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Declaration

I, Marta Melnykevych, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date.....

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Abstract

This thesis assesses the achievements in nation-building in Moldova's break-away region, the Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic. Bearing in mind achievements in PMR's state-building, it is assumed that people in Transnistria will willingly identify themselves with this de facto state. Citizens living within the de facto state borders with all elements of statehood should be able to develop strong patriotic ties towards their home country, and choose Transnistrian as their main identity, instead of their ethnic identities.

People of Transnistria, consisting of such three biggest ethnic groups like Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans, constitute an example of a civic nation. Resemblance to some people and difference from the others constitutes a foundation of any national identity. The war of 1992 enhanced differences between Transnistrians and Moldovans. Simultaneously it prompted an establishment of a new Transnistrian identity. In addition, there were circumstances such as language, culture, historical background and geographical location that contributed to the creation of Transnistrian nation. The policies of PMR's authorities aimed at creation of unique Transnistrian culture and identity are rather timid. They can not compete with strong messages and actions from the Russian Federation about similarities and common past of these two people. The Soviet history, myths of that time, and once shared common identity contribute to establishment of Transnistrian nation which accordingly is dependent on Russian culture and language.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Defining the problem and research question

In August 1991, with no intention of parting from the Soviet Union, Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic (Transnistria¹) declared its independence from Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR). Unfortunately for the leaders of the new state's formation, after the fall of the Soviet Union their aspirations for sovereignty acquired merely forms of the separatist movement. Chisinau refused to recognize a self-declared republic which resulted in war of Transnistria in 1992.

The rift along the Dniester River was fueled by the language conflict. Authorities in Chisinau unexpectedly for the population, both minorities and those belonging to titular Moldovan nation, decided to switch to the Latin script. Such actions were perceived by them as an attempt to limit the influence of Russian culture and language on their land, whereas the Russian speaking population residing in the region interpreted this as oppression because they sensed a threat to their freedom and values. More than twenty years have passed, yet Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic still is not recognized as a state, and the rest of the world associates it with a de facto state² defined by the deep-rooted frozen conflict with thriving illegal business and criminality.

Despite being isolated from the outside, authorities of the secessionist republic did not procrastinate and have managed to establish a state-like entity with own president,

¹ Transnistria – a strip of land in the east of Moldova between the Dniester River and the border with Ukraine, self-proclaimed separatist republic within Moldova. Western scholars commonly use this name, Transnistria, referring to this secessionist republic, but it is usually taken negatively by the ordinary citizens of the de facto state as it bears a negative connotation for them. This name was used during the occupation of the region by the terror regime of Ion Antonescu during the World War II, when present PMR became a part of Romania. Transnistria was under occupation for 970 days, at that time all Russian speaking population were considered suspicious. According to Antonescu's order, all "strangers" including all Russian speaking population was to be evicted (Kodrianu, 2002). That is why the name of the region Transnistria is associated with fascism and atrocities of that time. For this reason, population of the quasi-state prefers PMR (Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic) or its shorter version Pridniestrovina as a name of their republic.

² De facto state – a term that was first used by Scott Pegg (1998), who defined it as "separatist entity that have gained autonomy and succeeded in the processes of state-building, but failed in securing international legitimacy". There were also studies that protested against the usage of such term. Scholars suggested that such entities should rather be called separatist (King, 2001), contested (Geldenhuys, 2009), unrecognized states (Caspersen, 2012), or unrecognized quasi-states (Kolstø, 2006). In this thesis, referring to the Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic, most of these terms are used for language diversity.

parliament, currency, constitution, anthem, and flag. Moreover, having acquired features of statehood, separatist authorities in Tiraspol attempted also to legitimize their cause by establishing a unique Transnistrian civic nation - a new identity which, in fact, is a mixture of local ethnic Ukrainian, Russian and Moldovan identities. Transnistrian identity emerged as an opposition to Moldovan identity; therefore it was filled with Russian culture instead. Attempting to create a unique Transnistrian people, authorities in the PMR chose to capture the images of heroic times and glories of Soviet past and even adopted its symbols in search for the idealized history for its citizens.

There are several studies focusing on the phenomenon of the de facto states (King, 2001, Kolstø, 2006, Caspersen, 2012). Some of the researchers describe their development, efforts and successes in state-building, assess their possibilities and prospects of economic viability, study causes of conflicts and forces supporting them, discuss relations of the de facto states with their patron-states, etc. However, there is a lack of research focused on their potential and success in nation-building. The latter remains understudied as most of de facto states were used to be described as “informational black holes” (King, 2001). Despite still closed nature of the PMR’s regime, due to the turbulent recent changes in the Eastern Europe, today a great attention is paid how the situation is developing in the region. This thesis introduces new empirical material by combining results based on the mixed methods approach. Evaluating PMR policymakers’ achievements (top-down) and exploring how these policies were received by ordinary people (bottom-up) gives a chance to understand the success of constructing a new Transnistrian identity.

I draw on work of scholars of classic theories of nation-building (Anderson, 1983, Hobsbawm, 1990, Smith, 1991), to analyze experience of other countries in order to understand and interpret the practical outcomes in Transnistria. In addition, I have relied on Michael Billig’s (1995), theory of banal nationalism which investigates and explains demonstration and penetration of nationhood into everyday life creating an imagined sense of solidarity and belonging to one nation as well as reminders of nation’s existence as such. Accordingly, this study examines what were the causes of a new de facto state the Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic emergence, explores details of nation-building theories and evaluates the extent to which they were applied in Transnistria, provides the background for the policies implemented by the leaders of the separatist state, and discusses their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to establishing a new national identity. Thereby, this research responds the following questions: Was the project of nation-building in Transnistria

successful or not? What influences the choice of main identity among the citizens of contemporary Transnistria?

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The thesis explores Transnistria's achievements in nation-building. The paper begins with brief outline of the history of the conflict. Discussing the circumstances under which the separatist de facto state came into being helps to grasp the phenomenon of Transnistrian identity. The third chapter is dedicated to the theoretical foundations of nationalism and nation-building. Here the concept of identity is discussed, the logic to protect one's identity is explained, a debate of views what was first nation or nationalism is given, as well as a role of socialization, education, media, authorities, language, etc. in nation-building is revealed. In the following chapter the description of methods, used during the research, are provided. This chapter also explains what decisions were to be made prior to the field trip, challenges that were to be faced there as well as sampling approaches used in this research. In the fifth chapter the results of the study are presented. At first, the results of the top-down policies are presented, then I proceed to the findings based on the quantitative research method showing the preferences of main identity among Transnistrian youth, and finally based on the material obtained via the interviews with citizens of the secessionist republic I demonstrate a bottom-up response or how ordinary people respond to the political decisions from above. Finally, conclusion on how appropriate is it to refer to the community residing on the left bank of the Dniester River as to a specific identity group, or nation, will be given. To sum up, I will evaluate PMR's authority's efforts promoting Transnistrian identity and socializing it to the masses.

2 Historical background

Modern intricate situation in the world brings people's attention to currently ongoing issues, leaving behind old and forgotten imbroglio. Yet, as at the brink of 2013, the confrontation in neighboring Ukraine developed from an internal to almost international crisis, with many people suggesting that Transnistria could be aggressor's next aim in territory's expansion, after annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation (Leraan Skjetne, 2014).

My project is devoted to research whether Transnistrian population managed to develop a common identity and whether they can be called an example of another civic nation that rose from the collapse of the Soviet Union. Transnistria, which de jure is an integral part of Moldova, is commonly also known as a de facto state. Throughout its history, this piece of land, squeezed between Ukrainian border with Moldova, on one side, and the Dniester River on the other, has witnessed various transformations and vicissitudes. Quite often Transnistria is associated with frozen conflict, trafficking, poorly controlled borders, and Russian financial aid (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013). Digression into history is needed in order to grasp what are the reasons for such associations.

2.1 Historical overview

Area of both Moldova and Transnistria was once of great interest for Russian and Ottoman Empires. Initially, history of Moldova started in 1359. Then, in 16th century, it was surrendered by Turks and forced to obey its suzerainty. In 1792, Russian Empire took over these lands and proceeded to the west as far as the Dniester River. In 1918, Bessarabia³ or the newly born Democratic Republic of Moldova (excluding territories of modern Transnistria) chose to incorporate its territories to Greater Romania (O'Loughlin et al., 2013).

Unlike Moldova, Transnistria's history starts with the conquest of Bessarabia by the Russian empire. Its capital, Tiraspol, was founded in 1792 by Marshall Suvorov during the reign of the Russian Empire in the region. In 1924, present-day Transnistria was Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and part of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, with three official languages (Romanian, Ukrainian, and Russian) and its capital first in Balta and after 1929 in Tiraspol. Accordingly, people from the left bank of the Dniester River

³ Bessarabia – historical region in Eastern Europe bounded by the Dniester River in the east, the Prut River in the west and the mouth of the Danube River and the Black Sea in the south. Today Bessarabia is a part of Moldova, except for the territories bordering the Black Sea which belong to Ukraine.

underline that Transnistria only belonged to Ukraine or Russia and was never part of Bessarabia until these two entities were combined in 1945 when the Moldavian Soviet Socialistic Republic was established. In such a way, the differences between east and west banks of the Dniester River were noticeable and deepened over the years. These areas were formed on the basis of different historic divisions as well as on varying levels of development, namely rapidly developing industrial area with a center in Tiraspol and Moldova focusing mostly on agriculture.

After the World War II, Bessarabia in particular (and Moldova in general) attracted many Ukrainians and Russians to resettle here. In such a way Soviet authorities attempted to dilute Romanian population and mix them with Slavs (HRW, 1993). Russian-speaking population felt safe and satisfied with their living conditions in the new place, since at that point Russian culture was promoted in this region as it was throughout the Soviet Union. In accordance with Soviet policy, a large number of skilled workers from Ukraine, Russia, and other parts of the Soviet Union were brought to work in industrial region of Transnistria, whereas agrarian Moldova retained its ethnic demography. The availability of sharp distinctions in ethnic composition of the population happened to be clearly visible in late 1980's when parties started to design different views of their future which resulted in a frozen conflict between Moldova and a self-proclaimed republic of PMR.

The last Soviet census in 1989, just before the split of the country along the Dniester River, proved that the population in Moldova was more ethnically homogenous while the population of Transnistria which consisted of a mixture of various ethnic minorities (See Table 1). At that time the total population of Moldovan republic was over 4.3 million, of which about 600, 000 inhabitants lived in Transnistria. The struggle for cultural primacy was always present in Moldova. It involved big ethnic groups like Moldovans, Russians, and Ukrainians as well as minor ethnic communities including Gagauz, Jews and Bulgarians.

In June 1990, the Soviet Moldova adopted a Declaration of Independence, whereby it decided to secede from the USSR even before its formal dissolution. Such actions were motivated by the idea of similarities between Moldovan and Romanian ethnical identities and a need for state's reunification with Romania. A movement called "Popular Front of Moldova" was aimed to persuade the population of their affiliation not to Moldovan but to Romanian nation and to emphasize the need to have Romanian as a state language. Followers of this organization, whose main objective was the reunification of the country with Romania, believed that language should be written with Latin script (like in Romanian

language) instead of Cyrillic, as was the case earlier when Bessarabia was a part of Romania in the interwar years (Kolstø, 2000).

Table 1 Population and nationalities in Moldova and Transnistria in accordance to 1989 census

	All Moldova	%	Transnistria	%	Government controlled Moldova	%
Total Population	4335260	100	601660		3733600	
Moldovans	2794749	64.5	240062	39.9	2554687	68.4
Russians	562069	12.9	153423	25.5	408646	10.9
Ukrainians	600366	13.9	170270	28.3	430096	11.5
Gagauz	153548	3.5		NA		
Others	224528	5.2	38506	6.4	339570	9.1
Total %		100		13.9		86.1

Source: O'LOUGHLIN, J., TOAL, G. & CHAMBERLAIN-CREANGĂ, 2013.

Similarly to the events in the west, people from the eastern part of Moldavian Soviet Socialistic Republic passed a declaration of Independence for their region. Such events were nothing unusual at that time as 1990 was a year of the “Parade of Sovereignties” in the former USSR (Blakkisrud and Kolstø, 2011). However, the pro-soviet oriented authorities in Tiraspol strived for their independence from Moldova but not from the USSR. In few months Transnistrians confirmed their intentions to end their association with Moldova in the plebiscite and even managed to elect a new leader for the breakaway territory. However, all these efforts were in vain as Transnistria’s worst nightmare was realized when the dissolution of the USSR took place. Thus Transnistria’s claims for freedom from Moldova transformed into secessionist struggle of the region. In turn Moldova, as new parent state after USSR’s collapse, did not recognize a self-proclaimed republic and refused to make any concessions.

The official language act became the main issue that started the split in society, as a law proclaiming Romanian as official language of Moldavian Soviet Socialistic Republic provoked a storm of discontent and resistance in Transnistria (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013). Thereafter, frequent clashes between Transnistrian irregular forces and Moldovan police

stared to take place. The latter were supported by Romanian volunteers whereas the separatists were backed by volunteers from Ukraine and Russia. Attempts of Chisinau to reintegrate the left bank under its control resulted in the short but cruel War of Transnistria in March 1992. With the intervention of the former 14th Soviet Army in support of the secessionists, fighting was brought to the end. A ceasefire agreement was signed on 21st of July 1992, but no solution has been reached since, though numerous peaceful negotiations.

2.2 Similarities and differences between the two banks of the Dniester River

Due to various circumstances inhabitants of Transnistria and Moldova do not agree on how they should conduct their inner or external policy as well as friendship and good neighboring relations with what other countries should be maintained. Moreover, Transnistria and Moldova cannot envision their common future as they have different aspirations, namely east-oriented PMR and focusing on the European vector Moldova. Division of the country along the Dniester River was by no means provoked by religious or ethnical differences as it is often a case in other separatist movements but has historical, cultural, linguistic, and economic causes.

It is quite common for different scholars to highlight differences between these two entities. Nevertheless, if one takes a closer look at both parts of Moldova, one could identify a lot of similarities as well. The composition of the population on both banks of the Dniester River is more or less the same, but different experiences during various historical times should be taken into account. Religious views do not constitute any discomposure, as most of people in both regions belong to Orthodox Church. Both countries have aging populations, high rates of migration among the population, relatively similar living conditions, and people's discontent of authority's policies. Quite important is also the fact that the leaders of both countries who were in power for a long time were replaced by newcomers, namely Yevgeny Shevchuk in Transnistria and Nicolae Timofti in the Republic of Moldova.

