were widely perceived as moves towards unification with Romania. To non-Moldovans the most threatening of these steps was legislation passed by the Moldovan Supreme Soviet in 1989 that made Romanian the only official state language and required all officials to demonstrate proficiency in Romanian, even if serving in Gagauz and Russian-speaking communities. In September 1990 the Moldovan Supreme Soviet declared its sovereignty and nullified the transfer of Moldava from Romania to the USSR by the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In response to these moves, Slavs in the Dniester Region began to mobilize for autonomy in 1989 (Sato 2009: 144-146). The Trans-Dniester Slavs created the Dniester Soviet Republic and announced their intention to secede from Moldavia in order to rejoin the Soviet Union. We code the movement as of 1991, the year of Moldova's independence. We indicate that this movement was both active and nonviolent prior to Moldova's independence.
- War soon brook out. After the war, an OSCE mediation team drafted a document calling for the division of Moldova into autonomous territories with their own constitutions and parliaments. However, many Dniestrians claimed the proposal is insufficient and continued to press for independence. The movement is ongoing (BBC 2011; Benea 2013; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000; Lexis Nexis; Marshall & Gurr 2003; Minahan 1996, 2002; MAR; Roth 2015: 128ff; Sato 2009, Radio Liberty 2020). [start date: 1989; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- There is some ambiuguity concerning the dominant claim. In August 1991, Transdniestria declared independence. Vahl & Emerson (2004), on the other hand, argue that the Transdniestrian leadership in effect aims for a symmetric two-state federation à la Serbia and Montenegro, and that only a small, radical minority aims for an independent state. However, most authors argue that Transdniestrians demanded independence from Moldova (MAR; Wolff 2011; Beyer 2010). In 1997 the chairman of the Transdniestrian Supreme Soviet announced that Transdniestria would join the Russian-Belarus union (the union had been formed in 1996; the intention at the time was to eventually create a federation like the Soviet Union but soon after both sides lost their enthusiasm for the union) (Brezianu & Spanu 2010: 237). In 1998 and 2006 there were referendums on joining a Russian-Belarus union and joining Russia, respectively, suggesting that the claim shifted to unification with Russia. After Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 2014, Transdniestrians publicly declared they want to be incorporated into Russia as well. It is possible that the effective claim has been for a merger with Russia throughout, but the 1991 independence declaration and the 1991 independence referendum lead us to code a claim for independence in the initial years: we code an independence claim until 1997, and a claim for union with Russia 1998 onwards (following the first of January rule and the first observed claim for union with Russia). [1991-1997: independence claim; 1998-2020: irredentist claim]

Independence claims

- While the dominant claim shifted to irredentism in 1997, Minahan (2002: 536) indicates that the independence claim persisted. This is reinforced by Roth (2015: 129), though independence is likely conceived as a precursor to union with Russia (RIA Novostii 2022). Independence claims run alongside irredentist claims and are coded as ongoing. [start date: 1991; end date: ongoing]

Irredentist claims

- See above. [start date: 1997; end date: ongoing]

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Trans- Dniester Slavs is the Transnistria region, which lies between the river Dniester and the border to Ukraine (Roth 2015: 128). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

- Two days before Moldova's declaration of independence, on August 25, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the self-declared Transdniestrian Soviet Republic declared its independence from Moldova (Neukirch 2001; Hewitt & Cheetham 2000: 296). This is coded under the header of Moldova since Moldova effectively gained independence following the August Coup [1991: independence declaration]

Separatist armed conflict

- The HVIOLSD coding for 1991-1992 follows Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl (2019). Marshall & Gurr (2003: 58) suggest continued violence in 1993-1997, but this appears to follow a MAR rebellion score of three in 1993-1997 whose only basis appears to be Transnistria's declaration of independence and de facto independent status. UCDP confirms the NVIOLSD code for 1993-1997: "In negotiations in March 1992, the parties agreed on a ceasefire that was soon broken. However, talks between Russia and Moldova were concluded in a ceasefire agreement on 21 July. This agreement put an end to the violence." [1991-1992: HVIOLSD; 1993-2020: NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- In 1988 Gorbachev initiated contested elections throughout the Union, a measure tantamount to a reduction of Moscow's control of the regions (see Suny 1993: 118, 141, 461; Linz & Stepan 1992; Brown 1996: 179). However, local choice of leaders had little effect for groups without an autonomous status (like the Trans-Dniester Slavs) as the respective regions' decision rights were very limited. Hence, this is not coded as a concession.
- More importantly, in 1989 Moldova's Supreme Soviet adopted a new language law (Sato 2009: 144; Chinn & Roper 1995: 296-300). Moldovan (using Romanian script) was made the official language. Public officials as well as those with high positions in the private sector were required to acquire facility in both Russian and Romanian by 1994 (later this was postponed to 1997). The law contained compromises, too. Russian was to be used as the language for inter-ethnic relations, and the Gagauz language was to be protected and developed, and was to be the official language alongside Moldovan/Romanian and Russian in areas of Gagauz population (Vahl & Emerson 2004). Still, the law was perceived as a threat by both Slavic and Gagauz minorities, and

