

**What does it mean to be a kin majority?
Analyzing Romanian identity in Moldova and
Russian identity in Crimea from below***

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Objective: This article investigates what kin identification means from a bottom-up perspective in two kin majority cases: Moldova and Crimea. *Methods:* The article is based on ~50 fieldwork interviews conducted in both Moldova and Crimea with everyday social actors (2012-2013). *Results:* Ethnic homogeneity for kin majorities is more fractured than previously considered. Respondents identified more in terms of assemblages of ethnic, cultural, political, linguistic, territorial identities than in mutually exclusive census categories. *Conclusions:* To understand fully the relations between kin majorities, their kin-state and home state and the impact of growing kin engagement policies, like dual citizenship, it is necessary to analyse the complexities of the lived experience of kin identification for members of kin majorities and how this relates to kin-state identification and affiliation. Understanding these complexities helps to have a more nuanced understanding of the role of ethnicity in post-Communist societies, in terms of kin-state and intra-state relations.¹

1 Introducing the kin majority problem

In post-Communist states there has been an emergence of new and renewed cross-border ties where states reach out to those considered to be ethnic kin, i.e. co-ethnic. In the 1990s, kin-state relations were considered as increasing the likelihood of conflict, yet kin-states' territorial claims failed to materialize. Instead kin-states moved towards institutional engagement with external kin communities by facilitating their acquisition of citizenship and quasi-citizenship. Despite the proliferation of these policies, little research engages with the kin community by exploring how they identify and the lived experience of kin-state policies. Similarly there has been a focus only on kin *minorities* and little consideration of the phenomenon of kin *majorities*.²

Similarly, existing kin relations research on the cases of Crimea and Moldova is sparse and based on top-down assumptions. For example Eyal and Smith (1996:223) describe there “can be no doubt” that Moldovans “can only be considered Romanians”. Similarly in Crimea, few studies have researched everyday identity politics in the region in its own right, treating Crimea as ethnic outlier

within Ukraine (Fournier, 2002; Wilson, 2002). Using “everyday nationalism” and political ethnographic approaches, this article explores the meaning of kin identification in these two kin majority cases, Moldova and Crimea, by exploring from a bottom-up perspective how individuals identify themselves relative to their home-state and kin-state.³

The article finds that there are many different ways of identifying with the kin-state, which blur mutually exclusive census categories, such as Romanian/Moldovan and Russian/Ukrainian boundaries. This article demonstrates that kin majorities are an important phenomenon to research because when viewed from below, they appear far more fractured than their majority status would indicate.

(Table 1 about here)

2 From kin minorites from above to kin majorities from below

This research is a critique of two kin-state approaches categorized as *antagonistic* and *fuzzy* (Table 1). The *antagonistic* approach argues that competing claims between the home-state and kin-state towards the kin community could be a potential cause of conflict (Laitin, 2001; Fearon, 1998; Laitin, 1998; Saideman and Ayres, 2008; van Houten, 1998; Smith, 2002; Brubaker, 1996). The second approach argues that the growth of kin-state policies was evidence of a “fuzzy” type of politics (Batt, 2002; Fowler, 2004). Both approaches focus on top-down institutions by considering only the states involved, and not the perspective of the members of these kin communities who, for example, are the people eligible and applying for dual citizenship from their kin-state. However if kin-state policies are presumed to be part of a “soft power” approach of co-optation of “people and societies, rather than governments and elites” then it is appropriate to study these people (Tsygankov, 2006:1081).

Secondly these approaches have treated kin minorities as analogous to kin majority cases, rather than considering them as separate phenomena. This is an unreasonable assumption because of the differential demographic and power status of minorities and majorities in their home-state.

For example it would hardly be fair to consider kin majorities' home-states to also be their "host state", as in the case of ethnic Russians in Estonia (Pogonyi et al., 2010:1). Kin majorities therefore need to be studied in their own right.

As the top-down *antagonistic* and *fuzzy* approaches do not disaggregate the category of kin majority, this article uses a bottom-up perspective to analyse the meaning of kin identification for members of kin majorities. Caspersen (2008) highlights the importance of exploring the role of kin community elites in mediating conflict, and analyzing the relationship between bottom-up conflict and the kin-state. However she does not consider the fractures that run within kin communities, in particular kin majorities. Everyday nationalism is therefore a useful approach because it allows disaggregation of the kin community from the bottom-up.

Quantitative approaches to ethnicity, such as those which use the ethno-linguistic fractionalization index, focused too much on considering how ethnicity is a "strategic choice" and taken the validity of the data for granted (Wedeen, 2002:717; c.f. Chandra, 2006; Chandra, 2001; Chandra and Wilkinson, 2008; Roeder, 2011; Alesina et al., 2003; Posner, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Fearon, 2003). In qualitative political science there has been discussion of the role of ethnic identification in politics, such as its role in providing "uncertainty reduction" (Hale, 2008:9). However researchers have failed to disaggregate what ethnic groups mean from the perspective of those who are supposed to identify with them, leading to assumptions about how ethnicity is largely a descent-based concept (Chandra, 2006) and about the relationship between ethnic homogeneity and democracy outcomes, and likelihood of conflict (Beissinger, 2008).

The everyday nationalism approach is useful therefore to disaggregate kin majorities to explore the "lay" categories of "everyday social experience" (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000:4). In turn this allows researchers to engage with how people "enact (and ignore and deflect) nationhood and nationalism in the varied contexts of their everyday lives" (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008:537; see also Brubaker et al., 2006; Dawson, 2012; Gagnon, 2006; Day and Thompson, 2004; de Cillia et al., 1999;

Miller-Idriss, 2009). Moreover it engages with the complexities of lived experiences of ethnic identification where a fundamental part of Soviet and post-Soviet experience has been of living in ethnically and linguistically diverse families (Pirie, 1996; Gorenburg, 2006).⁴ This everyday and people-centered approach therefore has a great potential for deepening the understanding of kin-state relations by exploring what kin identification means and how it is constructed by actors.

3 Research methodology

This article analyses two kin majority cases: Moldova and Crimea, which are similar in terms of their demographic, historical and political context and differ in the nature of kin-state policies available.⁵ They experienced the same territorial flux, having been part of their respective kin-states during the twentieth century, until 1991 there were part of the Soviet Union, in the post-Soviet context they were subject to territorial claims which had largely subsided (until Crimea's de facto annexation in March 2014).