In addition, authorities of both entities do not have a single view in relation to their foreign policy regarding each other as well as concerning other parties. For instance, Moldova is ought to make a decision whether it wants to reunite with Romania and follow the nostalgia of the "Big Romania" or it wants to stay an independent state of its own. Although Moldova is striving to keep the lands with a center in Tiraspol as its integral part, its leadership is having a hard time deciding about the future of their own state. Since the late 1980's Moldova started to investigate its origin, resulting in active movements of unionists

(supporters of annexation to Romania) who considered Moldovan republic as a consequence of Bessarabia's occupation by the Soviet. Moldova does its utmost to get international attention and bring Transnistrian authorities to a standstill where it has to alter its position on such issues as Transnistrian statehood, its reintegration to Moldova and the improvement of democratization on the left bank of the Dniester River (Protsyk, 2006).

Transnistria, in turn, has to choose one option as desired future of the region, be it fighting for its independence, reunification with the Russian Federation (this option is desired by the population but is rather problematic in real life as the Russian Federation does not even have a common border with Transnistria and it has its own agenda here) or agree on the conditions suggested by Moldovan side.

2.3 Attempts for the settlement of the frozen conflict

Over the years various ways and formulas for peaceful reconciliation of conflicting parties have been suggested by different sides and mediators. For instance, Russian politicians suggested Moscow Memorandum in 1997 and Kozak Memorandum in 2003, in 2004 the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Settlement Proposals were put forward, and Ukrainian side proposed Yushchenko Plan in 2005. All of these settlement plans suggested reintegration of two warring parties despite disagreements. Unfortunately, none of these efforts were successful. In 2005, the negotiations started to be held under the auspices of the OSCE in a special format of 5+2, which involved conflicting parties of Moldova and Transnistria, then Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE as mediators, while the EU and the USA were given a role of observers.

Situation in Transnistria certainly draws attention of the international community while some particular actors have their specific interests here. Given the availability of a large number of ethnic Ukrainians living in the separatist region and a common borderline with Transnistria, the unfolding events are closely followed by Ukraine. Ukrainian side promoted the democratization in the region. A settlement plan offered by the Ukrainian president (Yushchenko plan) suggested a special legal status for Transnistria within the Republic of Moldova, supported the idea of preceding the first local elections to be held under international aegis so that they could afford to be recognized by international community, and agreed to grant the self-proclaimed republic with a right to self-determination in case Moldova would lose its independence and choose to reintegrate to Romania (Kulyk and V., 2008). After Transnistrian authorities rejected these proposed terms

of settlement, Ukraine was forced to revise its border trade regime with Transnistria. Thus, postponed for a long time new customs rules were finally applied in March 2006. According to the new rules, only goods that had a proper Moldovan custom documentation were allowed through the Ukrainian border. This backfired with a negative reaction in Tiraspol where Moldova and Ukraine were accused of “economic blockade” of Transnistria (Protsyk, 2006).

About sixty thousand of Transnistrians have already received Russian citizenship and that number is steadily increasing. So, by the time this region will be demilitarized of Russian troops (on the soil of the de-facto state there are still about 2,000 Russian soldiers (Kosienkowski, 2014)), most of territory’s population would be under its influence anyway. Moreover, Russian is the dominant language in the self-proclaimed republic used in political leadership, education, culture and law which works in accordance to Russian rules already (Beril, 2010). In contrast to this, Russia demonstrated its commitment to build closer ties with the West and institutionalize an EU-Russian partnership in order to overcome political stalemate between the parties. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President of Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev initiated a Meseberg process in June 2010. This initiative was aimed to “promote institutional and political rapprochement between the parties on the basis of a pilot: settlement of the Transnistrian conflict” (Devyatkov, 2012b, p.55). Moldovan side believes that it is a position of Russia that remains the main source of opposition to conflict settlement and country’s reintegration but not the separatist regime itself (Protsyk, 2006). In such case Russia is perceived not as a mediator but as a party to the conflict. Given that, the international community aims to find other ways to make Moscow stop maintaining the status quo in Tiraspol.

Moldova searching for its origin and country’s well-being also has to put everything at stake. The choice of coming closer to Romania and EU but giving up its relationship with Russia and other CIS⁴ countries could not be easy to make. To Russia’s dismay, Chisinau was the first out of three (Georgia and Ukraine), to ratify its preliminary signed association agreement with the EU. As for Transnistria, the European Union supports territorial integrity and sovereignty of Moldova. The EU is in favor of having Transnistria within a single Moldovan state with a special status for the region.

Transnistrian population consists of three major ethnic groups Moldovans, Russians, and Ukrainians. It is important to note that Moldovans are a minority in Transnistria as they

⁴ The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS; Russian: SNG, Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv.) also known as the Russian Commonwealth is a regional organisation consisting of the former Soviet Republics which emerged after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

are outnumbered by Ukrainians and Russians (See Table 1). Slavic population of the region does not share the intent of the Republic of Moldova to reintegrate to Romania as they do not agree to have a common culture, root, and identity with the latter. Being the majority residing in the urban areas Russian-speaking Transnistrians occupy leading positions, whereas engaged in agriculture Moldovans reside in the rural setting. It is clear that population of industrial region with a center in Tiraspol strives to acquire recognition and strengthen its attributes of a functioning republic. People of Transnistria were united by a common idea of living in an independent state. On this basis they managed to enjoy peaceful coexistence and even established a state-like unit of governance with its own president, parliament, currency, constitution, anthem, and flag. It is possible that now after twenty years of living in isolation, people of Transnistria have established a unique common bond with each other, a shared sense of Transnistrian affiliation. Their desire to live in the independent state could encourage the emergence of a new national identity.

3 Theoretical framework

In this section I address to the existing literature on concepts of nation, nationalism and challenges of national identity establishment. Based on the works of the most influential researchers in this field (Smith, 1991, Hobsbawm, 1990, Anderson, 1983, Renan, 1882), I focus on different theories how did a concept of nation come into being, also I reflect on nation's origin (natural or constructed).

However, most of the classic theories of nation-building refer to the times when the 'old' European nations were created. When it comes to Transnistria, some parts of these theories are not so relevant, as PMR is a state-like formation of the more recent times. Taking that into the consideration, I also focus on the theory of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), as a complementary theory. Thus, I elaborate on how banal nationalism affects nation-building in the present time.

3.1 Theorizing on origins of nation, nationalism and national identity

A concept of identity was a subject of vivid scholarly debates in the 1990's. Nevertheless, most of scholars reached a consensus that identity equals one's understanding of who one is and who one is not. In other words, identity is distinguishing of 'self' from the 'other' (Andersson, 2010). Understanding of self-identity starts with the opposition of 'self' to 'other' which is accompanied by differentiation of those who are similar or identical from those who are different. In search of one's identity it can be concluded that 'self' of every individual is made out of multiple identities or roles like family, gender, ethnic, territorial, religious, and class (Smith, 1991). So, people consist of numerous 'selves' which can also alter due to circumstances. Identity also foresees people's role and behavior due to different role identities, such as father, husband, monarch, warrior, and a citizen people behave in a different way. It is typical for us humans to be willing to get to know who we are, learn of where we come from, discover our history, roots and culture. All these notions constitute our identity and help us discover our 'self', therefore making us feel complete.

Some might think that identification with one's nation or a state with all its inherent elements, be it language, religion, policy or territory, is something natural and fixed. When in fact it took a long time and a number of turbulent changes before those nations that we are used to have in international relations today came into being. France and England are known as the first nation-states in modern meaning of this term. Those who assume that they did not experience any problems but always existed as nations are definitely mistaken. Yet, both of

them went through a great number of invasions and territorial and structural changes in order to become European states, home for millions of their citizens who willingly identify themselves with aforementioned nations. Emergence of shared identification among masses is an integral part of nation-building and a key element of political integration of every state. Identification theory is an element of psychological theory which claims that

In order to achieve psychological security, every individual possesses an inherent drive to internalize – to identify with- the behavior, mores and attitudes of significant figures in her/his social environment (Bloom, 1990, p.23).

Bearing this interpretation in mind, it becomes clear why do people actively seek their identity. Each one of us in search of psychological security, or even more important emotional well-being, is able to attribute ourselves to several groups or communities simultaneously possessing more than one identity at the same time (Smith, 1993). Being a girl you can claim your affiliation to such groups (divided by gender) as: females, sisters, mothers, wives, etc. Then, during receiving education individuals identify with other pupils, students, youth; or in professional life with their colleagues - teachers, drivers, doctors, businessmen, etc. Each of these identifications occurs under certain circumstances and requires a special role and behavior. It was studied that individuals who live under the same conditions usually develop the same identification or adopt the same identity. Then, likewise, it seems quite natural that people who share the same identity attempt to boost and protect their identity.

In some cases national identity gets into conflict with the culture and identity of the opponent. In this way people are motivated to search for support and seek for security among those who are similar to them as they feel threatened by an alien culture. William Bloom (1990, p.65) claimed: “Psychologically threatened by the alien culture the individuals sought security with those who shared the same culture, with those with whom there was a shared sense of identity”. Those involved in a conflict, often defined as a conflict with an opposite or alien culture, come back to their local communities and spread stories and their memories to others. This was expressed through loss of a close person, commemoration of victory or defeat, transmitted in poems and songs, voiced in rumors, or boasts.

Survival of the state can be provided and protected by mass mobilization which is only possible in case people in the mass share the same identification (Bloom, 1990). In order

to ensure its survival every country should make sure to create a common identification of its people. As Bloom (1990, p.52) puts it

National identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols – have internalized the symbols of the nation – so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of these symbols of national identity.

Pursuant to this, nation does not come to existence just because some people stated that they identify themselves as a nation or if some community would equate their formation to a nation. A birth of nation just like establishment of a state does not happen overnight. It is pointless to claim that some extraordinary transformations could facilitate such processes. Such turning points are the so called “big bangs” of the history (Carvalho et al., 2011). Obviously, no treaty, agreement or any other solitary act is able to change the whole system of coexistence between states at once since it is an ongoing process which requires time and a lot of efforts. Likewise it is pivotal for every nation, in order to be called one, to undergo a long psychological process which results in general identification of its masses with a nation.

The combination of terms state and nation and state and national language in their currently common meaning were not in use in old days. As reported by Eric Hobsbawm (1990, p.14), only since 1884 we have heard of something called national language which was described as “the official and literary language of a country, and the one generally spoken in that country, as distinct from dialects and the languages of other nations”. Approximately at the same time the term nation was described as “the aggregate of the inhabitants of a province, a country or a kingdom” (Ibid).

Subsequently, a term nation obtained a different meaning. It was in the beginning of 19-th century when a nation was described as group of people of the same ethnic origin who speak the same language and share a common tradition. We can witness the transformation of a term and trace back how new characteristics, such as common traditions, interests, culture, ect., were over time attached to nation, a term commonly known and used today. All this indicated that a concept of nation in its modern meaning is historically very young.

A concept of nation simultaneously is understood in two ways. Civic nation is established on a ground of political contract between its citizens and a state. Civic nationalism also known as constructed nationalism is based on principle when all people

regardless of their ethnical background or origin can be recognized as state's citizens as they respect and submit to the state's law. For instance, France and the USA are the examples of nations constructed in such a way. Such nations are characterized by shared historic territory, a sense of equality among their members who have common values and bear the same set of rights. Contrary to that, nations based on "pure" ethnic affiliation are based on shared cultural and ethnic roots. Such ethnic nations are perceived as unique, as they believe in their shared genealogy, and deem to have descent ties (Smith, 1991). They also have a common sense of kinship among people in addition to the emphasis on customs, traditions and vernacular language (Kaplan, 2007). Veracity of these differences and peculiarities are often subject of debate, however both of these notions are useful for understanding the process of national identity formation in any state.

Any identification, including national identification, is usually enhanced by socialization. After people have agreed on the identification with their nation-state, then the same identification would be spread to new generations through family and other social contacts (Bloom, 1990), be it through school, working environment, military service or national symbols. People through conversations reinforce and push forward their identification as citizens of a country to their children since their early childhood. Identification does not prove loyalty because people always are in need for safety physically and psychologically. Sometimes individuals can even give up their beliefs, or identity, in order to preserve their lives. Some people, with no significant reasons for it, share such a strong feeling of kinship and ethno-national ties with other compatriots that they would not hesitate to risk their own life or would be ready to kill their enemies for the sake of their nation. As Steve Fenton (2007) notes: "The willingness of people to die in defense of national and nationalist causes is taken as the supreme indicator of the intensity of commitment which nation can call forth".

Establishment of national identification or nation-building requires a lot of time and efforts. Additionally, the process of nation-building can never be fully completed (Bloom, 1990). This can be explained by the fact that there always is a cluster of people who for various reasons refuse to identify with the nation-state. In some instances, changes in the history or political trends repel some individuals or groups of people from identification with nation-state. So, nation-building is never ending process, which takes a lot of re-education and persuasive skill so that even the most indifferent people would choose and cultivate their national identification. Accordingly, if in some part of the world state formation processes take place, it is possible to claim that over time within its territory a nation will emerge. Yet,

it is unlikely to expect and senseless to claim that every nation sooner or later will build its own state.

There are about two hundred countries in the world and a countless number of ethnic groups. Some identity groups even share some characteristics with a nation. Though, sometimes they do not have any chances to build their own state, in other cases some communities choose not to do so. Success of these groups to improve their status to the statehood depends on circumstances, popular support, political elite's power and their neighbor's interests. It was Hobsbawm (1990, p.23) who raised a question:

Which of the numerous European populations classifiable as a “nationality” on some ground or another, would acquire a state, and which of the numerous existing states would be imbued with the character of “nation”.

Similarly, Ernest Renan (1882) was outraged as he could not understand the reasons why Holland was endowed with the title of the nation, when Hanover or others were not. The creation of a state which subsequently results in birth of its nation has to be a feasible project, but I find it problematic how to determine which project meets such description and which does not. Probably in most cases birth of nation depends on inside and outside factors which means that it is important to see how people react to it, in other words if a creation of a new identity and state formation is preferred by its inhabitants, as well as to take into account how other influential entities perceive such outcome. Furthermore, it is pivotal that national identification is desired by the population residing in specific territory. European states are definitely not nationally homogeneous, inasmuch as in the whole world a great number of nationalities are mixed. The viability of every independent nation had to be proven, otherwise small or weak nationalities were doomed to disappear or integrate into larger and stronger ones. For some communities integration into the other communities would be rather welcomed than condemned (Ibid, p.35) while the others would never come to terms with such end.