can be considered a decrease in their cultural rights. A critical provision was that public officials and certain people in the private sector needed to be able to communicate in Romanian within five years (Neukirch 2001). Hence, we code a restriction. [1989: cultural rights restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- After independence, Moldova chose the zero-option, meaning that citizenship is automatically granted to all residents of Moldova at the time of independence (if they wish to have Moldovan citizenship). This is not coded as a concession since it primarily concerns the access dimension.
- Between 1990, when Transdniestria declared its separation from the MSSR, and 1992, relations between Tiraspol and Chisinau were characterized by increasing escalation and sporadic violence. With Transdniestria consolidating its position with the help of the Russian 14th Army, pressure built on President Snegur to take decisive action against the separatists. In late March 1992, Snegur declared a state of emergency across the republic, and soon afterward the government made an effort to disarm the separatists' militia. These efforts were met by armed resistance, which, by May 1992, had escalated into a full-scale civil war as weapons released to the Transnistrians by the 14th Army were used against Moldovan military units.
- On July 21, 1992, a cease-fire was signed by Mircea Snegur and Boris Yeltsin. The agreement set forth general principles for a peaceful settlement of the dispute, including respect for Moldova's territorial integrity, the need for a special status for Transdniestria, and the right for Transdniestrians to secede if Moldova were to join Romania (Vahl & Emerson 2004: 7). Moldova lifted the state of emergency, and Transdniestria resumed gas and electricity supplies. Subsequently, a tripartite peace-keeping force was established (Neukirch 2001). We do not code a concession because there do not appear to have been concrete steps towards implementation.
- In 1993, the OSCE began its mission with a broad mediation agenda. After extensive consultations, the OSCE in November 1993 published a proposal for conflict regulation that, while keeping Moldova's territorial integrity intact, would have offered Trandniestria broad autonomy. The first round of negotiations, however, led nowhere. In 1994, after the pro-Romanian forces were defeated in Moldova's parliamentary elections, a second round of negotiations began, with the OSCE proposal as its basis. Still, Transdniestria brought in its own, far more radical proposal. In Moldova's 1994 constitution, Transdniestria was granted a special form of autonomy (see Article 111). Of course, Transnistria has not actually reintegrated and regional autonomy has not been implemented. Still, with this, Moldova repeated and substantiated the earlier autonomy promise, hence we code an autonomy concession. [1994: autonomy concession]
- There were repeated rounds of negotiations after 1994; however, no final settlement has been reached thus far.
    - The negotiations stalled in 1995, without concrete results. At the same time there were negotiations with Russia on the withdrawal of the 14th Army. In 1994 Moldova and Russia reached an agreement that called for the withdrawal of the 14th Army within three years. However, the withdrawal was never fully implemented, and Russian soldiers remained in Transdniestria (Roper 2001; Roper 2004; Sasse 2009).
    - In 1995, Ukraine joined the negotiations as additional mediator, and in January 1996 an agreement was signed between Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia that recognized the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Moldova (Vahl & Emerson 2004: 10-11).
    - A third wave of negotiations began, leading to the Memorandum on the Principles of Settlement of Relations between Moldova and Transdniestria, which, after some back and forth, was eventually signed in May 1997. The Memorandum was heavily criticized in both Moldova and Transdniestria, and the two parties disagreed on what actually had been agreed. According to Vahl & Emerson (2004: 11), "[o]n the Moldovan side, the signing of the Moscow Memorandum was interpreted as providing Transnistrian acceptance of the territorial integrity of Moldova and thus reunification, while on the left bank it was seen as Moldova's implicit recognition of the Transnistrian republic, which had no intention of becoming an integral part of the Republic of Moldova." After the

Memorandum was signed, negotiations on a final settlement began, but insurmountable differences led to their abortion in September 1997 (Neukirch 2001).