To operationalize the everyday nationalism approach, I conducted ~50 semi-structured interviews in both cases with everyday actors (2012-2013). Using a conversational style, I guided respondents to discuss their general opinions on local culture and politics before asking them more specifically about how they conceived of, and constructed, their identity.⁶ I also conducted participant observation of everyday activities, such as local protests and festivals, and everyday life, by living with local people; these I recorded in daily fieldwork notes.

I tried to engage with how everyday respondents described their identification and the meanings they attached to this identity, in relation to their home-state and kin-state. The focus on meaning was crucial to this bottom-up approach where, like other interpretivist scholars, I was interested to gather data not just on "practice of politics" but also the "signification" and "meaning-making" content of these practices and identities (Wedeen, 2009:80). The implementation of this approach was crucial to ensure data was collected and analyzed rigorously. I used a consistent interview guide for both cases and interviewed a wide spectrum of respondents from different

groups, and in particular with young people (Table 2). Interviews were primarily conducted in the capitals of each case (Chişinău, Simferopol) with control interviews conducted in second cities (Bălţi, Yalta).⁷

The rest of this article analyzes the collected data by engaging with what kin identification means in these cases. To do this, how respondents identified and their rationale is conceptualized through inductively derived identification categories. In both cases, these categories show the complexity of co-ethnic identification, where mutually exclusive census categories appear blurred and the relationship with the kin-state seems more contingent.

(Table 2 about here)

4 Crimea: the meaning of kin identification

Within Ukraine, Crimea is an ethnic outlier as the only region where a majority (58%) identify as ethnically Russian (2001 Ukrainian census).⁸ Due to its demography and the threat of separatism in the 1990s, Crimea has been unable to shake off the image of being a hotbed of Russian nationalism and the idea that it could be the “next South Ossetia” (Krushelnycky, 2008; Maigre, 2008; Kuzio, 2014).⁹ However Russian movements failed to gain much ground after 1994 when they were unable to convince more than a small minority to support secession or Russian irredentism (Sasse, 2007). Crimea’s referendum in 2014 in support of unification with Russia, might indicate that pro-Russian separatist sentiment remained. However the findings of this section suggest that strong identification with Russian was a minority sentiment.¹⁰

To conceptualize the ways that respondents identified as Russia and/or Ukrainian, the respondents are grouped in five inductively derived identification categories (Table 3):

1. *Discriminated Russians* emphasized a strong Russian identification and felt threatened by the Ukrainian state;
2. *Ethnic Russians* also identified primarily as Russian but this was expressed without feeling discriminated;

(Table 3 about here)

3. *Political Ukrainians* identified primarily as citizens of Ukraine, regardless of ethnic identification;
4. *Crimeans* identified primarily regionally and inter-ethnically, identifying as between Ukrainian and Russian;
5. *Ethnic Ukrainians* identified ethnically and linguistically as Ukrainian.

4.1 Discriminated Russians – “here it is impossible to be anything short of Russian”

C-19a, C-19b, C-20, C-24, C-25, C-48a, C-48b, C-55

Discriminated Russians identified strongly as ethnically Russian and anti-Ukrainian because they felt discriminated by post-Soviet Ukraine. Many of these respondents were affiliated with local Russian and Compatriot organisations based in Simferopol, such as *Ruskaia Obschina Kryma* (Russian Community of Crimea, hereafter ROC).

They saw Crimea as a native and historic “Russian cultural enclave” [C-19a, C-48a, C-48b]. Crimea was seen as “better” for Russians than elsewhere in Ukraine because outside Crimea, everything “is in Ukrainian language all the time” and there were “no products for the Russian-speaking population” [C-25]. Russia was their homeland from which they had been politically separated and they retained a sense of fraternity with Russians in Russia, and beyond, as Russia was “more than the Russian Federation” because it “exists in the brotherhood” [C-24]. Hence they had a strong Russian ethnic identification which was rooted in their sense of belonging to Crimea and to a transnational Russian fraternity.

Discriminated Russians felt great antipathy towards Ukraine’s “forced” policy of Ukrainization (*Ukrainizatsia*) because it aimed to “assimilate Russians” [C-25, C-24]. This created an “infringement of the rights of Russians” where “priority” was given to Ukrainian language and education [C-24, C-55]. Even Russian language education was criticized for being “completely Ukrainian” because it is required to teach the “history of collaborators during World War II [...]

Bandera, Shukhevych” and in kindergarten to teach Ukrainian songs and poems.¹¹ They saw this privileging of Ukrainian in everyday life as particularly unfair and even dangerous for the elderly. For example, prescription instructions were now in Ukrainian and not Russian and this was dangerous because the elderly “cannot understand the technical terms in the Ukrainian language” [C-19a, C-25, C-55].

Though *Discriminated Russians* were not defined by age, they did emphasized a critical generational divide in Crimea where the “young generation, almost quite often understand” Ukrainian, because of post-Soviet education policies, while for “older people it causes a problem” [C-55]. Ultimately these respondents resented the newly privileged status of Ukrainian language and culture within state and society, and thereby resisted being within the Ukrainian frame of governance.

They argued that the group threatened by Ukrainization in Crimea was wider than ethnic Russians and wanting, at least superficially, to protect the rights of “Russian speakers” as much as ethnic Russians [C-19a].¹² C-24 saw it as “doubly wrong” that Ukrainian language and culture had a privileged status in Crimea because Crimea was a “multinational” region and so the “vast majority” of other ethnic groups are Russian speaker. However this concern for other groups was paradoxical given their deep antipathy towards other groups in Crimea and especially Crimean Tatars.¹³ C-24 believed that Crimean Tatar nationalism “leaves no room for Russians in Crimea” by framing Crimea as “only the birthplace of Crimean Tatars” and no other group. This was framed not just in symbolic but also material terms, because they felt discriminated in how land was distributed more favorably to Tatars in Crimea than themselves [C-20].

These respondents disliked Ukraine’s efforts to consolidate the nation-state and consequently they had no sense of civic attachment or identification as a “patriot” to Ukraine [C-48a, C-48b]. C-24 expressed that she did not vote in elections “because they are all against me as a citizen” as “almost all the parties in Ukraine are anti-Russian”, so that they felt as an unwanted

“stepchild” within Ukraine. This group therefore demonstrated the strongest identification as Russian and the weakest identification as Ukrainian. They resented Ukraine’s state-building and nation-building efforts which infringed on their rights to speak and be Russian, and did not respect their rights as the historic and demographically dominant inhabitants of Crimea.