3.2 Nation and nationalism: natural outcome or social construction ?

There were extensive debates about how did nation come into being, what came first, state or nation, what was nationalism and its role? There were those who considered nation as

something natural because people are loyal to their nations as to their families. Some scholars believed that nation was something constructed or even imagined (Anderson, 1983), while others emphasizing the role of language and education in nation-building and identity formation, argued it was developed due to modernity or industrialization (Gellner, 1983, Hobsbawm, 1990).

Being a modernist himself, Gellner perceived a nation as recently constructed phenomenon of modernity. He considered that there was a specific chain effect where industrialism paved the way to nationalism, and then nationalism, in turn, caused emergence of nations. The roots of nationalism originated in industrial society with its larger population, well-defined division of labor and universally standardized system of education. As he puts it in his work “Nations and nationalism”

A society has emerged based on a high-powered technology and the expectancy of sustained growth, which requires both a mobile division of labor, and sustained, frequent and precise communication between strangers involving a sharing of explicit meaning, transmitted in a standard idiom and in writing when required (Gellner, 1983, pp. 33-34).

Gellner was convinced that it was nationalism that gave rise to nations and by no means the opposite. It was nationalism that made possible the transition from agrarian society to industrial society. As a unifying ideology nationalism emerged due to a new form of social organization which was founded on education-dependent masses or, so called, high cultures. Indeed, in new industrial societies political and cultural boundaries were blurred due to development of literacy through mass education system. Gradually a state became known as protector of its culture and provider of evenly distributed standardized education of its population. All in all, this indicates that education indeed had an impact on emergence of nations and the idea of nation as something natural or God-given is nothing more than a myth.

Similar views were voiced by Eric Hobsbawm (1990), who refused to recognize nation as a fundamental and fixed social establishment. He was convinced that nation refers to the inventions of more recent times. To his mind, nation could be addressed to as a social establishment, yet, on condition of existence of modern territorial state. Hobsbawm argued that political and national components of nationalism should correspond with each other. These components should be equal as nationalism itself indicates that its political and

national sections should be matching. In his work *“Nation and Nationalism since 1780”* Hobsbawm (1990) concurred with Geller (1983, pp.48-49) when the latter claimed: “Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent... political destiny, are myth”. Nations should not be seen as “primary nor as an unchanging social entities” (Hobsbawm, 1990, p.9). Everything about nations is artificial and constructed. Nations do not have a clear date of their birth, moreover, their deaths if such take place are never natural (Anderson, 1983). What happens in real life is that nationalism sometimes alters pre-existing cultures into nations, sometimes it erases existing cultures and discovers new ones instead. (Gellner, 1983).

Just like Gellner, Hobsbawm (1990) was convinced that only nationalism was able to create a state and a nation, but by no means was it possible vice versa. Hobsbawm viewed nations as “dual phenomena” which are constructed from above. However, he found it problematic to grasp these phenomena unless they would be simultaneously studied from the bottom. Such approach would pave the way to learning more about ordinary people’s thoughts, attitudes, problems, emotions, interests, needs, etc. These statements contrasted with those of Geller, as the latter supported the idea of studying nations from above instead.

Anthony Smith, unlike his teacher Geller, had a different perspective on origin of such concepts as nation and nationalism. He argued that nationalism was a universal phenomenon given that it was around for quite a long time. His views about emergence of nationalism as an ideology coincided with ideas of other researchers who concluded that before French Revolution there were no hints for nationalism and no emphasis for cultural differences between nations. Nevertheless, according to Smith, nationalism based on ethnic identity existed long before that. If one is to understand the reasons and the means that contributed to construction of nations and nationalism, especially in Europe, then studying the pre-modern ethnic identities should be a starting point.

In Smith’s view (1991, p.14), a nation was “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”. Smith also emphasizes a notion of ethnic community or, using a French term, *ethnie*. He insisted that a collective name, a myth of common origin, common historical memories, elements that distinguish their common culture, an association with a specific “homeland”, and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population were the main elements of any *ethnie*. A community which possessed these attributes approached the ideal type of ethnic community or *ethnie*. It is hard not to notice that definitions of nation and *ethnie* are rather similar. However, it

should be noted that a historical territory has more of symbolic meaning for ethnies, whereas nation exists only due to its possession of a piece of land which is popularly known as nation's "homeland". So, ethnies is focused on mostly cultural components, whereas nation is based on both cultural and political elements.

Smith also stresses the importance of myth of common ancestry for the sense of ethnic identification for ethnies. These myths helped ethnies to survive since ancient times because it was the answer to 'whence we came' that is a key to the question of 'who we are' (Smith, 1991, p.22). Spreading memories and myths about country's glorious past among its citizens is a key to the existence of any nation. Often, these stories are not based on facts but on legends and exaggerations instead, but, despite that, they assist people in understanding the essence of their nation. Besides that, myths demonstrate differences between nations and help people form perceptions about themselves (Grosby, 2005). Some societies were fortunate to inherit rich and finely-documented pieces of their history, memories, folklore and customs of their ancestors, while the others got only blurred memories and rather a hint for their predecessors' past and traditions. Such differences were caused by uneven development of education, literacy, development of art and music, etc. So, there were those who possessed rich ethno-history and those who had to rediscover once again it with a help of mythology or archeology (Smith, 1993).

Nationalism, in Smith's opinion, was a cultural phenomenon and not just an ideology. After all, he perceived nationalism as something similar to national identity. In accordance with his definition, nationalism is "an ideological movement for attaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential 'nation' " (Smith, 1991, p.73). Nationalism is responsible for maintaining autonomy, unity and identity within a nation. These concepts emerged in Europe of eighteenth century as a result of various transformations. Since then it was noted that members of one society share certain similarities and differ from the outside communities. Members of one community speak the same language, eat and dress in the same manner; when others, non-members of this particular community are used to do things in their own way. National identity and national culture derives from this.

3.3 Nation as an imagined community

Benedict Anderson, being also a follower of modernist views, unlike Geller, had a different theory concerning the emergence and rise of nations. According to him, capitalism was one of the main elements in the process of nation formation, but its role was significantly underestimated. He pointed out the fact that capitalism pushed forward the art of printing which coincided with the rise of a concept of nation. Anderson (1983, p.6) provides us with a definition of a nation as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”. Such community is claimed to be imagined because most of its members will never meet. Despite the fact that most people never even hear of each other’s existence, they still perceive themselves as parts of the same community.

It was inevitable for a nation to be imagined as a community as it was initially described as “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1983). In addition, nation was usually associated with sovereignty since the notion of nation emerged in times when Enlightenment and revolution suppressed the legitimacy of God-given rule. Beyond that, each nation is also limited or has its quantitative and territorial limitations. This idea was also confirmed by Hobsbawm (1990), who stated that in order to create a nation it had to cross through a so called numerical threshold, meaning that being a nation requires a certain size. Building a nation always requires expansion of other territories and absorbing other communities. This, in turn, does not match with a definition of a nation as a community based on ethnicity, language and common past.

3.4 Role of language, education and literacy in nation-building

Nobody can deny that language is one of the most distinguishing criteria for each community, be it an ethnic group or a nation. Language was of vital importance in Anderson's theory too. As it was noted, "few things seem as historically deep-rooted as languages, for which no dated origins can ever be given" (Anderson, 1983, p.196). Therefore, the scholar emphasized the role of printing as he was persuaded that establishing of imagined communities and a feeling of solidarity inherent to them takes place through language. Language, indeed, is the most common indicator of nationality. Yet, as an exception, there are several examples of nations where people belong to the same state but they do not speak the same language. For instance, people in Switzerland do not have one common language. However, it does not create problems for them or encourages them to separation as they share a strong Swiss identity.

Commonly a national universal language is developed by long-established cultural elite or dominant culture. As Anderson (1983, pp. 133-134) puts it: "Imperial languages are still vernaculars, and thus particular vernaculars among many". National language should not be treated as an emblem of nation-ness similar to a flag, folk music, dances or costumes. Such attitude would not be right as the role of language is much more important. Language is capable of creating imagined communities characterized by particular solidarity and devotion.

In old times, before printing industry was established, there existed a great number of various oral languages and dialects. Quite obviously creation of a large nation out of individuals who were not able to communicate with each other was not possible. There was a need to unite or standardize related dialects into one language. This was implemented through establishment of printing and book publishing. What propagated imagined community to literate and illiterate people was media by printing stories of people as members of one nation in newspapers. People living in the same territory believed that "everyone" from their community learned the same news and had the exact same access to information. In such a way individuals perceived each other or imagined each other as members of the same nation, disregarding the fact that most of members of any nation would never have a chance to get acquainted with most of members of their community.

The increase of literacy among the inhabitants made it easier for authorities to get support of the population. Thus, understanding the linkage between literacy, mass education and nation, it can be argued that progress of a nation depends on the progress in education

(Anderson, 1983). Members of modern society possess a high level of literacy as well as they are endowed with technical skills and competence. Such perfection could be implemented only by means of a systematized national pyramid-like education system, based on primary schools led by teachers who gained their education in secondary schools, staffed by teachers trained at universities (Gellner, 1983).

History was communicated to new generations through language. Consequently language became an important element of history construction. With the advent of written languages and printing, language became unchangeable which, to an extent, led to the perception of language as something that always existed. The most efficient and easy way to unite people is through language. Mass education of the inhabitants ensures their knowledge of national language and history. A state's authorities are responsible for history construction since they suggest their own version of the historical events to the masses. That is why people learn about 'chosen glories' and 'chosen traumas'. Accordingly, history books promote the evil image of bad enemy or alien culture, they praise selected characters as heroes, and hide embarrassing events and negative pages from state's history. During the process of history construction both remembering some important events as well as forgetting other episodes are quite crucial (Anderson, 1983). In his "*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*" Ernest Renan (1882) stated that the essence of a nation is that its people have a lot in common, but there are also many historical facts that have been erased from their collective memory. Forgetting is a crucial element in nation making. In such a way over time invaders of one's land settle down, integrate and are hard to be distinguished from the rest of population. It is necessary that every citizen remembers the good, victorious times of his/her ancestors, while details of all evil and embarrassing events or massacres and their victims have to be erased from nation's collective memory.

3.5 Banal nationalism

Gradually it became natural for every human being to possess a certain national identity. Furthermore, it is expected to get a straightforward response regarding national identity if one is asked of it. According to Michael Billig (1995), people are unable to forget their national identity as they are constantly reminded of it because their identity is "continually being flagged". In order to keep reminding of one's identity non-stop, banal nationalism uses casual small words and memorable phrases jingling in ears the of state's

citizens, which simultaneously ensure that under no circumstances national identity, would be forgotten.

It was Billig's theory on "banal nationalism" that helped to explain demonstration and penetration of nationhood into everyday life of each state. Billig was convinced that established nations, or the nations which are confident of their continuity, constantly keep reminding them of their nationhood. People of each nation every day are reminded of their place among other nations. But such reminders are so common and familiar to people that they often overlook and fail to notice them. The concept of banal nationalism covers "the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced" (Billig, 1995, p. 6). The signs of banal nationalism are to be found in every "flag hanging unnoticed on the public building" (Ibid). In this case banal refers to everyday nationalism.

In search for other forms of banal habitual nationalism, I came across celebration of national holidays, which becomes one of the tools capable to reinforce national identity among state's citizens. However, because national holidays have only occasional character, they are not able to guarantee continuity and sustainability of national identity's distribution. Simultaneously such symbols of nationhood as flags, coins, and bank notes are an essential part of each state's everyday life and constant reminder of one's membership in a specific nation. Banal nationalism also is powered by routine small words which provide constant, however not conscious, reminders of belonging to a specific homeland. These routine words make sure that national identity of a specific state stays unforgettable and continues its existence. The banal nationalism is also reproduced every day via discourses of politicians representing the state and its people. Political leaders often use such words as "we", "our", "us" meaning that a nation is a single holistic unit. In such a manner, they also as if inadvertently underline a common homeland for all citizens living in a specific state.

Politics and sports are quite often mixed together, which makes sport also an influential token in the process of national reproduction. Quite interestingly, we can witness when someone's personal achievements are transformed into national events celebrated by all members of a nation. Specific sportsmen with specific names win Olympic golden medals as well as medals in other competitions, nevertheless, their successes are celebrated as national victories (Malešević, 2013). Sport and politics definitely are closely connected as sportsmen use national emblems and colors on their outfits when representing a country in any competition, the national anthem of football teams can be heard prior to the match, the national flags are raised in honor of the winner at Olympic Games, etc.

We recall that once some heroic, joyful or dramatic events in a specific state or with its citizens take place they immediately are generalized as national achievement or loss. In case of a natural disaster, plane crash, or any other accident people are holding their breath anxiously waiting to get any news about losses among “us”. Besides that, mass media also contributes to dissemination of banal nationalism. Media uses words such as “nation”, and as mentioned earlier words like “our”, “us”, “we”. Reporting news from other countries they state: “France declared”, “the USA confirmed”, “Russia insisted”, etc. In such a way, states are depicted as living elements and their ability to act independently on the international arena is emphasized. “Our” nation has to be imagined as a nation among other nations. Sometimes nationalism penetrates not only into state institutions, be it educational establishments, media, military services, city councils, courts, etc., but into the domain of civil society as family, neighborhood or even children’s playground (Malešević, 2013).

People identify themselves with different states and moreover they take pride in different things connected with their nation-state. National pride and nationalism are not the same concepts. National pride contains personal sentiments of each individual towards his/her nation-state, while nationalism involves both individual sentiments as well as an ideology of unity among society’s members (Hjerm, 1998). For some (Smith and Kim, 2006, p.127) national pride is “the positive affect that public feels towards their country, resulting from their national identity”. There are probably as many ways to be proud of a country as there are citizens of it. People are so different which is why some of us are proud of our history, economy, agriculture, science, art, technologies, industry, quality of roads, while the others prefer nature, language, national symbols, national sport teams, etc. Based on this, national pride can be argued to be a multi-dimensional notion which can be generalized into cultural-historical and economic-political pride.