- Meanwhile, in 1996, the Moldovan government had provided the Transdniestrian authorities with legal customs stamps for imports and exports, presumably as a confidence-building measure. This allowed Transdniestria to legally export and import, and is hence coded as a concession on economic autonomy. [1996: autonomy concession]
- In 1998, an Agreement on Confidence Measures and Development of Contacts between Republic of Moldova and Trandniestria was signed, the only document the parties could agree on in the following months. The agreement, according to Neukirch (2001), was not fully implemented, however, and even more important to us, it would not have implied changes in the autonomy status (see Vahl & Emerson 2004: 12). Another round of negotiations began in November 1998 (negotiations began in serious in July the next year). Differences between the parties remained fundamental, with Transdniestria advocating a maximalist, confederalist solution and Moldova insisting on the idea of a unitary state (Neukirch 2001: 129). Negotiations stalled again in 2000. Neukirch (2001: 130) concludes that 7 years of negotiations have not produced any concrete results on the core issues.
- The 1996 agreement that had provided Transdniestrian authorities with the right to use Moldovan custom seals came to an end in 2001, when the Moldovan government introduced new customs stamps (Gudim 2006). Transdniestrian authorities argued that this violated the earlier Moscow Memorandum, and described the action as an economic blockade. In line with this, Vahl & Emerson (2004: 13) argue it had a devastating effect on Transdniestria's economy, with GDP in free fall in 2002 (-13.5%). We code an autonomy restriction since Moldova's action limited Transdniestria's economic (trade) autonomy. [2001: autonomy restriction]
- The Russian-leaning Communists came to power in Moldova in 2001. The newly elected Communist government set out to increase the status of the Russian language, but confronted with strong opposition the plan to raise the status of the Russian language to the level of an official state language was abolished in 2003 (Roper 2005: 506), hence we do not code a concession.
- In 2003, Moldova outlined a procedure under which Transdniestrian companies can export and import products, though the procedure continued to run via Moldovan authorities (Gudim 2006). It appears that the autonomy of Transdniestria remained unaffected.
- Under the Communist leadership, relations with Tiraspol increased rapidly and negotiations resumed in 2001 (Tudoroiu 2012: 141). The Kiev proposal, a new draft agreement for federalization, was introduced by the three mediators in 2002 (Vahl & Emerson 2004: 13). However, given that the plan to raise the status of the Russian language in Moldova was abandoned in 2003, an agreement could again not be reached (Tudoroiu 2012: 141). Realizing that having the Communists in power was a unique opportunity to reach a settlement favorable to Russia, Russia tabled a new proposal for an asymmetric federation in November 2003 (the so-called Kozak proposal). The proposal did not coincide with the Transnistrian position, which sought equal status between Transnistria and Moldova, but gave Transnistria veto powers over future constitutional changes; this encouraged Transnistria to sign it. Moldova's president, Vladimir Voronin was initially supportive of the plan, but refused to sign after internal opposition and international pressure from the OSCE and US, and after Russia had endorsed the Transnistrian demand to maintain a Russian military presence for the next 20 years as a guarantee for the intended federation (Tudoroiu 2012: 142). Note that in response, the EU imposed a travel ban on Transdniestrian leaders, which was renewed (for a year) in 2009 (Sasse 2009: 374).
- Subsequently the Transdniestrian side abandoned sincere negotiations. It adopted a course of outright confrontation when it began to shut down Romanian/Moldovan schools in 2004 (Roper 2005: 510). In July 2004, the Moldovan side retaliated by stopping the issuance of export certificates to Transdniestrian companies (Roper 2005:

515; Gudim 2006). This is tantamount to an economic blockade, thus we code a restriction.[1] [2004: autonomy restriction]
    - In response, Transdniestria blockaded rail transportation. In 2005, there were further measures to curb Transdniestria's (illegal) trade activities. In particular, upon Moldova's invitation, the European Union in cooperation with the UNDP set up a Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in November 2005 with the aim of containing Trandniestria's smuggling activities.
    - With Western-oriented, democratic forces coming to power in Ukraine after 2004's Orange Revolution, a new opportunity opened up to negotiate an end to the conflict. In 2005 Yushchenko launched what would become the Yushchenko plan, a seven-step proposal that, among other things, would have foreseen democratic elections in Transnistria. For the authoritarian leaders in Tiraspol such a proposal was unacceptable and potentially suicidal, but also Chisinau did not accept the proposal because it may have led them to cope with a new and democratically elected, but not less aggressive Transdniestrian leadership. As a result of an increasing determination on the part of Chisinau to act more proactively, in July 2005 Chisinau promulgated a Law that made Transdniestria an autonomous entity with special legal status (Popescu 2013); in 2007 a second such law was adopted. The laws mainly served the purpose of setting a red line beyond which Chisinau is not willing to go (Popescu 2013), but it did offer Transdniestria autonomy on the lines of Gagauzia. While this also means that the Moldovan side ruled out proper federalization (Beyer 2010), the 2005 and 2007 laws further substantiated Moldova's willingness to grant autonomy in return for reintegration. We code a single autonomy concession in 2005, since it does not appear as if the 2007 law went beyond the 2005 version. [2005: autonomy concession]
    - Between 2007 and 2011, the negotiations were effectively stalled (Wolff 2011), and we found no evidence of further concessions or restrictions.
    - In 2013, the Moldovan government made legislative amendments to assure the free movement of people living permanently on the left bank, including those residents with Ukrainian or Russian passports (OSCE 2013). While a significant development, this is not a concession as defined here.
    - A series of agreements was signed in 2017, which culminated in the Rome Protocol. The Rome Protocol primarily concerned the opening and functioning of a bridge linking the Moldovan and Transnistrian territories, the apostilization of degrees, and the running of Moldovan Latin-script schools in Transnistria (OSCE 2018). While a significant development, this is not a concession as defined here.
    - The Moldovan government adopted a new law in 2019 which allows to certify civil status facts of Transnistrian residents (OSCE 2019). While a significant development, this is not a concession as defined here.
- Background info: Chisinau appears to have kind of accepted the de-facto status quo from around 1994 on (Roper 2001: 110). According to Neukirch (2001: 130-132), there is a lack of interest to change the status quo on both sides. Trandniestria, on the one hand, has become a fully-fledged de-facto state, and Moldova, on the other hand, depends as much on Transdniestria as Transdniestria depends on Moldova. All major roads, pipelines, and train connections pass through Transdniestria, part of the elite in Chisinau appears to profit from the illegal activities operated from Transdniestria as well (trafficking and smuggling in particular), and finally, a return of Transdniestria to Moldova would shake-up the political equilibrium and cause a loss of influence for right parties given that most Transdniestrians would probably vote for left-wing parties.