4.2 Ethnic Russians – “For me Russian culture is everything, Pushkin is our everything.”

C-1, C-3, C-7, C-8, C-9, C-11c, C-14a, C-14b, C-15, C-16, C-21, C-22, 33, C-24, C-46, C-51, C-53,

C-57b

Ethnic Russians, identifying primarily as ethnically Russian, saw Russia as their cultural homeland. However they felt less culturally threatened by the Ukrainian state than *Discriminated Russians* and were more easily able to reconcile being ethnically Russian with residing in Ukraine.

Respondents saw being Russian and Russian culture as “native” [C-14b, C-15, C-34]. They saw Russian identity as inherited from parents where *narod* (people, nation) was “like a family” and even though relatives come from different places, they are “greater Russians” and “pro-Slavic” [C-9, C-52]. Hence there was an organic association with being Russian because, as C-21 explained, “every culture is transmitted through blood and mother’s milk”, where being ethnically Russian was not a choice because “I think in Russian so I am Russian” [C-3, C-22]. Like *Discriminated Russians*, this group saw Crimea as historically “Russian land” and a “Russian enclave” because of the importance of Crimea to Russian writers and to the Russian empire [C-8, C-9, C-14b, C-53].

Ethnic Russians had a strong attachment to Crimea, seeing Crimea as a place of Russians who shared both Crimea and Russia as their homeland. They felt an ongoing emotional attachment to Russia because Russia was their “big motherland” and “historical motherland” while Crimea was their “small motherland” [C-3, C-15, C-34, C-53]. However this was mitigated by less favorable attitudes to Russia as a political entity, because Russia did not “understand” Crimea: Putin merely wanted to undermine and disrespect Ukrainian politicians [C-22]. Equally, C-22 explained that

Ukraine did not understand that identifying as Russian and speaking Russian was not analogous to being a “patriot of Putin” [C-22].

Instead several members of this group expressed a sense of patriotism towards Ukraine [C-8, C-22, C-46]. There was a complicated sense of what Russia meant to this group, as somewhere that evoked a cultural but not political attachment because they felt content to remain part of Ukraine. They did not feel that being Russian excluded them from being part of Ukraine. Though C-21 professed a natural sense of Russian identity, he also described how he had “nothing against Ukraine as a state” because “this is my state”. This group was also more willing to speak Ukrainian than *Discriminated Russians*. Even though they were still native Russian speakers they did not see language as such an “acute issue” and did not observe a “strangulation of Russian culture” [C-21, C-22]. Instead disputes over language were “at the political level, the establishment level” because at the “everyday level, there are no differences” as people can speak the language they wish [C-22, C-53].

Though *Ethnic Russians* did not reject being part of Ukraine, they did express some confusion about what it meant to reside in, and be a citizen of, Ukraine. Crimea was seen as an “integral part of Ukraine” [C-51] but this was combined with the idea that Ukraine was a new state that had been created more out of the dissolution of the Soviet Union than by an active process [C-22, C-34]. A young respondent explained that she did not feel Ukrainian or “patriotic” about Ukraine because she did not know about Ukrainian traditions and culture “like they do in west Ukraine” [C-33]. She wanted to be “more patriotic towards Ukraine” and to “know more” about Ukrainian culture and ethnicity because she felt she should as it “will be right [...] we are a country” [C-33].

There was a desire therefore among these respondents to fit more into Ukraine, at least politically because of the normative sense that it was appropriate to want to belong to the state in which you reside. Overall, this group indicated a greater acceptance of being governed by Ukraine, even if there was a sense of confusion and uncertainty about fitting the necessary criteria to be

considered fully Ukrainian, and sense that they *should* feel Ukrainian, as this was now where they resided.

4.3 Political Ukrainians – “I feel more like a Ukrainian citizen”

C-2b, C-11a, C-11b, C-12, C-16, C-18, C-23, C-28, C-29, C-30, C-31, C-32, C-37, C-40, C-47, C-59

Political Ukrainians identified primarily with Ukraine, politically, above identifying as ethnically Russian or Ukrainian. The group was predominantly comprised by young people. This group is the most interesting for Crimea because it contradicts the dominant understanding of Crimea, with many respondents emphasizing their identification as Ukrainian citizens first, questioning descent-based understandings of ethnic identification.

Respondents did not believe that ethnicity or language were important issues in Crimea, or related to quality of life, because in in Crimea “citizens live badly, it is independent from ethnicity” [C-23]. There was a strong desire among some of this group not to talk about ethnicity because talking about ethnicity means “we are on a very low level” and “have nothing more to say, unfortunately” [C-23]. As such, they nullified the importance of ethnicity saying that they want to “feel myself as a citizen, regardless of ethnicity” [C-23, C-47].

This group was not necessarily fluent in Ukrainian, expressing difficulties in the “mixed education” system and switching between Russian to Ukrainian language in education [C-47, C-32, C-2b]. However they had a greater willingness and expertise in speaking Ukrainian than *Discriminated* and *Ethnic Russian* respondents. Crucially they thought that in Ukraine the political elite [C-2b] and populace should be able to speak Ukrainian, as the state language, and should know Ukrainian history [C-12, C-59].

They identified with Ukraine because it was “my home” [C-59]. As C-37 explained, “I am Ukrainian” and “not Russian” because I “was not born in Russia” but in Crimea which “is Ukraine”. Many of these respondents had been born when Ukraine was an “independent state” [C-31] (i.e.

after 1991) which was important because they felt that Crimea was more politically connected to Ukraine than *Discriminated* and *Ethnic Russians*. This group had little sympathy for ethnic Russians in Crimea who felt discriminated because they did not see how there was discrimination in schools because there were “enough schools in Russian language” [C-18].

Respondents described the contrast between themselves and their parents who they identified as ethnically Russian [C-11a, C-11b, C-30, C-32]. They explained how they had “partly Russian blood, partly Ukrainian, but mostly Russian” but felt “more Ukrainian” because this was where they were born and were Ukrainian citizens [C-32, C-59]. This caused disputes between themselves and their parents. For example C-30’s parents wanted to keep celebrating New Year twice (according to local and Moscow time) while she wanted to celebrate it just once according to Ukrainian time because she was “from Ukraine”. *Political Ukrainians* therefore saw Russia as somewhere foreign and Russians observed how Russians also identified them as foreign because they were from Ukraine [C-28, C-59].

This highlighted the contingency of ethnic identification where ethnicity was not necessarily seen in terms of common descent, but modified by politically experiences. Thus being born and educated in post-Soviet Ukraine disrupted their ethnic identification as Russian. This sense of contingency was heightened by respondents who described how their mobility, such as being educated outside Crimea, was the point at which they “understood” that they liked the “Ukrainian national idea” [C-29, C-30, C-59].