According to Siniša Malešević (2013), there is a difference between “hot” and “banal” nationalisms. The former is argued to describe acts of people willing to build their own state. The latter refers to so called already “established nations” which “have confidence in their own continuity, and that, particularly, are part of what is conventionally described as the West”(Billig, 1995, p.8). Hot nationalism is known as violent nationalism which is accompanied by revolutions, movements for independence, rebellion, etc. when banal nationalism is committed to provide daily reminders of nationhood to its citizens and spread it out to the rest of the world. State formation is a long lasting process which is described not only by violence. There is a direct link between violence and nationalism. Most of the time

when nationalism gets into violent forms it happens very suddenly. Afterwards nationalism acquires more peaceful shape and gradually it mingles with mild forms of nationalism. It transforms into a daily routine or everyday habit of nationalism expression with no hint of violence.

It is crucial to underline that a nation and as well as feeling of national identity are not created once and forever. Establishment of national identity is a long-term continuous process of first construction and then its maintenance. After its successful establishment banal nationalism needs to be constantly reproduced, whereas people, burdened with their routine problems, overlook or simply fail to notice it.

In the following sections, I will investigate how notions such as nation, nationalism, national identity are manifested in the process of state formation in PMR. Looking at experience of the nations that have been established long time ago, I will compare it with processes that occurred and policies implemented in Transnistria during the last 20 years. This will be aimed find out whether and in what forms processes of nation- building take place in Transnistria.

4 Methodology

4.1 Mixed methods and triangulation

At an early stage of project planning, it was decided that combining quantitative research methods with qualitative ones would be quite beneficial for my study. Mixed methods research or the third research community became an alternative to the disagreement between qualitative and quantitative research approaches. It focuses on narrative and numerical data and their analyses. Besides, it supports the use of any suitable methodological tools to answer the research question under investigation (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). Studying a case using different methods or a combination of: qualitative, quantitative, observation, group discussions, a set of direct and indirect questions is traditionally referred to as multiple operationalism, which in more recent time became known as triangulation (Kleven et al., 2011). Using mixed methods is also practical because a researcher responds to questions “using both numbers and words, combining inductive and deductive thinking, employing skills in observing people as well as recording behavior”(Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 13).

The mixed methods approach enables us to triangulate the data collected, since through “combining several lines of sight, researchers obtain a better, more substantive picture of reality” (Berg and Lune, 2012, p.6). In such a way collected information would be analyzed by means of different techniques and approaches. However, a research based on mixed methods approach has its limitations as well. First of all, applying mixed methods should be relevant to the issue being studied. It could be challenging to study the same topic resorting to mixed methods approach and find a way to combine theoretical expectations, analysis, and findings based on differences of inductive and deductive reasoning. Moreover, using mixed methods requires certain skills, time and resources for data collection and analysis (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Of course, mastering qualitative and quantitative methods separately is inevitable prior to applying mixed methods for any study.

4.1.1 Theoretical expectations. Hypotheses

Taking into the consideration PMR’s achievements in establishing all important institutions required for every viable state, it could be expected that living within the de-facto state borders with all elements of statehood, its citizens would be able to develop strong patriotic ties towards their home country, Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic. Political elites in

Transnistria ensured the election of their own president, parliament, defined its borders, established their own currency, national bank, national flag, anthem, army, police, ect. Due to the separatist sentiments in the region since 1990's, and bearing in mind achievements in PMR's state-building, it is expected that people in Transnistria would willingly identify themselves with this breakaway state and claim PMR to be their main identity, rather than affiliate with their ethnic identities instead.

The quantitative part of the research project was to be held in one of educational institutions of the de-facto state, so it was assumed that most of current students in Tiraspol have been born in PMR or that they have spent most of their lives in Transnistria. Being mindful of this, I was convinced that the majority of Transnistrian youth have been constantly reminded of their affiliation to Transnistrian nation and that they have been certainly raised up with a sense of love, devotion, respect and pride for their nation and homeland. Being challenged by the question how to measure national identity, I selected national pride as an indicator of attachment to a Transnistrian as one's main identity.

Accordingly, predictions from my theories, hypotheses were developed: First, most of the respondents would affiliate themselves with PMR, and choose Transnistrian as their main identity (hypothesis 1). And second, those who would choose Transnistrian as their main identity would be more proud of being citizens of PMR than other citizens of the secessionist territory (hypothesis 2). Referring to the classic nation-building theories, I have analyzed the experience of 'old' established nations and compared it to the outcomes in Transnistria. Doing so, I intended to find an answer to my research question whether the project of nation-building in Transnistria was successful.

In case the fidelity of these hypotheses would be confirmed, it would indicate that the project of nation-building in PMR was successful. Accordingly, we would be able to claim that the world has witnessed the birth of a new nation, Transnistrian nation.

4.2 Quantitative research method

In order to study national identity preferences of Transnistrian youth, the focus of this research was to use quantitative research methods. Applying these methods, all data collected during the project had to be transformed into numbers as quantitative research is based on numerical analysis. Quantitative methods allow us to test the hypotheses, since they provide us with reliable and quantifiable information that can be generalized to the larger population.

Despite such advantages, quantitative methods have some weaknesses too. In particular, by doing quantitative research we tend to study specific cases of people's behavior omitting the influence of the variables not included in the research design. That is why sometimes specific human's behavior and habits are taken out from the broader context. Survey is known as a main element of quantitative research. Conducting a survey was decided to be a good tool to provide inputs and respond the question posed by this research project. This sort of study required involvement of a large number of respondents, which is possible with conducting a survey.

4.2.1 Data collection

Details of the data collection processes were to be discussed and approved prior to going to the field trip to Moldova. Before resorting to survey distribution among respondents, a particular setting had to be chosen as a site for the data collection (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). The research aimed at finding whether young Transnistrians willingly affiliate with PMR. Due to the fact that Tiraspol is a capital of a self-proclaimed republic and its biggest city inhabited by a mixture of various ethnic groups, it was chosen as the most suitable location for the project. In order to narrow down the setting even more it was decided to select one of the educational institutions of higher education in Tiraspol which quite naturally is a place that brings together a considerable number of Transnistrian youth.

Due to the unrecognized status of the republic, doing a research by the outsider turned out to be a challenging task. When a foreigner arrives in order to study something in a place like Transnistria, it simultaneously draws a lot of unwanted attention and negative attitude from respondents, ordinary people, and also raises suspicion of the intelligence agencies of the unrecognized republic. After having visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and being questioned by Committee of State Security of PMR I finally received an approval for my project. At first, Taras Shevchenko Transnistrian State University was considered to be an appropriate place to conduct a survey among the students as it is a largest educational institution in PMR. However, due to the some unexpected difficulties and long consideration of the application for the research by the university administration, it was decided to switch the educational establishment while being at the field.

Finally, College of Business and Service in Tiraspol was selected as a site suitable to perform a study in instead. This college educates and trains students for such specialties: modeling and design of garments (custom tailoring), management in service, marketing in

service, economics and accounting in service, hotel management, and such professions as hairdresser and tailor (custom tailoring). College's staff endorsed the idea of having a survey conducted by a foreign researcher among their students. The administration of the college agreed to provide all necessary support and assistance for the study.

4.2.2 Sampling approach

Before going to the field, it was planned that the size of the sample would be about 200 people. But due to the lack of time, some incomplete answers and other limitations the final sample size of the study consisted of 190 students. All data were collected during the field trip to Tiraspol, which took place from 26th of November until 16th of December 2013.

By choosing a certain number of individuals as a sample for the study we provide ourselves with an opportunity to draw some conclusions. This gives us a chance to generalize our findings to the larger population (Berg and Lune, 2012 p.50). It is advised to resort to probability sampling when a quantitative research is conducted. Applying a simple random or systematic random sampling would provide respondents with the same chance of being included in the sample. However, resorting to such sampling approach would require more time to conduct the study. By getting access to the lists of all students enrolled in the college, I would be able to apply probability sampling. Yet, in my case, this was not possible as establishing close and robust relationship with college's administration was limited due to time constraints. Due to the limitations that have been already mentioned, it was possible to apply the convenience sampling only. Convenience sampling is based on availability and ease of access of respondents (Ibid).

The convenience sample for this particular research consisted of students of College of Business and Service in Tiraspol. College's administration suggested some particular classes that should be included in the study (according to the deputy director of educational work of the college, students there were more mature and would be eager to participate in the research project) and I had no choice but to accept this offer. There were no specific expectations from the respondents (age, sex, nationality, study program, etc.). Therefore, survey participants were chosen by the administration and students who showed up for the lecture on the day of data collection were asked to complete the questionnaire. If one is to generalize the findings to the larger population, the randomness of the sampling should be guaranteed (Fowler, 2009). Unfortunately, it was not going to be the case in my project. The

results of this research are only valid for this specific sample and can not be generalized to larger population.

All data needed for analysis were collected through the survey prepared beforehand. The rules of informed consent in the course of the research were strictly followed. The respondents were informed of the purpose of the research conducted before the survey sheets were distributed. They were instructed about the main ideas of the project. Simultaneously, respondents were assured of anonymity in terms of their identity, and they were informed about voluntary participation in the survey. At first, a survey consisted of 22 questions aimed to reveal the young Transnistrians' preferences of identity. Subsequently, after performing a pilot survey with few respondents, two questions were rejected as they were considered as sensitive, or drawing too much attention and causing a wrong impression of the respondents. These questions dealt with historical dates and the fate of the Russian army in PMR. These questions could be interpreted as interference in the internal affairs of PMR. Moreover, these points were more of the researcher's personal interest and they did not add any vital information to the study. It was decided not to incite controversies and to focus on the purpose of the study instead.

As a result, my survey was reduced to 20 questions (see Appendix 2). The first part of the survey was aimed at getting general information about respondents, namely their age, sex, department and year of studying. It also involved question about religious views to verify predominance of religious beliefs. Next, students were asked to note their birthplace (within or outside PMR). To identify interviewees' position on the socio-economic ladder, the issue of their parents' employment was raised. In the following part, native languages, as well as other language proficiency of the respondents, were to be included in the survey. With a help of the next variable I wanted to learn of young Transnistrians' main identity. This question happened to be my dependent variable at the same time, and it was quite crucial for the study. The following question revealed students' citizenship, taking into the consideration that in PMR quite often answers about native language, identity and citizenship do not match (Stepanov, 2010). I asked whether the students have ever been abroad which enabled me to debate of how it could affect their views and perceptions. In case of a positive answer they were asked to identify the countries they have been to. It was important to get to know about for how many years students have been living in PMR, as it was anticipated that most of currently enrolled students in Tiraspol were born in PMR (see Appendix 2.1 or 2.2 for details). Anyhow, this was expected to have an impact on identity preferences. The respondents' future plans for work and residence were addressed in the subsequent survey

questions. Furthermore, students were asked to name the future they desire for their republic, namely gaining independence, being a part of other country be it Moldova, Russia or Ukraine or a part of European Union. Respondents were supposed to answer whether they were proud of being citizen of PMR, if PMR should have more or less economic and political relations with some particular state, or how they viewed the interethnic relations in PMR. In the final block of the survey students were asked to name the most important holiday celebrated in PMR as well as to disclose where most of their close relatives lived.

4.2.3 Linear regression

Method of least squares (ols) was chosen as my statistical tool out of several other methods. This choice can be justified by the fact that my dependent variable (proud of being a citizen of PMR) was an ordinal variable. In case my dependent variable was a dichotomous (dummy) variable it would be better to use logistic regression instead, since it is known as a good tool for analysis in such instances. Method of least squares helps to find a line that fits the data in the best way. This line attempts to go as close as possible to all data points. It gets least amount of differences in the data points observed and the line itself. Therefore, it is called a 'line of best fit' (Field et al., 2012).

OLS is used to check whether there is a correlation between the dependent and explanatory or independent variable. The coefficient here indicates to what extent changes in the explanatory variable affect the dependent variable. It displays the strength and direction of relationship (negative or positive) between two variables (Bryman, 2008). If there would be a positive relationship, the increase in one variable would induce other variable to increase simultaneously. On the other hand, in case of a negative relationship, one variable increases as the other decreases (Ibid). The standard error demonstrates how credible this effect is (uncertainty of the correlation) and how much its distribution differs from the mean. The level of significance is measured with a help of correlation coefficient and the standard error. The p-value calculations demonstrate whether the findings are statistically significant.

4.2.4 R program

R is a free of charge, open source program which allows you to do data analysis and make graphs once you have downloaded it to your computer. I have used it earlier for a research method's class during a qualitative semester. Taking into account that I have not taken any classes on statistics before, using the same statistical program for my master thesis was

considered a good idea. I have learnt basics in R language and rules of running the needed commands in R during the research methods class, however now I had to master my skills in using this program and to improve my knowledge and abilities. That is why I have discovered a possibility to apply some extra tools by expanding R and downloading its packages. The latter are stored in a central location which is known as CRAN (Comprehensive RArchive Network) and they can also be downloaded and used by anybody. R packages make it easier to work with this program as well as they add specific functionality to it. Using a package of R Commander (Rcmdr) made it even easier to run commands for a beginner in statistics like me. R Commander turned out to be especially helpful in making graphs.

4.3 Quantitative methodological challenges

4.3.1 Multicollinearity

What can cause problems in statistics is multicollinearity. It usually takes place in case of strong correlation between two or more variables included in a multiple regression model (Field, 2009). This can lead to negative consequences for the estimated coefficients and their standard errors and have a negative effect on the regression itself as well as on the accuracy of the prediction.

There are few ways to identify multicollinearity in a regression model. In this thesis, pairwise correlation of variables was applied which is a way of discovering multicollinearity by running a correlation matrix of all dependent, independent and control variables included in a regression model to check if any of them correlate too high with each other. Usually two variables should not get a correlation exceeding 0.7 or - 0.7. Besides that, I also conducted a variance inflation factor (VIF) test in R program as a second way of identifying multicolleniariry in my regression model.

4.3.2 Bias of omitted variable

It might be possible that correlation between dependent and independent variable is explained by the third variable affecting both of them. In case if the third variable is not included in the model, it can cause a spurious relationship between dependent and independent variables. That is why it is crucial to include several variables, usually known as control variables, in the model and test whether they influence the independent and dependent variables. However, there is always a chance that a relevant control variable was not included in a model. In such instances model's analysis would be subjected to omitted variable bias. To avoid this problem my control variables were chosen very carefully with extra literature review and taking into account the feedback from the respondents.