[1] We found no evidence suggesting that the blockade was lifted in subsequent years.

Regional autonomy

- See below. [1991-2020: regional autonomy]

De facto independence

- Transdniestrian authorities began to disregard Chisinau's authority in 1990. In February 1991, the Transdniestrian Supreme Soviet decided to organize a central bank of Transnistria, which was created in April the same year (Sato 2009: 156). According to Caspersen (2012: 12), Transdniestria is a de facto (unrecognized) state 1991 onwards. Since the establishment of de facto independence coincided with Moldova's independence, we code de facto independence from 1991 onwards. [1991-2020: de facto independence]

Major territorial changes

- Moldova attained independence in 1991, implying a host change. [1991: host change (new)]
- [1991: establishment of de facto independent state]

EPR2SDM

Movement	Trans-Dniester Slavs
Scenario	n:1
EPR group(s)	Russian speakers
Gwgroupid(s)	35903000

Power access

- Throughout 1991-2020, the Trans-Dniester Slavs self-excluded themselves from power, thus we apply the powerless code throughout. [1991-2020: powerless]

Group size

- There are Russian speakers throughout Moldova; the Trans-Dniester Slavs represent but part of them. According to Minahan (2002: 532), the Trans-Dniester Slavs number around 550,000 (out of Transnistria's total population of 732,000). Minahan seems to refer to the Soviet Union's 1989 census and this figure appears to include Bender, a right-bank town that is though under the control of Transnistria. Other sources say that Transnistria had a population of about 600,000 in the 1989 census, with 40% ethnic Moldovans. This figure likely does not include Bender, but it still is lower than Minahan's 732,000. We follow Minahan and use his figure including Bender. In the 1989 census Moldova's total population was 4.3 million (this figure remained more or less stable after independence). The resulting group size is applied to the first good decade of Moldova's independence. [1991-2004: 0.1279]
- Since the 1980s, Moldova's Slav population decreased: combining Russians and Ukrainians, the Slav share decreased from 27% to 20% between 1989 and 2004. Emigration appears to have particularly affected Transnistria, given the war and economic deprivation. According to Transnistria's 2004 census, its total population is only 555,000 (compared to >700,000 in the late 1980s). Around two thirds of Transdnniestria's population are Russian speakers (Russians and Ukrainians as well as some smaller groups, including the Gagauz). This would suggest that there were 360,000 Dniester Slavs in the Transdniester area in 2004. The number of Dniester Slavs outside the area is not clear. According to Minahan, approx. 90% of all Transdniester Slavs had

reside in the area in 1989. If we assume that the share outside Transnistria remained stable, this yields a group size of approx. 0.1026, a bit lower than the 0.1279 reported above. Note: Moldova's total population results if we combine the figures from the 2004 Transdniestrian census with the separately conducted Moldovan census: 3.9 million. The 2014 Moldovan census suggests a similar proportion (National Bereau of Statistics 2014; Infotag 2014). [2005-2020: 0.1026]

Regional concentration

- According to Minahan (2002: 532), whose figures appear to relate to the situation in 1989 (see above), the vast majority of the Trans-Dniester Slavs resides in Trasndniestria (approx. 90%), where they make up 68% of the local population. The Transdniester Slavs continued to dominate the area in the 2000s (still around two thirds) (see above). [concentrated]

Kin

- Russians in various countries, in particular Russia and Ukraine, can be considered close kindred. [kin in neighboring country]

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