The generational divide was important also because they believed that older residents in Crimea “do not change” [C-37] and are “stuck in the past” [C-59]. Hence this group believed that older people were more likely to identify as Russian and be sympathetic towards the Soviet Union because it was difficult for this generation to “adjust to these new Ukrainian realities, during last 20 years already” [C-18]. In contrast they believed that, for young people, it was “easier (to) feel

themselves Ukrainians” because the majority of their experience was in independent Ukraine [C-18].

Overall *Political Ukrainians* defended how it was most “correct” and necessary to identify as Ukrainian [C-27]. In fact, they believed that Kyiv “needs to do more” to integrate Crimea within Ukraine because even though they lived in Crimea “we’re still in Ukraine” [C-11b, C-23, C-59, C-30].

4.4 Crimean – “well, Crimean, it’s partly Russian, Ukrainian, partly”

C-2a, C-4, C-36, C-38, C-57a

Crimeans identified “firstly” as Crimean because this was where they lived [C-2a]. This compares to the other groups who identified somewhat, but not fully, with Crimea. Their identification as Crimean was largely territorial and inter-ethnic, being between Ukrainian and Russian. C-4 explained that she did not feel Russian because she was not *rossiian*, i.e. she was not born in Russia, but *russskiy* (ethnically Russian).¹⁴

Crimean was an inter-ethnic identification, where respondents identified as being both ethnically between Russian and Ukrainian, and geographically between Ukraine and Russia. Respondents felt inhibited from identifying as fully Ukrainian or Russian, and feeling partially both, because of their equally ethnically mixed parents [C-36]. Identifying as Crimean allowed them to negotiate this complexity because Crimea itself was “partly Russian, Ukrainian partly” [C-36, C-38]. Hence the idea was not just that “we are separate” from Russia and Ukraine, because of the geographic and political position of Crimea, but also because “we began belonging to one country (Russia), then to another country (Ukraine)” [C-57a]. This category reconciled their confusion by identifying as “more Crimean” [C-38], which allowed them to remain connected to the peninsula and to identify as simultaneously but not fully Ukrainian and Russian.

While they felt partly Russian, these respondents were unwilling to identify as fully Russian also because they did not feel close to Russia. Some respondents noted that they had never been to Russia [C-36]. Even within families, there was a sense of the differences between those residing in

Russia and those in Crimea. C-57a described how his Russian relatives from “Piter” when they come to Crimea “arrive with such an accent” and are patronizing, and even angry, about the Russian accent in Crimea, describing them as “oh southerners, southerners”.¹⁵ He noted also how “we even eat differently” based on the different ways of eating a common food, *varenniki*.¹⁶

This group exhibited little negativity to Ukraine, but were also mediated in their identification as Ukrainian and their political affiliation with Ukraine. Like *Political Ukrainians*, they thought that Ukraine was not able to understand Crimea. As C-4 explained, to the rest of Ukraine, Crimea is “like a single town” because they do not understand Crimea’s variety and complexity. Similarly they felt that Ukraine is more concerned to protect its own unitary character, because it is a “young” state which cannot “afford” two official languages due to the “fear that Ukraine would collapse” [C-38].

Crimeans showed the greatest sense of belonging to Crimea, because of their inter-ethnic situation. This translated to limited identification with Ukraine and Russia, but a greater negativity towards Russia and little resistance to Crimea being part of Ukraine.

4.5 Ethnic Ukrainians – “by birth I’m Ukrainian and Ukrainian-speaking”

C-6, C-13, C-26, C-27, C-45, C-49

Ethnic Ukrainians are the contrast group in the Crimean case, demonstrating an absence of Russian ethnic and cultural identification and a strong attachment to Ukraine. They identified according to the singular concept that they were from Ukraine, spoke Ukrainian and were part of Ukrainian culture.

Ethnic Ukrainians identified themselves as being Ukrainian “by birth”, were born outside of Crimea, and expressed “love” for Ukraine and Ukrainian culture [C-45, C-26]. They used their “native” Ukrainian language as a marker of being Ukrainian, representing themselves in stark contrast to the Crimean majority. However they were willing to adapt to the local linguistic context

because even though “Ukrainian is the state language” the “dominant” language of “interethnic communication in Crimea is still Russian” [C-13, C-26, C-45].

Ethnic Russians and Russian speakers, and in particular Russia, were seen as the defining other. These separate spheres were collapsed so that “speaking Russian” was assumed to mean “to feel near to Russia” [C-6], in contrast to *Ethnic Russians* who objected to such an assumption. Russia was constructed as a malign and inferior other where “Ukraine is peaceful in comparison to Russia” and in Ukraine “wealth is more evenly distributed” [C-26].

Ethnic Ukrainians discredited the identity of Russians in Ukraine as a false consciousness. They described how Soviet policies had “made (everyone) Russian-speaking” and so “many have become pro-Russian” even though they “they are not identical to the Russians” [C-49]. Russians were seen as ignorant about Russia because “the majority of Crimeans, the majority of young Crimeans, [...] have never been to Russia” and therefore held misguided beliefs about how Russia was “something ideal, beautiful” [C-27]. He tried also to delegitimize Russian movements by explaining how their leaders were not really ethnically Russian [C-27].¹⁷ Russian movements in Crimea were seen as illegitimate and, contrasting with *Discriminated Russians*, suggested that these movements created problems that did not really exist. As C-26 explained who “would infringe the Russian language and culture in Crimea” because based on his experience he had never encountered any anti-Russian “prejudice” [C-26]. Overall, this category were the most negative about Russia, feeling no sense of connection with the state and sought to question the basis of links with Russia and the feelings of discrimination felt by some Russians.

Despite identifying ethnically with Ukraine, they supported a civic rather than ethnic idea of Ukraine. They did “accept Ukrainian nationalism” and “artificial Ukrainization” because “it will bring nothing but harm” [C-45]. Rather the respondent saw Ukrainian language as “taking root, as the state language” but this has to be a slow “natural” process, rather something which is imposed by Kyiv [C-45]. The idea of a “single political nation [...] was not so far away” and would happen in

“10-15 years” because of the younger post-Soviet generation who experienced only Ukraine’s period of independence.