4.3.3 Outliers

Values that are very different or standing out from other average values are known as outliers. Such observations can bias the mean and inflate the standard deviation and, not least, they can influence results of the whole regression. It is crucial to detect outliers and check if they bias a model in any way. If the outlier is included in a model it can have a dramatic effect on the regression model by increasing or decreasing its gradient as well as have

affecting the intercept. Residuals can be described as differences in values of the outcome which was predicted by the model and the outcome's values observed in a sample (Field et al., 2012). In case a model fits the sample data well, then all residuals will be small numbers (numbers will be zero or close to zero). If a model does not fit the sample data, residuals will be large. Besides, if there is a case that has really large residual, it most likely is an outlier.

4.3.4 Influential cases

Sometimes it is useful to delete a certain case to see whether it would result in different regression coefficients. Thus, the cases of outliers in the model can be revealed. Doing so also helps to check if the model is stable through the whole sample or if it could be biased by one or few influential cases. Assessment of a specific case on a model can be performed by several residual statistics tools. In my research project, hat values (also known as leverage values) were used to measure the effect of the obtained value of the outcome variable in comparison to the values that were predicted. Technically the average leverage value is calculated by $(k+1)/n$, where k is the number of predictors included in the model and n is the number of participants. If a case was not influential, then leverage values should result between 0 and 1 (meaning that the case has full control and influences prediction quite well).

In this thesis I also resorted to DFBeta test to identify influential cases. DFBeta test in R measures differences in the parameters of the regression model when all cases are included and when one (apparently influential) case is excluded. Usually DFBeta is calculated based on each case and for all the parameters included in the model.

4.3.5 Independent errors

For any two observations from the model the residuals should be uncorrelated. By running the Durbin Watson Test I tested the assumption of independent errors. It checks serial correlation between errors in regression model. Getting more in details, Durbin –Watson test checks if neighboring residuals are correlated which helps to assess the assumption of independent errors.

The size of statistics obtained is dependent on quantity of predictors and observations included. Tests' statistics vary between 0 and 4. In case the value obtained was 2, it means that the residuals are independent or uncorrelated. A negative correlation between residuals is indicated by a value greater than 2, when a value below 2 confirms a positive correlation.

According to a conservative rule suggested by Andy Field (2012), values below 1 or above 3 should be of researcher's concern.

4.4 Qualitative part

Applying qualitative methods would provide me with a different perspective on incentives for Transnistrian identity, given that the respondents would share their own views on the topic. In such a manner I would find out more ideas and reasons for admitting Transnistrian to be the main identity of people in PMR or against it. At the same time, I need to underline that a focus of the study was made to apply a quantitative method through conducting a survey as it was mentioned before. Qualitative part of the research was only to be an additional tool for data collection and analysis which gives a different perspective on the problem, a perspective from inside. After all, findings from the qualitative part played more important role than it was expected. Yet, in the end a combination of two research methods was the best option as triangulation enabled looking at the problem under study from different angles.

4.4.1 Sampling approach

Proceeding to a qualitative part of data collection for this project, the plan was to conduct semi-structured interviews with people belonging to different age groups. I aimed at having rather informal, vivid conversations with the respondents. It was decided to conduct about 10 interviews for this study. It was planned to approach people of various ages, namely young – under 30 years old (representatives were to be chosen among students), people of working age (coded as adult or over 30), and people over 50 years old. Doing so would enable me to find some patterns and reveal differences in the responses from different age groups. In the thesis I also refer to them as first, second (middle aged) or third age groups.

My sample consisted of representatives of both males and females, which also allowed me to access different points of view with regard to gender. In addition, given the fact that I was not satisfied with the amount of data collected while I was in the field, I have managed to get in contact with people who were born in PMR or who previously resided there. In such a way I could compare the answers with those who live in the secessionist region all the time with those who now live abroad and therefore could have a different perspective on the issues ongoing in Transnistria.

It is worth mentioning that in the survey sheet distributed among the students for the quantitative part, the information about informed consent was followed by a request to put

down telephone number or e-mail address if some students would like to participate further in the study, which in this case was taking part in the interview. This generated in a fair number of volunteers and students who consented to be interviewed by providing me with their contact information. Besides that, they were opened for the dialogues and discussions. Such enthusiasm among the students might be explained by their pure interest, as due to unrecognized status of this republic and the regime's insular nature (Protsyk, 2008), it is doubtful that they had participated any similar projects earlier. So, it was not difficult to find participants for the interview among students as 35 out of 190 respondents to the survey chose to share their contacts showing their interest to continue participation in the project. Then two of them were selected from the whole pile. Shortly after being contacted, they agreed for a meeting during which the semi-structured interview was conducted.

As for establishing contact with other age groups, I had to rely on my organizing and persuasive skills and recruit respondents from my own acquaintances⁵ and contacts interested in being part of my research project. Applying a convenient sampling technique "relying on available subjects – those who are close at hand or easily accessible" (Berg and Lune, 2012, p.51) the first respondents agreed to be interviewed. Then, applying snowball method, more interviewees of the respective age groups were contacted and interviewed. Regarding the final size of the sample, I managed to conduct 8 interviews. Three of them were interviews with students (including one student living abroad and two from Tiraspol), three with people of working age (one of them was approached in PMR and two more outside), and two more with retired people (both currently residing in the PMR). Speaking of the site of the interviews, five of them were conducted in PMR, two interviews with former citizens of Rybnitsa and Tiraspol were conducted in Norway, and the last respondent, originating from Bendery, was approached in Ukraine.

In some ways my sample can claim to be a purposive as respondents had to fit certain criteria with regard to age and they were selected "to ensure that certain types of individuals or persons displaying certain attributes are included in the study" (Berg and Lune, 2012, p.52). At the same time it was quite crucial for the sample to include people belonging to different ethnic groups (Ukrainians, Russians, and Moldovans) which should be one of the conditions for different perspectives among respondents. Following this method, I have learnt

⁵ I happened to have acquaintances in Transnistria because my fiancé went to school and lived there for 14 years. In total, I have been there four times. My first trip to PMR took place in 2008.

of differences how do people of various ethnicities residing in PMR perceive themselves and how they accept others.

4.4.2 Data collection

I have made a list of issues that had to be covered through the interviewees, before the process of data collection. The interviews were aimed at getting an idea on how people react to top-down policies related to nation-building and national identity provided by the Transnistrian de facto state. Bearing in mind that a nation is not only created by the authorities but also depends on how the masses feel, how they respond to the policies and rules provided from above, I have decided to see if it finds support at the bottom (applying the bottom-up approach).

Quite obviously, the interview guide started with the cover information of respondents – age, religion, marital status, occupation. Afterwards I proceeded to ask about the respondent's background (including birth place, place of residence, occupation). During the interviews I have asked questions about respondents' identity, their perspectives on Transnistrian nation, the language used by them mostly as well as proficiency in other state and foreign languages. Finding out the respondent's citizenship provided also a useful insight. When relevant, people were asked of their marital status followed by question of ethnic affiliation of their spouses. This was done to understand if people of different ethnic affiliation (e.g. Moldovans, Ukrainians, and Russians) have any inhibitions regarding intermarriages, since the armed conflict in 1990's. A social interaction was one of the pivotal topics in my guide. During the conversation I tried to uncover what kind of social relations individuals belonging to various ethnic groups had. Then, asking for person's aspirations for the PMR's future, I hoped to access personal views with regard to the intricate status of the PMR. It was important for me to understand what Transnistria meant for my respondents, if it was important or not, if they felt proud of it in any possible way. In search for tokens of banal nationalism which are quite useful tools in nation-building, I asked about people's relationship to the flag, anthem, de facto state's authorities, role of education, language, media, etc. Asking about traditions I wanted to identify peculiarities or differences in celebration among various ethnic groups as well as to learn of whether any special Transnistrian traditions have been established. Questions about school, army, coworkers, etc. were aimed at studying the environment where national idea is spread, maintained and socialized via people to the rest of society.

As I conducted semi-structured interviews, the questions were posed in a flexible, not fixed order. Prior to the data collection process, I have managed to conduct a pilot interview that helped me to get a better understanding of the issue and test the adequacy and clarity of the questions. Ultimately, it is important to note that every interview lasted about 40 minutes. During each conversation both audio recordings and written notes were taken. At the stage of data analysis both of them were transcribed into text documents. However, the transcription of audio recordings was made only partly as it was supposed to contain only the most interesting and relevant parts of the conversations, omitting unnecessary elements.

Some of my respondents were re-approached by me after the actual interview took place and skype turned out to be a very handy and helpful tool in case the researcher and respondent do not reside in the same place. Group discussion happened to be a very interesting tool resorted to during the research as well. In my case, it was not planned but took place quite natural during the conversation with several students prior and after one of the classes.

4.4.3 Ethical issues and limitations

Speaking of ethical issues, oral informed consent was taken before every interview; all the respondents were informed that under no circumstances their identity would be disclosed. Even though I, as a researcher, knew names of the respondents participating in the study, in my notes they were labeled with a special ID number instead of their names. Afterwards, a special colored coding frame that contained answers that were obtained from the interviewees was made. All data collected was organized in accordance to specific categories and issues, in this way the process of identifying the main patterns in the data collected was simplified due to using the coding frame.

As for communication with respondents, there were no significant problems that could have affected the research process. The researcher is proficient in Russian, which is used by a majority of the inhabitants in PMR on a daily basis. For this reason, I may claim that my communication with the respondents did not require any additional help or interpreter, which quite often may cause informational bias. Despite these advantages, my research project also had some limitations. There were few things that could have influenced the trustworthiness and quality of data collected. First of all, discussing interethnic relations in PMR happened to be a quite sensitive topic to be discussed with a stranger. A lot of people, when asked directly, usually claim that everything is normal and fair in matters

concerning inter-ethnic affairs. However, then during the flow of the conversation they open up and tell more stories with some details of their inter-ethnic coexistence. Most likely, the real discussions about inter-ethnic misunderstandings in the PMR take place in the family circle behind closed doors. Secondly, one of the interviews was conducted in the public place during rush hour. During the conversation there was a lot of noise and many curious people around. This was making interviewer and interviewee uncomfortable, at the same time it affected the contents and efficiency of the conversation. Using technical equipment as an additional instrument during the interview can be both helpful as you can focus more on the conversation with the interviewee and useless at times when the battery runs out or the place is too noisy.

5 Analysis and discussion of findings

5.1 Findings and critical observations based on qualitative research approach.

Making a nation - case of Transnistria

It is quite hard to disagree, that attempting to gain psychological security and emotional well-being people are willing to affiliate themselves to those who are similar to them. By opposing 'our' group to the 'other' we distinguish ourselves or realize what are our similarities and differences. This also helps to understand who we are, stimulates us to learn more about history of our community, to exalt our heroes and guard against the foes. Each one of us consists of several 'selves' or as Walt Whitman (1855) in his poem "*Song of Myself*" puts it: "we contain multitudes", while our dominant identity depends on circumstances. The latter also foresees one's behavior accordingly to one's role. Rather significant role is devoted to one's national identity. Referring to the works of theoreticians (Smith, 1991, Anderson, 1983, Hobsbawm, 1990), I have analyzed what it takes to create a nation, and compare it to what has been done already Transnistria. Hence, we can check if people who reside in one area (PMR) for more than 20 years have managed to develop and socialize the same identity.

While I share Gellner's (1983) view that unifying ideology known as nationalism gave a rise to a birth of nation, I argue that nationalism is, indeed, an engine unifying people in a social organization called a nation. Concurring with Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1990), I need to underline that it was nationalism that gave a rise to a state and a nation. The ideology of nationalism is applied to overcome political differences and cultural diversity among cluster of people and their communities. According to Geller (1983, p.43), nationalism is "the striving to make culture and polity congruent, to endow a culture with its own political roof". Then it was due to the development of literacy and centralized mass education system, people learned of their affiliation to a specific community as well as they were taught to respect and submit to laws provided by their state, which was obliged to protect them in return.

I do not consider a nation as something natural or God-given as I believe that it was imagined and created in the past and socialized to the masses as an inevitable part of their lives. Nation is a constructed social establishment or as Ernest Renan (1882), argues: "Nation is a historical result", which was created after a modern territorial state came into being (Hobsbawm, 1990). Today people do not imagine living outside of the state system as our whole world is constructed in such a way. All nations were constructed with a help of media and standardized education system controlled by the state. These two elements help country's

authorities to spread and maintain national attachment and national identity to all citizens. Consequently, I agree that all talks about nation as something natural and God-given are nothing more than myths (Gellner, 1983).

Some scholars, including Smith (1991), consider nationalism as a universal phenomenon as it was based on ethnic identity and existed long before French Revolution, characterized by the fall of monarchies and declined power of church and a rise of democracy and nationalism. Accordingly, population sharing historic territory, myths, memories and culture with the same legal rights and duties for all its members constitutes a nation. Proceeding from this, it could be argued that being legal successor of the abolished MSSR, Transnistria's peoplehood is based on its historic territory and cultivates myths and memories of that time. At the same time, Smith (1991), insisted on existence of primordial ethnic community, or *ethnie*, which was described similarly to nation. For *ethnie* its historic territory was rather symbolic as it was focusing more on its cultural elements, while it was the pivotal element for the nation, as the latter exists just because it possesses a piece of land.

By the establishment of MSSR in 1945 its population was brought together with no regard to their ethnic background. Moreover, people of the MSSR were imposed with another common identity they had to embrace – Soviet identity. Based on this, group of people residing on the left bank of the Dniester River does not constitute an example of some primordial community similar to *ethnie*, as it does not focus on its cultural elements and because it consists of several ethnic groups residing in one territory. In this case their territory has a pivotal role for them, just like for every modern nation. Therefore, I may claim that Transnistrian people today demonstrate close ties, attachment, and devotion to their land and it constitutes a classic example of civic nation as it consists of people with various different ethnic backgrounds, causing no problems for the majority of them. The leadership of the de facto state chose a “nonnationalistic or even antinationalistic concept of the nation” (Kolstø, 2000, p.143). Bearing in mind all the details of how this entity emerged, it makes sense to claim that Transnistrian is rather a regional identity, with its specific psychological climate and tendency to copy life style and culture from the Russian Federation.