While this group tried to vilify Russia and undermine the consciousness of ethnic Russians in Crimea, they were confident in the loyalty of Crimean residents to a political Ukrainian idea and agreed that Crimea was changing its orientation towards Ukraine [C-27]. Whereas previously Crimean residents had Ukrainian citizenship but did not affiliate with Ukraine, today the “vast majority of Crimean residents, regardless of ethnicity consider themselves citizens of Ukraine” [C-26]. This was because of Crimean’s “adaptability” and realization that “I live here” and this “means that I need to be a citizen” and “to participate in the political life of the country in the elections and so on” [C-26]. Hence *Ethnic Ukrainians* saw Crimea as anchored to Ukraine because Crimea as “a single whole with Ukraine is very important to me” [C-49].

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This section on Crimea has shown the complexities of being Russian in Crimea. It has questioned the assumption that Crimea is a region essentially orientated to Russia and that co-ethnic identification is necessarily analogous to kin-state identification. It was only *Discriminated Russians* who indicated a pro-Russia affiliation. Other categories demonstrated either a willingness to reconcile being Russian with residing in Crimea as a part of Ukraine, or the dominance of political affiliation with Ukraine over other forms of identification. The next section will apply the same method to analyses the different ways in which respondents in the Moldovan case identified as being Romanian and/or Moldovan.

5 Moldova: the meaning of kin identification

In the second kin majority case, Moldova’s 2004 census indicated a majority identified ethnically as Moldovan (75.8%) while a minority identified as Romanian (2.2%). However Romania claim that 78% are ethnically Romanian in Moldova by merging these categories (Department for Romanians Abroad). This is evidence of a wider ideological rift between pan-Romanianism and Moldovanism.¹⁸

Moldovanists see Moldova as a nation in its own right which is separate linguistically and ethnically to Romania.¹⁹ The pan-Romanian approach claims Moldova as an ancient Romanian region where the Moldovan population form a constituent part of Romania which was united politically in Greater Romania (Beks and Graur, 2006; C. King, 1994; Ihrig, 2008). Ethnically and linguistically, pan-Romanians see Moldovan as a synonym of Romanian and Moldovan as a synonym for “Soviet Romanian” (Deletant, 1978:189). In the Moldovan case therefore the issue is how respondents' identified as Romanian and/or Moldovan and their rationale, with this people-centered bottom-up approach allowing a consideration of what lies between these two opposed positions.

To delve deeper into this question, four inductively derived identification categories exemplify the different meanings of being Romanian and identifying with Romania for the Moldovan case (Table 4):

1. *Organic Romanians* identified only as Romanian and believed that Moldovan was analogous to being Romanian.
2. *Cultural Romanians* identified as ethnically Romanian but clarified this with stronger, and more political, links to Moldova.
3. *Ambiguous Romanians*, identified somewhat as Romanian and somewhat Moldovan, while defining their language as Romanian.
4. *Moldovans* identified primarily as Moldovan but explained this in terms of being a citizen of Moldova.

(Table 4 about here)

5.1 *Organic Romanians* - “all Moldovans are Romanians, but not all Romanians are Moldovans”

M-11, M-16, M-2, M-26a, M-8, M-25a, M-25b, M-28, M-1, M-10, M-14, M-18, M-15, M-49, M-35, M-32, M-42, M-46, M-47, M-53, M-39, M-48

Organic Romanians collapsed the separate categories of Romanian and Moldovan, to claim that the majority of residents could be both Moldovan and Romanian. They stressed the sameness (ethnic, cultural, linguistic and historical) between Romanians and Moldovans [M-2, M-10, M-25a M-28, M-32, M-35, M-42, M-46, M-39, M-48] to emphasize how they were “Moldovan and therefore Romanian” [M-16]. They saw Moldova as an artificial and Soviet nation and instead imagined themselves as part of the Romanian nation.²⁰

Being Moldovan was seen as proof of also being Romanian because “all Moldovans are Romanians, but not all Romanians are Moldovans” [M-25b, M-16, M-28]. As M-2 explained, he felt that he could be Moldovan, Romanian and Bessarabian simultaneously just as he could be a “brother, lover and son” simultaneously.²¹ Moreover Romanians and Moldovans shared not just the “same language” but in familial terms, they shared the “same blood” [M-18] and were “brothers” [M-10, M-14, M-49]. Moldovans and Romanians were therefore imagined to be the same in organic rather than voluntaristic terms (see Zimmer, 2003); as M-11 described, “you don’t have a choice to choose your mother”, emphasizing that identification as Romanian was optional but obligatory.

Moldova, as a separate nation to Romania, was imagined as an “artificial” idea “created” by Russian and Communist influence, just as Moldovan was also described as not a “true” language because it is really Romanian [M-1, M-8, M-10, M-14, M-18, M-28, M-48]. Being ethnically Moldovan was relegated to a false consciousness where those who identified as just Moldovan did not “understand” that because “they were Moldovan, they were Romanian” [M-11]. Instead, the idea of being Moldovan was relegated to a regional concept based on how Moldova was one of the “*țari*” (administrative territories) that makes up Romania, along with Wallachia and Transylvania whereas “identity as a nation, we are Romanian” [M-8, M-25a, M-25b, M-42].

Moldova’s regionality was embedded in a shared historical narrative with Romania, for example Moldova’s unfair annexation from Greater Romania by the Soviet Union [M-2, M-14]. However it was the *longue durée* perspective that was emphasized, such as their common Dacian

heritage and shared heroes of Decebal, Burebista and Trajan who were the “parents” of the Romanian “brother” and Moldovan “sister” [M-1, M-35].²² This “Dacomania” is a common device among Romanian nationalists more generally with the Dacian period seen to have an “almost messianic ethnic and political role in the creation of the ideal nation state” (Deletant, 1991:1, 76).²³ A further *longue durée* figure was Ștefan cel Mare, who was “our king” and proof that “we have common history” because he built fortresses in present day Romania and is also on “our [Moldovan] money” [M-26a, M-48].²⁴ Therefore just as it was correct to identify as Romanian, this version of history was viewed as “right” and “real” in overturning Soviet interpretations of history which had tried to erase this common history [M-16, M-26a].

This group emphasized the deep historical connection between Romania and Moldova which was embedded in the idea that they did not share simply cultural traits such as the “same language” but were organically intertwined as a region within Romanian because they had the “same blood” as Romanians [M-18]. The separation from Romania politically was blamed on the Soviet Union and the Russian “occupation” more generally, which was blamed also for the artificial cultural separation of Moldova from Romania. This group strongly identified as a kin majority, by indicating a shared sense of ethnicity with the kin-state, and quashing the notion of the home-state being separated by the kin-state because being Moldovan was seen as a regional identity nested within, and subordinate to, a Romanian ethnic identity.

5.2 Cultural Romanians – “we are Romanian and live in Moldova”

M-4, M-5, M-9, M-12, M-19, M-20, M-23, M-24, M-26b, M-33, M-40, M-44, M-43, M-45, M-51, *Cultural Romanians*, aligned ethnically with Romania, but combined this with a political belonging to Moldova. They were more certain about their ethnic identification than the *Ambivalent Romanian* category and less vociferously pan-Romanian than *Organic Romanians*.

Cultural Romanians agreed that “we are Romanian and live in Moldova”. Hence they identified as Romanian “from an ethnic point of view” but also as “Moldovan citizens” [M-19, M-12,

M-44, M-20, M-51]. *Organic Romanians*, *Cultural Romanians* believed also that they “obviously share history, language, culture” such as traditional clothes and dances with Romanians [M-33, M-43, M-24, M-12, M-23] and therefore “belong to Romanian culture” [M-45]. Language, however, was for many respondents the key factor that made them feel Romanian [M-24, M-40, M-44, M-43].

Alongside identifying ethnically as Romanian, they expressed also political and home-ties to Moldova [M-12, M-19, M-20, M-4, M-33, M-23, M-51, M-40]. Respondents therefore saw “opportunity” and felt pride in Moldova [M-33, M-24], with one respondent identifying also as a “patriot of Moldova, my country” [M-19]. What is crucial for these respondents is, like *Ethnic Russians* in Crimea, that different ethnic and political identifications were reconcilable and not competing facets of their identity.

Like the *Organic Romanians*, *Cultural Romanians* saw Moldova as a Romanian region [M-9, M-23, M-43] and an “artificial” and “fake” nation and language [M-12, M-20, M-26b]. It was interesting to observe how these respondents discussed their grandparents as Romanian because their grandparents were born, or had lived, in Greater Romania, while they identified as their parents as Moldovan because they had lived “most of their lives under Soviet rule” [M-19, M-33, M-20, M-43, M-51, M-26b, M-40]. As discussed above for the Crimean case, this highlighted the contingency of political experience for affecting how individuals would identify.

Cultural Romanians placed a greater emphasis on the artificiality of Moldovan as language than of the nation because as M-20 explained “if people want to consider themselves as Moldovan it’s a right, because they are citizens of the Republic of Moldova”. Unlike the *Organic Romanians* who saw the Moldovan nation as a false consciousness, this group was unwilling to claim that people in Moldova should identify as Romanian believing that individuals have the right to self-identify. This group was therefore more voluntaristic and less organic in their self-categorization and categorization of others than *Organic Romanians* because “the most important thing for our society is to build a new citizenship” rather than engage in identity debates [M-20].

While Cultural Romanians ethnically identified as Romanian, they used Moldova's regionality to highlight the differences between those residing in Moldova and other Romanian regions, in contrast to *Organic Romanians* who highlighted their inherent commonalities. Romania was viewed as "more European" while they were "more Russian", in terms of mentality, different historical experiences and contemporary politics [M-12, M-19, M-5]. Moldova was seen as somewhere that was partly, but not fully Romanian, having "always a mix of Romanian legacy but also Soviet legacy" []. It was this "mixture of traditions, of habits, of cultural traits" that "makes us different" to Romanians from Romania [M-40, M-45].

Overall this group did not question their ethnic identification with the kin-state, but qualified this, unlike *Organic Romanians*, with their political bond to their home-state. They qualified their ethnic identification as Romanian also by the feeling that they were not the same as Romanians, on the basis that Romanians from Moldova had different political experiences.

5.3 Ambivalent Romanians – "we entered modernity let's say, from the Russian door" [M-27]

M-3, M-6, M-17, M-27, M-50

Ambivalent Romanians were both hesitant, and somewhat critical, of identifying as wholly Romanian. This differentiates them from *Organic* and *Cultural Romanians* who were resolute in their ethnic identification with the kin-state, but also differentiates them from *Moldovans*, since they did identify somewhat with Romania as a kin state. In general *Ambiguous Romanians* were not just ambiguous in their identification but also were unwilling to talk about their identity because of their lack of certainty about how they identified [M-3, M-6, M-17, M-27].

Ambivalent Romanians were resolute in describing their language as Romanian [M-3, M-6, M-17, M-27]. As M-3 explained you can "call it whatever you like" but it's the "same language" even though in terms of everyday vernacular there were "some russisms" and a "different accent" [M-17, M-27]. However in terms of ethnic identification, they were hesitant to both discuss the issue of

identity [M-3] and did not “really feel Romanian or Moldovan” but at the “intersection of nationalities” [M-50, M-27].

Like *Organic* and *Cultural Romanians*, they described Romania as having the “closest culture and history” to Moldova because Moldova had been part of Romanian territory before 1812 and continued to be a Romanian region [M-3, M-17]. However this historical connection was mediated by more contemporary political experiences. Romania was now more “occidental” than Moldova, because Moldova was post-Soviet and pro-Russian, while Romania has an “identity of EU integration” [M-17]. This experience of being different from Romania was expressed also by M-27 who described how:

[...] we entered modernity from different doors. We are the same ethno-culture, basically, and language and so on but we are a little bit different. They imitated the French model. We entered modernity let's say from the Russian door.

This respondent indicated that he believes those residing in Moldova to be associated with those in Romania, based on common cultural and linguistic characteristics. However he refuted the way that *Organic Romanians* describe the populations as identical, by highlighting the modern political experiences, associated with connections to Russia and the Soviet Union, that are responsible for dividing those in Moldova from those in Romania, like M-17.

Although they felt somewhat close to Romania, their experience of being in Romania as students only heightened their sense that were “kind of Bessarabian, kind of Romanian but not 100% Romanian” because “they feel like not being of local origins” [M-27]. Moreover M-6 described how being Bessarabian had meant that he had been stereotyped as Russian by Romanians, while was a student there in the early 1990s. This was responsible for this respondent’s ambivalence to identify as Romanian even though he had grown up in a household with tradition of Romanian culture, and his father had been involved in the pan-Romanian Popular Front.²⁵

Ambivalent Romanians agreed in their dislike of ethnic politics and believed instead that Moldova needs a “civic identity” [M-6]. Romania was seen as a “friend” rather than a “brother” but respondents disliked also how Romania was “too ideological” in its approach and use a “nationalist ideology” towards Moldova [M-17, M-3, M-6]. In general therefore, this group was less involved in primordial reasoning, in terms of defining themselves in between Romanian and Moldovan but did stress more recent historical aspects, in particular the influence of the Soviet Union, which differentiated them from Romanians. Compared to *Organic* and *Cultural Romanians*, they tended to dispute the subordination of Moldova as a regional identification nested within a Romanian ethnic identification, since they saw recent political experiences as a crucial factor which separated them from being fully, and unproblematically, Romanian.