5.1.1 Grasping a nation using bottom-up and top-down approach

Nations are “dual phenomena” created from above, be it an influential political ruler or powerful elite which is followed by the masses (Hobsbawm, 1990). Therefore, Gellner (1983) insisted that they should be studied from above. Disagreeing with this opinion, Hobsbawm

(1990) stressed that nations can be fully grasped only in case if they are studied from the bottom at the same time. There is a need to study the steps that have been done by the national leaders in other countries in order to unite the people and construct the nation as well as to consult with practices of other communities. However, it is the nexus between both, top-down coordination of political action and a reaction from the people (bottom-up) which, if applied successfully, results in the birth of a nation. It is important to remember that the national identification is possible only if it is desired by the state's citizens. A case when citizens eagerly affiliate themselves with their national identity and a state provides security and well-being for its inhabitants is a win-win situation for both parties.

The history of PMR shows what leaders of this quasi state have strived to do in 23 years of non-stop struggle for recognition, nation establishment, and eradication of its label as a de facto state (top-down approach). Then, applying the qualitative method of studying this problem and conducting interviews with current citizens of PMR and some prior citizens of the secessionist republic gave me a chance to study this community residing on the left bank of the Dniester River from the bottom, as it was suggested by Eric Hobsbawm (1990) in his *"Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality"*. Doing so, in my master thesis I have learned from the works of theoreticians about the path that usually each nation had to undergo in order to be called one, then addressing to the literature on Transnistrian state building I have found out what has been done by the political elite in PMR. By conducting a survey among the Transnistrian students, I was able to get an overview of the preferences of identity amongst certain Transnistrian youth. It was the combination of results from the statistical tools and then talking to ordinary people that made me able to assess how successful the project of nation-building in Transnistria has been.

5.2 Role of banal nationalism. Attitude to authorities, national symbols and other factors influencing identification with PMR

Nowadays it is impossible to meet someone who does not possess a certain national identity. It is so common to ask for someone's ethnicity just like we ask for someone's name, last name, telephone number, e-mail, etc.; exclusively because we are so used to use these things that help us label and differentiate each other. A common national identification of a specific group implies that members of this community agree to identify with the same national symbols. Under these conditions, in case of an external threat a mass of people act as

one psychological group. Then they use every possible occasion to praise symbols of their national identity (Bloom, 1990).

We live in the world consisting of national states, so all world's inhabitants have to belong to one of them. Every single day, we are constantly reminded of our place among other nations. Nevertheless, it does not draw our attention as we overlook and fail to notice such reminders of our national identification. National identity is something that can never be forgotten by anyone as our national identity is continuously being ticked off or denoted to us by the state we belong to (Billig, 1995). Nationalism in itself is an ideology of unity among the members of a society that is also supplemented by the sentiments and individual feelings towards its nation (Hjerm, 1998). Practices of using specific words, signs, melodies etc., which induce that national identity will never be vanished, result in a creation of banal nationalism among people.

Some (Malešević, 2013) distinguish "banal" nationalism from a "hot" one. The "hot" nationalism should actually take place in places like Transnistria as it depicts deeds of people "aspiring to create a nation-state of their own" (Ibid, p.123). Manifestation of "hot" nationalism is observed during wars, armed clashes, revolutions, insurgencies or other dramatic changes in political life or some amendments in the political map of the world. Naturally, a lot more attention is given to these events than to everyday demonstration of nationalism. On the other hand, manifestations of nationalism that are expressed through sport events, parades, national cuisine, music festivals and variety of contest are most of the times taken for granted and some people fail to recognize them as a manifestation of their national affiliation. The power of such banal manifestations of nationalism is underestimated because it does make an impact as well as it is capable to cause changes. Today, a new way of expressing national attachment replaced aggressive military actions, hostilities, and military mobilization. Now nationalism acquired a milder form and is expressed rather through sport competitions, national cuisine, international beauty contests, song contests, cinematography, popular tourist destinations, etc., rather than by force and violence.

5.2.1 Flag

A de facto state of PMR managed to establish all attributes of a sovereign state: Constitution, legislative system (legislature –The Supreme Council, executive branch-President and Government, and the judicial system), it adopted its own national symbols (flag, coat of arms and anthem), as well as it introduced its own currency (Stepanov, 2010). Some

nations enjoy living in strong states being a strong civil society. People are usually proud of living in such a country and they are willing to celebrate their national achievements. Every day citizens of such states treat their national symbols with love and pride⁶. National symbols (coat of arms, flag and anthem) are used to foster civil feelings and patriotic attachment to one's nation (Stepanov, 2010).

Starting from the first days since people of PMR proclaimed their independence they acted as a legal successor of the abolished Soviet Moldova (Beril, 2010). Authorities in Tiraspol adopted its flag (a red rectangle with a green strip in the middle was approved as a flag of PMR). They refused to give up familiar form of coat of arms used by MSSR that remained almost unchanged (a star, sickle and hammer, rising sun, spikelets of wheat intertwined with grapes and corn (Stepanov, 2010)). Today, the republic's coat of arms is placed in the upper left corner of the flag (Council, 2013). As most of my respondents agreed, usually a flag of de-facto state of PMR can be seen: on state institutions, on the border, on some patriotic bill boards. Some of my interlocutors assumed that some people might have a flag at home but as they noted: "In PMR it is not usual to have a state flag at home".

Putting a flag on each building serves as banal marking of territory that belongs to a specific state⁷. Focusing on what takes place in Transnistria, I must say that people do not have that close relationship to such national symbol like flag. Based on this, I can argue that PMR's political leaders succeeded in adopting a national flag which is an important symbol of every nation and banal manifestation of national affiliation to each citizen. But they did not borrow practices from other countries, which are aimed at making people embrace their national flag into their every day's life. Having close relations to national symbols encourages people to be more proud of their state and its national symbols.

⁶ Based on my own experience I may claim that people in Scandinavia have a closer relationship with their national flag than people in other states do. For example, in Denmark there is a popular tradition of decorating private homes, cakes on different occasions as birthdays and weddings with national flags, while in Norway people decorate their street blocks and maintain a tradition of putting out a flag whenever a member of their family has a birthday. This would be totally unacceptable and alien in many countries, including Transnistria, where such deed would be regarded as an abuse of national symbol.

⁷ Having visited another secessionist territory, the Basque Autonomous Community in Spain, which is quite similar to Transnistria (for a long time they had a strong nationalist movement based on Basque own linguistic and cultural identity and they also struggle for creation of their independent state), I can draw some parallels between the two entities. In order to underline their differences from the patron state people in the Basque country, unlike people in Transnistria, are keen on using and cultivating their culture, language and their identity. On every building in the area of separatist movement I could see a flag of the Basque country demonstrating people's pride in their national symbols.

5.2.2 Currency

Another symbol of statehood in Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic is its own currency – Transnistrian ruble. It has been the official currency here since 1994 and still is the only mean of payment. Initially residents of the left bank of the Dniester River called money they used “suvoryky” as on each banknote of a newly introduced currency there was a portrait of Aleksander Suvorov - a national hero of Russia and Transnistria (Boev, 2013). A Generalissimo of the Russian army throughout his whole military career was never defeated by his enemies. For Transnistrians, Suvorov is not only the liberator and benefactor of Transnistrian land, but also a founder and protector of the city of Tiraspol.

A female from Tiraspol told me: “I remember the times when we had a salary of 5 USD. People barely made their ends meet”. As she proceeded, I have learned that sometimes people got their salaries in goods instead of money. Another respondent shared her views on the topic: “It is very important that we have our own currency and own bank system. It brings us closer to a position of other states”. The other Transnistrian citizen stated: “Our money can not be changed in any other state due to our unrecognized status. Besides, our salaries are too small, so in the end there is not much to be proud of...”

Nevertheless, introducing their own currency, authorities of the PMR indeed made a step forward in their state-building path. Having their own unique mean of payment also serves as a daily banal reminder to all people residing in PMR about their relationship and membership in Transnistrian nation.

5.2.3 President

The president of PMR is the head of the de facto state, which he or she represents in the international events. Banal nationalism is also shown via banal association with one’s republic when reading, or hearing statements of republic’s president who represents the whole Transnistrian nation. When asked about their opinion towards such important public figure as president, some representatives from the elder age group said: “Our previous president was a very good man, he had support from people”. Not the same impression I have got with regard to work of a new republic’s leader. People are not pleased with new government as its members are perceived as incompetent and inexperienced (Oleksy, 2013). One of my respondents told me: “Now people are not so happy. There have been dramatic changes in various institutions and many have lost their job”. To begin with, president Shevchuk lacks charisma of the previous Transnistrian leader. When a current president of PMR came to

power he was called “more Russian than Russia” itself (Kosienkowski, 2014). Then he insisted on conducting the policy of “small steps” to improve relations with Chisinau (Devyatkov, 2012a), which he defined as a “civilized divorce” (Zubov, 2013). The new regime is in favor of strong-arm governance. It struggles to avoid the creation of opposition, therefore it is “either you are with us or against us” (Oleksy, 2013).

Recalling the words of one of my respondents, I may claim that people in PMR do not like changes. Everything unknown makes them uncomfortable. They would rather suffer more from the previous regime, than now make peace with alterations taking place in their unrecognized republic. The fact that people are not happy with their new leadership decreases their level of pride and willingness to affiliate themselves with PMR.

5.2.4 Anthem

A national song of each country is a commonly known musical composition praising its history and exalting struggles of its people. Usually there is a special etiquette at what occasions and under what circumstances a national anthem is played. The anthem of Transnistria is a composition “We sing the praises of Transnistria”. It should be noted that republic’s anthem is also written in all three official languages operating in the secessionist republic. However, variants of Transnistrian national song are not the identical or literal translation of each other. The lyrics of the national anthem reflect the ideal based on which Transnistrian identity should be built – the faith in friendship between people united by hard work and their love towards Transnistrian land. When asked of awareness and usage of national anthem among Transnistrians, I have got the response: “I do not know it by heart as we never sung it at school actually”, “I studied at Ukrainian lyceum we used Ukrainian anthem more often, so I do not know Transnistrian anthem”. There happened to be those who stated: “I don’t think I remember the lyrics” or those who by mistake started singing a different song about PMR like “Tiraspol, Tiraspol, my Transnistria” instead of national anthem. One of the respondents claimed that text of national anthem in Transnistria was much politicized, “the lyrics are a propaganda itself” which was the reason why he also did not know the anthem.

Based on my sample it seemed like people in PMR were not interested in knowing their own anthem. Proceeding from this, I may assert that education institutions starting from preschool institutions until post graduate schools do not cultivate and socialize national symbols among children who are future citizens of the republic. Educational institutions of

PMR, operating under the supervision its of political leadership, failed to develop love and special bond between their citizens and national symbols as children were not encouraged to learn and use anthem on different occasions. With regard to the fact that people in Transnistria do not have their national costume (though in more than 20 years it was possible to create one) or national dish (they also could have created a special dish or tradition of making some culinary masterpiece on national holidays) etc. they at least have to use those symbols of their identity that are already established and socialized into the masses. Lack of knowledge of national anthem among republic's citizens is a disturbing sign of policies launched by authorities aimed at nation-building.

5.2.5 Role of education, history and myths

Education for every human is, first of all, a contribution or direct investment in him- or herself. Secondly, education also grants an individual with his identity and culture as both are transmitted via school. A culture of a specific community is maintained and socialized into the whole population due to state controlled centralized education system (Gellner, 1983). As Adam Smith (1991) emphasized, education is of great importance in case if a state was created through ethnic separatist movement which over time escalated to active political entity, which was exactly the case in PMR. In such cases education has a pivotal role as it is supposed to ensure the re-education of its citizens of their new national values, memories and myths (Smith, 1991). Every country spreads out and maintains national devotion and identity for all people via media and standardized educational system.

Having a monopoly on education within its borders leaders of every country decide what their citizens are going to study at school or learn during the history classes. It is hard to contradict that as people became more educated it became easier for the political elites to control and get support from the population. This is how progress of a nation is dependent on success in education (Anderson, 1983).

Taking into account Transnistria, authorities do not have a monopoly on education here, as pupils studying at different schools learn different versions of history. For example, those who go to Russian schools learn history of a Motherland which is a Russian history (history from a Russian standpoint), and the history of a Native land, that is a history of PMR. Then those studying in Ukrainian schools learn history of Ukraine as well. Finally, there are those few studying in Moldovan schools. However, there is a need to differentiate between schools subordinated to Chisinau where children write in Latin alphabet and learn history of

Romania and those which operate under Ministry of education in Tiraspol where pupils study Russian history and write in Cyrillic. According to one of my respondents, “Population in PMR is very much alike the population in the east of Ukraine – not that well educated and not very politically conscious”. The other interviewee rather agreed with him: “It is easy to get lost having so many points of views in the history, but most of our students do not really read all that as well as they do not think too much”.

In the middle of 1990’s a copy of Russian system of education was established in PMR. The educational programs, starting from preschool to post-graduate education, and all disciplines taught in PMR are identical to those in Russia. Since 1996-1997 Transnistrian National University adopted Russian state educational standards, and today it operates as any other Russian higher educational institution (Beril, 2010). Education in PMR is constantly developing and moving forward with support from Russia. According to Stepan Beril (2010, p.119) – ex-rector of Transnistrian National University: “Russia as a state with a great potential in education is a consolidating core and an educational center attracting all other states from the former Soviet Union” .

There is a tremendous need for the history books to get updated in Transnistria. Children in PMR still learn favorable to their government version of the historical events, hear about ‘chosen glories’ and ‘chosen traumas’ as well as celebrate national holidays of Soviet times which make the whole situation even more difficult and strange. There have never been any joint celebrations for the whole Moldova including Transnistria together. That is why children on both sides of the Dniester River do not even know much about each other, they grew up with a feeling of being different, or even worse being enemies to each other. The youth of PMR is not allowed to get to know about two sides of one history and are also not encouraged to develop a critical thinking towards their own society.

According to Anthony Smith (1991), myths of common ancestry are of great importance for creating a sense of identification for any identity group. These stories helped people realize who they were by explaining the past of their community. Understanding their origin gave people strength to survive over time and overcome obstacles in protecting their identity group from any external threat. Every nation’s citizen should be remind of the glorious past of their ancestors to the rest of the community, which would enable them to recreate and experience these glories (Smith, 1995). The myths of common ancestry, of glorious past, etc. are also an important elements of the history taught at schools.