5.4 Moldovans – “I speak Romanian, I live in the Republic of Moldova and I am Moldovan.”
[M-21]

M-7a, M-7b, M-7c, M-21, M-34, M-36, M-37, M-38, M-52, M-56

Moldovans identified as primarily and “totally” Moldovan [M-7a, M-38] and saw Romanian and Moldovan as separate but complex categories. These respondents mostly grew up in multi-lingual households and had multi-ethnic families, while those in the other categories grew up in predominantly Romanian speaking families.

For many of these respondents being Moldovan was something obvious to them where they were “Moldovan of course” because this was the education system they had grown up in and had Moldovan friends [M-37, M-56]. However, being Moldovan was also seen as a “messy”, “complicated” and “convoluted” identity because there was not something uniquely Moldovan [M-56, M-34, M-37]. Rather Moldova was formed from the hybridity of having been part of both Russia and Romania, and having both Russian and Romanian culture in Moldova [M-56, M-34, M-37].

In terms of language, the situation was less complicated because all respondents believed that Romanian and Moldovan were the same language, where Moldovan was just the “official name”

for the language [M-37, M-36]. The comparison between Romania and Moldova and British and American forms of English was common for these respondents who explained that “being American” does not “mean speaking American [...] as they still speak English” [M-34, M-56]. Thus speaking Romanian did not impede their identification as Moldovan.

Although they described the language they spoke as Romanian, many *Moldovans* described the multi-lingual nature of their childhood and home life, although were generally educated in Romanian-language schools [M-52, M-34, M-7a, M-56]. As they explained, this was because they came from multi-ethnic families, including their parents, and therefore grew up speaking multiple languages at home, which I witnessed first-hand when interviewing M-7a and her parents [M-7b and M-7c].

While these respondents had a democratic approach to the ethnic identification of others, they voiced the need for an independent Moldova and civic identity. M-21 discussed how “in Moldova every citizen must understand the civic aspect” because we are “bound by that ID card of this state” rather than be divided by ethnicity. Several of these respondents expressed a sense of “love” for Moldova and the “people” because “it is my country” [M-38]. Hence even if *Moldovans* were not explicitly anti-Romanian, they were still explicitly pro-Moldovan, believing that Moldova “deserves” an existence separate from Romania [M-21].

These respondents explained also the complexities of Romania relationship with Moldova, because Romania had to play a “tricky game” regarding Moldova, as the first state that recognized Moldova’s independence and the first state that “does not recognize it (Moldova) to the full extent” based on Romania’s (re)unification claims towards Moldova [M-21, M-56]. Rather, *Moldovans* wanted a pragmatic relationship which recognized that Romania was an important “friend for Moldova” but, in a complex international situation, should not be Moldova’s only friend, both within the EU and post-Soviet space [M-52, M-21].

Moldovans differed from the other categories in terms of their interpretation of history and identity, since they indicated no fraternal identification with Romania as a kin-state and instead wanted a friendly, but not exclusive relationship with Romania. They described a sense of shared language with Romania, but no cultural or ethnic identification as Romanian

6 Conclusion

Unlike previous kin-state research, this article has demonstrated the complexities of kin identification in two kin majority cases using the everyday nationalism approach. In both cases, disaggregating the kin majority showed how respondents rarely conceived of themselves in singular terms, but in terms of different assemblages (cultural, ethnic, linguistic and political) of Russian/Ukrainian or Romanian/Moldovan forms of identification. This bottom-up approach to kin identification in Crimea and Moldova, challenges assumptions based on data such as censuses which require identification with mutually exclusive census categories, which in reality are far more complex and privilege ethnic identification over other inter-ethnic and political forms of identification.

When comparing the cases, two different post-Soviet stories emerge. In Moldova, respondents indicated not just many ways of being Romanian and Moldovan, but different interpretations about what the relationship between these categories. Moreover the majority of respondents indicated a move away from Soviet Moldovanist perspectives, towards a perspective which blur the boundaries, at least culturally, between being Romanian and Moldovan, and orientate Moldova at an everyday level increasingly towards Romania, as the kin-state. This is heightened by the post-Soviet generation who has strengthened their sense of commonalities with Romania in a way that was not possible for their parents who grew up under the Soviet system.

In Crimea, at the everyday level, respondents indicated a move away from the kin-state based on their post-Soviet experience. In the context of contemporary events in Crimea, this article demonstrates that the nature and strength of Russian identification is often overplayed, and under

analyzed. Many respondents, especially the post-Soviet generation, questioned their Russian identification and/or reconciled it with a political affiliation to Ukraine, because the majority of their experience had been as a citizen of Ukraine.

This article confirms the assertion of Brubaker and Cooper (2000:4) that it is crucial to separate “categories of analysis” from “categories of practice” and focus more on the latter, by using everyday approaches to explore questions of ethnicity and kin nationalism from below. Moreover this article has shown that it is necessary to question further the conceptual assumption that ethnicity is a “myth of common descent”, which pervades nationalism studies and political science, by showing how this myth can be disrupted and distorted by political experience and context. Secondly, when viewed from below, the notion of a kin majority as an ethnically homogenous majority is much more complex with crosscutting ties to the home-state and region, thereby questioning the assumption that the kin community should be treated as a unitary actor in relation to the kin-state and home-state.

Table 1***Previous approaches to kin-state relations***

	Perspective	Critique
<i>Antagonistic</i> Originally Brubaker (1996) and developed by Fearon and Laitin (2003), van Houten (1998), Smith (2002), also Caspersen (2008)	Triadic nexus → antagonism between states Potential source of conflict	Absence of conflict Doesn't account for kin-state introduction of policies Top-down institutional approach Kin minority focus
<i>Fuzzy</i> Fowler (2004), Batt (2002)	Kin-state policies cause fuzzy relations between states in the nexus Not conflictual because states willing to share sovereignty over shared citizenry	Assumes kin-state policies unproblematic Top-down institutional approach Kin minority focus

Table 2***Types of respondents***

	<i>Moldova</i>	<i>Crimea</i>
<i>Young people (18-35 years)</i>	Youth wings of main political parties Student and youth organisations Ordinary students and young people	Youth wings of main political parties Student and youth organisations Ordinary students and young people
<i>>35 years</i>	Members of other organisations Other ordinary citizens	Members of other organisations Other ordinary citizens

Table 3

Explanation of identification categories for Crimean case

	Place of birth	Language		Russia	Ukraine	Crimea
		Russian	Ukrainian			
1. <i>Discriminated Russians</i>	Crimea or Russia	Native & everyday	Lack desire & proficiency	Spiritual motherland	Anti-Ukraine	Russian motherland
2. <i>Ethnic Russians</i>	Crimea or Russia	Native & everyday	Lack proficiency	Cultural motherland	Neutral	Russian motherland
3. <i>Crimean</i>	Crimea	Native & everyday	Relatively proficient	Worse than Ukraine	Immature state	Only motherland
4. <i>Political Ukrainians</i>	Crimea	Native & everyday	Relatively proficient	Anti-Russia	Pro-Ukraine	Integral part of Ukraine
5. <i>Ethnic Ukrainians</i>	Other Ukrainian regions	Everyday	Native	Viewed as Other and malign	Cultural motherland	Integral part of Ukraine

Table 4

Explanation of identification categories for Moldovan case

	Usual language	Identity	Relationship between Romanian and Moldovan		Romania	Moldova
			languages	nations		
1. <i>Organic Romanians</i>	RO ^a	Organically RO	same	same, artificially separated	Brother state	(pre-) historically RO
2. <i>Cultural Romanians</i>	RO	Ethnically RO, Politically MD ^b	same	some differences	more European brother	more RUS
3. <i>Ambivalent Romanians</i>	RO	not fully RO	same, different accent	some differences	Friend	More Soviet/RUS
4. <i>Moldovans</i>	RO, RUS ^c	MD/mixed	same	Different	Positive neighbour	Home

^a RO =Romanian, ^b MD = Moldovan, ^c RUS = Russian

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² Here a kin majority is defined as a community which possess a shared sense of ethnicity with a kin-state but form a majority in the state or sub-state unit in which they reside.

³ Fieldwork was conducted in 2012 and 2013 in Crimea and therefore this is predominantly a study of Crimea before Yanukovich left office and pro-Russian groups in Crimea seized power.

⁴ Indeed (Gorenburg, 2006) notes that the phenomenon and impact of ethnically mixed families was a highly researched in the Soviet Union.

⁵ It should be noted that this is not a perfect “Mill’s method” comparison based on a single difference (see G. King et al., 1994; George and Bennett, 2005) because the cases also differ in terms of their sovereignty status. However the level of autonomy is not considered of great importance for this research because of its focus on people rather than state systems.

⁶ Interviews were conducted in the preferred language of the respondent: in Crimea the majority were conducted in Russian; in Moldova the majority were conducted in Romanian and English, with a few conducted wholly or partially I Russian.

⁷ By control interview, I mean interviews that were conducted in a second site within the same case to test if there were significant differences between the respondents in the main site where interviews were being conducted (Chişinău, Simferopol).

⁸ Other regions have a majority of Russian speakers (Donetsk, Lugansk), like Crimea (77%), but Crimea is still the only region where a majority *ethnically* identify as Russian (according to the 2001 census).

⁹ This refers to the idea Crimea is similar to South Ossetia where there was a war between Russia and Georgia over the territory in 2008.

¹⁰ Official results for the 16 March 2014 referendum report that there was 97% turnout of which 83% supported joining Russia (see State Council of the Republic of Crimea, 2014), however the results are refuted and the referendum seen as illegal by the OSCE, EU and US.

¹¹ Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevych are extremely controversial figures in independent Ukraine. They are seen as heroes by ardent Ukrainian nationalists, in particular in western Ukraine, and Nazi collaborators by ardent Russian nationalists (see Marples, 2006; Katchanovski, 2014).

¹² This discourse is promoted by the Russian state, who seek to promote the rights of Russians abroad as part of the Compatriot policy, and is found more generally by Fournier (2002) among Russian groups in Ukraine.

¹³ Crimean Tatars are a Muslim minority group who were deported from Crimea in 1944 by order of Stalin. Many Tatars have returned to Crimea since the end of the Soviet Union, with the proportion growing from 1.9% in 1989 to 12.1 in 2001, with 243,400 residing in Crimea by 2001 and the number continuing to grow since (Ukrainian Census 2001).

¹⁴ These are the two most common ways of identifying as Russian: *russskiy*, those who are ethno-culturally Russian; and *rossiian*, those residing within the contemporary territory of Russia; i.e. not all *rossiian* are *russskiy*, and not all *russskiy* are *rossiian*.

¹⁵ Piter is a common diminutive of St. Petersburg.

¹⁶ The respondent explained how “they take *varenniki* dip in sour cream and eat ... There is no vodka, sour cream, it is okay! It is necessary to douse *varenniki* with sour cream, not dunk!”

¹⁷ The respondent gave commonly cited example of Sergei Tsekov, head of the Russian Community of Crimea, who is half Bulgarian.

¹⁸ These divisions exist most starkly in political terms and in terms of interpreting historical events, when debating between whether the Soviet union were occupiers (pan-Romanians) or liberators (Moldovanists) and whether the annexation of Bessarabia to interwar Greater Romania was a liberation (pan-Romanians) or an occupation (Moldovanists).

¹⁹ Moldovanism was the official line in the Soviet Union. Today it is supported by the “neo-Soviet” Communist party (March 2007), social movements such as the Moldovan Patriots and a minority of Moldovan academics, such as Vasile Stati who is famous for the “Moldovan-Romanian dictionary” (see Stati 2002, 2003).

²⁰ Here Moldova means the territory between the Prut and the Nistru rivers, and thereby excluding Transnistria.

²¹ Bessarabia (Basarabia) is taken here to be the Romanian way to describe Moldova, differentiating it from the Moldovan region of Romania.

²² Burebista (82-44 BC) and Decebal (87-106 AD) were leaders of Dacia. Traian (98-117 AD) was the emperor of the Roman Empire during the empire’s conquests of Dacia.

²³ “Dacomania” was very popular during the Ceausescu era, with Dacia seen as pre-eminent for the “ethnogenesis of the Romanians” and the Dacian state, created during the first century BC, as anticipating the creation of Greater Romania (Deletant, 1991:1, 76).

²⁴ Ștefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great) was a fifteenth century king of Moldova, and is claimed as a cultural and historical hero by both Romania and Moldova, and pan-Romanian and Moldovanist approaches.

²⁵ The Popular Front was an organisation created in 1989 campaigning for the removal of Russian as the de facto official language, and recognition of Romanian, and eventually became a movement promoting unification with Romania (C. King, 1999).