As reported by Magdalena Dembinska and Julien Iglesias (2013, pp.417-418), Transnistrian nation has:

Its beginning (1792, when Southern Transnistria was ceded by the Ottomans to the Russian Empire), a memory of a state entity (1924, when the Soviet authorities created an autonomous republic within the borders of Ukraine), a myth of a Golden Age (1944-1990 Soviet Union), a myth of victimization (1941-1944 Romanian occupation and the 1990-1992 civil war with Moldova), and of national liberation (1992 paralleled with 1944).

Studying the myths of being a victim is even more dangerous than learning the myths of a heroic past. Nations, that perceive themselves as innocent victims of evil neighboring states, take advantage of these myths to justify themselves and their aggressive deeds as acts of self-defense or as ‘restoration of aboriginal rights’ (Stepanov, 2010). In Moldova children learn of Russia as their main enemy and a source of all misfortunes. On the other side of the Dniester River they teach of a small piece of land, represented by PMR, which heroically attempts to save Moldovans so that their nation would not disappear forever (Beril, 2010). In PMR children are taught to believe that Transnistria is “the sole defender of the true Moldovan identity” (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013).

After the armed conflict with Moldova “Our local Moldovans were suppressed” – as one of the respondents from the middle aged group said. At that time everything associated with Moldova was condemned and was not accepted. He proceeded: “Moldovans came into my land and killed our people. Even now I still do not trust them”. From his words I understood that he considered Moldovans as his main enemy. Then Moldovans residing in Transnistria, who also were innocent victims of the war, happened to be the object aimed with disrupted anger.

During my conversation with Transnistrians, we several times got into discussions about the events in 1992 and some of them shared their memories of war with me: “I was not taking part in military operations” - one of the elder respondents said. “I did not want to fight against my brothers, people just like me sent by their politicians. I was just observing”. A female in her early thirtieth shared:

I do not remember a lot, only moments. I went to school at that time and my mother brought me to my grandmother (in Ukraine) as she said to me because she was going through a hard time. I stayed there for about half a year.

In the spring of 1992, many students and professors, at free from lectures and exams time, took weapon to defend their republic. On bloody Saturday of 20th of June, known as the most severe confrontation day, students were not able to reach their homes in other cities of PMR as all the roads were attacked from the right bank (Beril, 2010). As I have learned from the memories of one of my interlocutors, “Many people suffered as their relatives and friends were killed including students after their graduation ball in the city of Bendery”. This tragic story underlines cruelty and injustice of the situation when children died due to political disputes. Thus, even if some people did not take part in war, they still had a connection to it through different social contacts. It encouraged them to respect the loyalty to their identity, community, state or nation as they had a common enemy - an alien culture and its ruler. It is important to note that having national memories of shared suffering sometimes unites people more than joys. “Griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort” (Renan, 1882, p.9). That is why a nation constitutes a large-scale solidarity of people united by a feeling of respect to the sacrifices that have been made in the past and those that will take place in the future.

Summing it up, national identity among the population is spread through the standardized educational system. Attempts of Transnistrian statesmen to maintain a unique Transnistrian national identity are limited and vague. Authorities in PMR lack the monopoly on education as there are different schools which are subordinated to various Ministries of Education. The motivation for national identity becomes more significant as an element of external threat comes into the picture. People on the left bank of the Dniester River are clear of Moldova being their biggest enemy, however, for some of them it is still problematic to grasp who they are themselves. Still, a perception of “us” among Transnistrians from “others” in this case Moldovans, encourages people of PMR to identify themselves with their own kind creating in this way a specific identity group.

5.3 Other manifestations of banal or everyday nationalism

5.3.1 Sport

Sport, without any doubt, also contributes to maintaining and distribution of an established national identity. It takes place through common usage of national colors on sportsmen’s uniforms, listening to national anthems prior to any competition, and giving honor to the national flag of the winner. Quite many sport competitions are organized

internationally, attracting simultaneously a great amount of audience all over the world. Bearing in mind that strong national feelings are based on solidarity between people, appliance of such tool as sport is quite important (Gellner, 1983). Some scholars expect pride in sport to be quite high in most nations (Kelley and Evans, 2002). Moreover, small nations are expected to be extremely proud of their sport achievements due to the fact that here they could be represented equally to other stronger and bigger entities (Evans, 1996).

On this subject some of the Transnistrians said: “Those who are interested in sport are probably proud of Sheriff football team”. But most of the time I have heard: “Football fans do not associate Sheriff football team with PMR because they play in Moldovan championship”.

When asked of Olympic Games and whom do they cheer for some of them said that they do not watch Olympics, while the others confessed: “I would never cheer for Moldovans”. Maybe some people would like to support their own sportsmen but they need to be representatives of Moldovan national team which is completely at odds with moral rules of Transnistrian people. A male (middle-aged group) respondent from Bendery told me that PMR has some good sportsmen. “When some of them won at competitions on the international level, our sportsmen went with a flag of PMR”. This, as my interlocutor stated, could be viewed as unreasonable act on one hand, but “it was really pleasant to see”. Having studied this question, I have learned that Transnistrian sportsmen actively participate in the Olympic Games, in World and European Championships, as well as they take part in other competitions between representatives from the CIS and Balkan countries. The fact that Transnistrian athletes take part in Olympics is really important with regard to the unrecognized status of their country as they resort to so called “sport diplomacy”. Thus, there were also athletes from Transnistria competing in Summer Olympics 2012 which took place in London. A swimmer Danila Artiomov and athlete Natalia Cherkes participated in the the Games of the XXX Olympiad as members of Moldovan national team. Two more sportsmen, Aleksander Diachenko and Aleksey Karavashkov, who started their career in PMR took part in this competition. However, they represented the Russian Federation.

Generally, people usually are not interested in development of sport in PMR. A Transnistrian identity is not maintained by sport as national colors are not used on uniforms of sportsmen representing PMR. Sheriff football team chose black and yellow colors instead of colors of de facto state’s flag. Other Transnistrian athletes participating in various competitions are members of Moldovan or Russian national teams.

5.3.2 Media

As noted before, a concept of nation coincided with development and widespread use of printing and book publishing. Media with a help of printing promotes imagined communities to both literate and illiterate people. Mass media not only encourages national loyalty among citizens of one nation, but it also maintains national identity among masses. Stories published in newspapers about people being part of one whole, make them feel that everyone else from their community has access to the same news and information. This makes them believe they belong to the same nation (Anderson, 1983).

According to one of my respondents, “Every community (Russian, Moldovan and Ukrainian) has its own newspaper. There they report news from PMR as well as they write about other countries”. The Ukrainian community has its newspaper “Homin” while Moldovans publish their stories (in Cyrillic alphabet) in their newspaper “Adevărul Nistrean” (The Dniestrian Truth). The local press quite often underlines that people of Transnistria due to common sufferings and struggles developed Transnistrian nation. The latter is depicted as civic and tolerant multiethnic people. Then quite obviously Russia is usually described as republic’s only friend, while Moldova is perceived as the worst enemy and is accused of all misfortunes (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013).

Every community in Transnistria is allowed to have their TV programs. The news are sent in all three languages on the local channels. In case Transnistrians do not use special cable TV then they would have few local channels, some Ukrainian and mostly Russian channels. One interviewee said: “We do not have any Moldovan channels at home”. A pro-Moldovan respondent claimed: “All Moldovan channels were closed or blocked. And news at Transnistrian channels is copied from Russian news”. As it was confirmed from the other sources (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013), Moldovan and Romanian channels in PMR were blocked on purpose. Proceeding from this, I may claim that media in PMR is strictly controlled by the state, and is not that free. It is Russian media that predominates in the secessionist republic. Ukrainian TV channels can be rather freely used now as they are not considered to cause any damage for the ideology of PMR’s authorities (however, due to the recent events in Ukraine, its channels might also be perceived as unfavorable). When it comes to people who use Moldovan language and who perceive themselves as Transnistrian Moldovans, they are forced to refuse from watching anything in their native language.

People residing on the left bank of the Dniester River do not have equal access to media in their native language. Transnistrian authorities failed to consolidate their forces and

create their own media platform, target group of which would include all ethnic minorities living in the de facto state. In such a way, news are provided by various TV channels, be it local, Ukrainian or Russian. As a result, people learn of different events presented from different angles, which stands in their way to imagine themselves as members of the same nation (Anderson, 1983). Besides, media pluralism decreases loyalty of people to only one Transnistrian identity, as it simultaneously maintains other identities among Transnistrians. Media in PMR rather fragmentizes the society, as it does not contribute to socialization of a common feeling of being a part of the one whole nation.

5.3.3 Holidays and traditions. Famous Transnistrians, heritage in literature, art, science, or music

When asked of if any traditions were established in PMR during the last 20 years, some people said: “There are no Transnistrian traditions”. “We celebrate ‘Maslenitsa’ which is Russian spring feast or ‘Martyshory’ – Moldovan holiday”. Among other answers there were few of those who admitted: “We celebrate a day of October revolution, a Day of Soviet Army, 8th of March. On the Victory day of 9th of May we have a parade”, “We still get days off on all holidays of Soviet times”. On the other hand, some respondents stated: “Our holidays are Day of republic and Day of Tiraspol city”. This demonstrated that there are those who clearly distinguish holidays important for their republic and the rest holidays which are celebrated on this land.

There are people who became national symbols of their countries. Such national heroes reflect on national values and culture of their people in their works. In such manner; they transmit customs and peculiarities of their identity to the rest to the world. Quite often the names of those admired by the masses are immediately associated with some nation because they provide a national image of their people. For instance, for Russians such name could be Pushkin or Dostoevsky, for Romanians – Eminescu, for Ukrainians – Shevchenko, etc. (Stepanov, 2010). So, writers and poets by describing a traditional culture of their people cultivate it as well as they contribute to encouragement of people to preserve their culture. It is assumed that new nations could have less pride in arts and literature as they did not have much time to create such masterpieces. Besides, in countries that share language with other states, literature does not play an important role for the improvement of national feelings (Bader, 1997).

A respondent who is a teacher herself told me that there is a community of poets (writing in all three languages) in Tiraspol. There are many of those who write in Ukrainian and Russian in PMR, but not so many choose to write in Moldovan. From a "*Verges of Identities*" by Viacheslav Stepanov (2010), I have learned more about modern literature in PMR. The most striking for me was a poem by a teacher of Ukrainian language Oksana Medvedenko currently working in lyceum of Chisinau. In her poem "My land" author talks of her two homelands (Moldova and Ukraine) that are deeply beloved by her. She stressed on how painful it is to separate them in her heart. That's how she managed to describe the situation when one can possess various identities (which is still very common in PMR as well as in many post-Soviet states). Other than that, most common answer from my respondents was: "I can not come up with a name of any poet in PMR I guess we should have some people who write about PMR but they are not popular".

Music and art can also be named as helpful elements used to unify a nation, intended to preserve and cultivate nation's culture. For example, such composers as Frederic Chopin or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, or artists as Pablo Picasso or Vincent van Gogh are known and admired in the whole world. Most of all they are cherished in their homelands which also benefite from their fame. These names improved image of their homelands and their compatriots were encouraged by their political leadership to be proud and look up to their national heroes. When asked of development of music in PMR, my respondents, unfortunately, could not name any composers, bands, singers, etc. Some of them said: "We have some underground bands, rap singers and rock bands. I have no idea who listens to that", "No, we do not have any Transnistrian music, everything is Russian", or "PMR is too small to have own real pop artists". Quite often contemporary musicians in various countries write some patriotic songs which can be used on different occasions to raise national spirit and bring people together as one. On that topic I also have heard: "I do not know any contemporary songs about Transnistria".

Among other famous people who were born in PMR or who lived there for a while were: painter Mykhail Ilarionov, Bulgarian writer Georgi Stamatov, Soviet Ukrainian actor and theater director Yurii Shymyskyi, Lev Tarasevych - prominent Russian and Soviet immunologist, epidemiologist, microbiologist, pathologist, and last but not least Nikolai Zelinskyi - Soviet organic chemist, who among his other achievements, is known for inventing a gas mask, and many others (news.org, 2014). During the interviews that I conducted, only one of my interviewees came up with the name of Nikolai Zelenskyi. Also it was mentioned that there were many of those who have made their career here, especially in

military. Names of Suvorov, Lebediev, Kotovskyi and Rumiancev are associated with PMR. According to my respondents, among other famous Transnistrians there was a current Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko who spent his youth in PMR, where he studied at school in Bendery. The other popular figure, who is famous maybe not for a right reason, is a Barbie girl from Tiraspol who is claimed to look exactly as a commonly known doll.

All in all, this indicates that people in PMR do not know their own heroes. People famous in the whole world who lived and worked in Transnistria definitely contribute to the positive image of Transnistrianess. However, de facto state's authorities have not used their opportunity to encourage people to take pride in their own national heroes and transmit their unique culture to the whole world. Given the fact that the names of famous Transnistrians who promote the preservation of the unique Transnistrian culture are forgotten and people do not recall achievements of their compatriots in any areas, citizens of PMR are not encouraged to develop close ties with their national identity.

5.4 Findings from the quantitative part

In the previous section I have focused on the Transnistrian authority's achievements in applying top-down approach when it comes to nation-building. In some instances, people show little interest and enthusiasm regarding Transnistrian state symbols and state policies, which indicate that nationalism in Transnistria can be called anything but 'hot'. Trying to determine whether the project of nation-building was successful in PMR I proceed to present my findings from the quantitative research method part. This section of my study focuses on finding out how do young people in Transnistria perceive themselves. Do they affiliate themselves with the secessionist republic or does their ethnic affiliation still prevail?

5.4.1 Results revealing Transnistrian students' place of birth, identity preferences and native language. Testing hypothesis 1

During the field trip to Tiraspol, I surveyed 190 students between 17 and 40 years old. My sample included 160 females and 30 males (regarding the specific of this particular college which educates students of specialties like: modeling and design of garments (custom tailoring), management in service, marketing in service, economics and accounting in service, hotel service (manager in the hospitality and tourist industry), and professions as hairdresser and tailor).

First of all, I had to check how many students, included in my sample, were born within PMR's borders. In order to learn how many of our respondents have been born inside the secessionist republic, I had to recode this variable into dummy variable (born inside and outside of PMR). In the survey respondents could choose between being born in Tiraspol, other city of PMR, village of PMR, or outside of Transnistria. Having recoded the place of birth of all the respondents the following table (Table 2) has been made:

Table 2

Born in PMR or outside?	PMR	Outside of PMR
Sex		
F	150	10
M	24	6
Total	174	16
100 %	91.6%	8.4%

A table above shows that there were 174 respondents - or 91.6 % of all students included in the survey who responded positively to this question. This confirms my assumption that most of the students currently studying in the secessionist republic have been born in Transnistria, which was proved by the collected data during my field trip.

Proceeding to the hypothesis 1 (people who were born within PMR would affiliate themselves with PMR and they would choose Transnistrian as their main identity), I had to find out how many of those who have been born in PMR actually chose PMR as their main identity (see Table 3):

Table 3

	Other main identity	PMR as main identity
Born PMR	85	89
Outside	13	3
Total	98	92
100 %	52%	48 %

From this table, I can derive the conclusion that despite being born in PMR people choose other identities as their main identities just as eagerly as some their fellow students choose PMR to be their main identity. Studying the survey sheets that were spread among the students, I have learned where those who claimed to be born outside of PMR came from. There were students who noted that they have been born in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Moldova (which underlines that some young people are willing to emphasize that PMR and Moldova are two separate entities). Having analyzed the results of the survey, I need to note that there were 92 of those who chose PMR as their main identity, 4 students chose other main identity option, 13 admitted to affiliate with Moldovan identity, 6 – chose Ukrainian as main identity, and 75 young people chose Russian as their main identity.

In other words, despite the fact that most of students have been born within PMR’s borders and they have spent their whole lives in this unrecognized republic, quite big number of them chose other identities as more important to them. Yet, we can claim that my hypothesis 1 can be rejected despite the fact that the majority of students have been born in the PMR, still most respondents (52 %) of the ones surveyed chose some other identity as their main one.

It is claimed that in the PMR, despite having three official languages, Russian is considered a dominant language, and that people in Transnistria perceive themselves as “a part of Russian civilization”(Oleksy, 2014), as “individuals bearing Russian identity”(Beril, 2010), etc. In order to test the assumption that most people in PMR speak Russian on my own sample, another table was made. The obtained results confirmed that most students speak Russian on their daily basis, as 128 respondents chose Russian as their native language. There were 6 students who selected Ukrainian and 19 respondents who chose Moldovan as their native language. 9 students preferred other languages among which there were: Bulgarian, Gagauz, and Tatar. (Please see Table 4 for details).

Table 4

Language \ Sex	Russian	Ukr	Mold	Other
Female	112	4	12	6
Male	16	2	7	3
Total	128	6	19	9

In this section, there happened to be fairly large number of non-applicable answers (NA's), precisely 28. This occurred because sometimes it was difficult for the students to choose only one language as their mother tongue because both of their parents do not speak the same language at home. However, the fact that parents speak different languages by no means has any influence on their relations and family life. In case respondents chose two options simultaneously such answer was not registered in my dataset which resulted in a high rate of NA's.

In order to investigate if gender influences whether one states to be proud or not proud of being Transnistrian another table (Table 5) was made. As we can see it was 39 female respondents who stated to be very proud of being Transnistrian which was about 24 % of all women included in the survey. 82 of them said to be rather proud than not, which in turn was about 51 % of all women. So, we can claim that 75% of all surveyed women had a positive response to feeling Transnistrian. However, there is quite a difference in being very proud and rather proud than not. Following the same steps it was calculated that 10 out of 30 men claimed to be very proud (33% out of all) 14 men – were rather proud (46%). In general, 79 % of men answered positively on this question. Proceeding from this, it can be argued that gender does not have any influence on the level of pride towards being Transnistrian. Having made a table for gender and Q15 – proud of being Transnistrian (dependent variable), (Table 5) such conclusions were made: a variable sex does not have that much influence whether an interviewee gives positive or negative answer to the question asked.

Table 5

	Not proud at all	Rather not proud	Indifferent	Rather proud than not	Very proud
Female	3	10	26	82	39
Male	2	1	3	14	10
Total	5	11	29	96	49

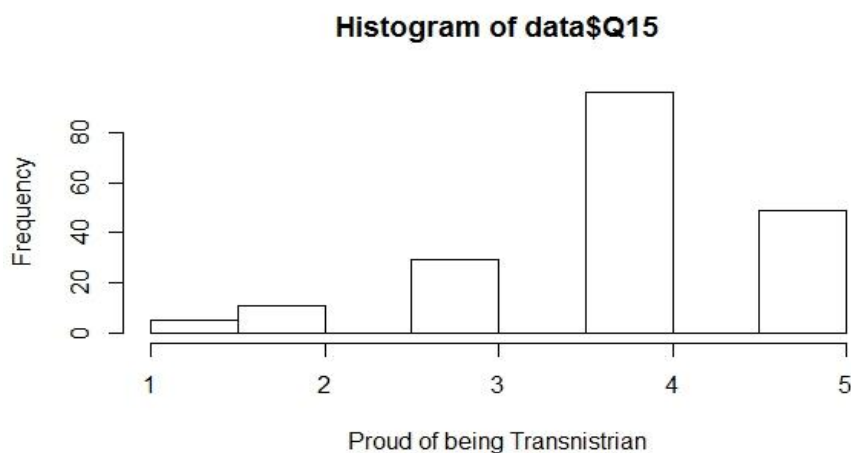
5.5 Testing hypothesis 2

Addressing the hypothesis 2, Those who choose Transnistrian as their main identity are more proud of being citizens of PMR than other citizens of the de facto state, a question – Are you proud of being a citizen of PMR ? was chosen to be our dependent variable. It could be argued that being proud of one's land can mean almost the same as having a connection,

feelings and will to affiliate yourself with that piece of land. In some cases it could be used as a proxy for identity because if you are proud of your state it is very likely that you would eagerly identify yourself with it. The probability to affiliate with a specific land is much higher if one is proud of this land.

In my survey students were given the chance to describe their level of pride towards PMR and choose one from the suggested option: not proud at all, rather not proud, indifferent, rather proud than not, or very proud. From a histogram below (Table 6) we can see that the most frequently chosen answer by my respondents was - rather proud than not.

Table 6



In total, 96 respondents were rather proud than not, 49 people insisted on being very proud of being Transnistrian, 29 of people surveyed were indifferent, 11 were rather not proud, and 5 respondents told to be not proud at all. Another table (Table 7) was made to find out how many of those who are proud of being Transnistrian were born in PMR?

Table 7

	Not proud at all	Rather not proud	Indifferent	Rather proud than not	Very proud
Born in PMR	5	11	26	86	46
Born outside	0	0	3	10	3
Total	5	11	29	96	49

As previous exercise has shown, 174 of our respondents (or more than 90 %) were born in PMR, however only 46 out of them claimed to be very proud of being Transnistrian. The fact that 86 of those born in PMR claimed to be rather proud than not is considered as a

positive trend, however such answer is considered as not quite satisfying as there is difference between 'very proud' and 'rather proud than not'. Then, summing up the answers of a low pride of being Transnistrian gives us 42 respondents who have rather negative attitude towards this issue. On the other hand, there were 16 respondents who were born outside the secessionist republic. None of them have chosen the first two options, then 3 students stated to be indifferent, when 10 of them selected an option of being rather proud than not, and finally 3 students admitted that they were very proud of being Transnistrian.

As a result, I have got bipolar answers from respondents, as comparing results of 46 of those who were born in PMR and claimed to be very proud of being Transnistrian to 42 of those who claimed the opposite, brings us to rather strange situation. Based on this, my assumption, that someone who was born in PMR has to be proud of being citizen of PMR, did not find justification. This encouraged me for further contemplating about what influences such differences in people's opinions and what are the factors that affect level of national pride among ordinary people in the de facto state. Transnistrian's level of pride in their land was considered as a token for their likelihood and will to affiliate with Transnistrian identity. Yet, I would like to learn whether there is a relationship between being proud of living in PMR and choosing Transnistrian as one's main identity. This could be done with a help of bivariate regression.

5.5.1 Bivariate regression

Simple regression is a way of predicting values of one variable from another, or a set of independent variables (Field, 2009). The bivariate regression tells us how value of dependent variable is likely to change in case the value for independent variable changes and if such a relationship is true. Running the bivariate regression for my dependent (proud of being citizen of PMR) and independent variable (respondent's main identity), it was decided to include all identity preferences of students' main identity (as my independent variable was made based on a set of dummy variables on identity) (please see Table 8 for details). However, it was crucial to leave out the PMR as main identity and to make it a reference variable. Doing so enabled comparing other results to it.

Table 8

Dependent variable – proud of being citizen of Transnistrian unrecognized republic

Variables	Coef. (s.d.)
Main identity Ukrainian	-1.09565** (0.37888)
Main identity Russian	-0.46820** (0.15221)
Main identity Moldovan	-0.09565 (0.26474)
Main identity other	-0.84565 (0.46018).
Intercept	4.09565 (0.08437)
N	190

Level of significance ***0.001, **0.01, *0.05

Taking into the consideration Ukrainian as main identity, the coefficient shows that dependent variable would change by -1.09565 if our independent variable would be altered. By the size of standard error we can conclude that this effect is significant by 0.37888 and this is how much our distribution differs from the mean. Similarly to that, focusing on Russian as main identity, I can conclude that dependent variable would change by -0.46820 in case of change in the independent variable. Standard error of 0.15221 demonstrates credibility of such changes, by simultaneously indicating distribution's difference from the mean. As we can see from the table, both of these variables have a negative coefficient which means that choosing these two main identities would have a negative influence on level of how proud of being citizen of Transnistria respondent is. Besides that, both of these variables proved to be significant.

Looking at other independent variables (Moldovan as main identity or other main identity), it is important to say that they also have got a negative coefficients of -0.09565 and -0.84565 respectively. However, such results were not to be named as statistically significant.

Despite the fact that there is no rule for doing so, 0.05 was chosen as a highest accepted level of significance. The significance level of 5% is rather used as a scientific

convention in the statistics. The significance level of 5% means that we accept that there is a 5% chance of committing a type I error (keeping the alternative hypothesis, saying there is a substantial relationship between the two variables, when it is in fact wrong and it should be rejected). It also indicates that there is a 5% chance that we would get an unusual result. The p-value of 0.001619 shows that our finding is less than 5 % or 0.05 which means that it is statistically significant. Proceeding from this, we have to reject our null hypothesis and instead accept our hypothesis 2 as there definitely is a relation between choosing PMR as one's main identity and feeling more proud of being Transnistrian citizen.

5.5.2 Multivariate regression

It is important to select the most important variables into the multivariate regression as values of coefficients vary due to the variables included in the model (Field, 2009 , p.186). In my first multivariate regression, I decided to add gender (recoded as dummy variable) and age as they are conventionally considered as important control variables (see Table 9 for details). However, in my case, gender is claimed to have a weak relationship with national pride because women as a rule express less national pride than men do (Smith and Kim, 2006). This was hard to test in my case, as women were a clear majority amongst the respondents. Then it was argued that usually national pride is very low among individuals under 30 years old. This would mean negative result for my sample again as most of the respondents were in their early 20's. Despite that, the research conducted by Tom Smith and Seokho Kim on national pride (Ibid) shows that among other countries Russia was the only outlier where individuals under 30 years old showed quite high level of national pride. Given the similarities between Russian and Transnistrian people, I can argue that results concerning national pride should be matching. In my sample there were people between 17 and 40 years old. That is why it was interesting to find out whether people of different age cohorts have similar answers when it comes to how proud of being Transnistrian one could be.

The coefficient shows to what extent our dependent variable will be affected in case there will be some changes in other variables (independent and control variables). Through the standard error of the estimate we learn what the uncertainty is. The level of significance of our findings, as always, can be checked by p-value. Analyzing the correlation between main identity as Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan as well as other main identity and our dependent variable (proud of being a citizen of PMR) gave us the following results: choosing any of these identities decreased level of pride of living in PMR. Indexes of -1.098736; -0.472884; -

0.119710; and -0.840558 respectively indicate that there is a negative effect. Based on the coefficient -0.005511, we can conclude that changes in the control variable Age (students get older) also slightly decreases the students' ability to feel proud of being a citizen on Transnistria. From the coefficient 0.073866, it can be seen that changes in the variable gender would have a positive correlation or a positive effect on feeling proud of being Transnistrian.

Table 9

Variables	Coef. (s.d.)
Main identity Ukrainian	-1.098736** (0.380836)
Main identity Russian	-0.472884** (0.153526)
Main identity Moldovan	-0.119710 (0.271979)
Main identity other	-0.840558. (0.463320)
Age	-0.005511 (0.022502)
Gender	0.073866 (0.190086)
N	190

I chose 0.05 as a highest accepted level of significance for the multivariate regression as well. In my regression I got the following results for the p-values of variables gender and age: 0.80680 and 0.69803. Proceeding from this, I can conclude that these variables have got the p-value higher than my highest accepted level of significance of 0.05 or 5% which means that these findings are not statistically significant.

In order to select best model for the multivariate regression which would be able to explain what variables influence our dependent variable most of all, the multivariate regression had to be run several times. In the end, (see Table 10 for details) some variables were selected as the most important for the model.

Table 10

Variables	Coef. (s.d.)	P-value
Main identity Ukrainian	-0.73884* (0.33430)	0.02838
Main identity Russian	-0.29098* (0.13836)	0.03687
Main identity Moldovan	-0.04654 (0.23270)	0.84170
Main identity other	-0.91434* (0.40377)	0.02475
Plans for future life in PMR	0.51185*** (0.12187)	4.23e-05
Independent Transnistria	0.38159** (0.12043)	0.00181
Safe (good interethnic relations)	0.63885*** 0.16051	0.0010

In this multivariate regression, I included my dependent variable Q15 – Are you proud of living in Transnistria, independent variable (student’s main identity be it Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan, or other), a variable confirming respondents’ plans to live and work in PMR in the future, a variable indicating respondent’s aspiration for an independent or recognized status of their homeland, and a variable emphasizing good inter-ethnic relations in the region. The coefficient demonstrates the level of effect on the dependent variable if independent variable or controls will be changed. Estimates’ standard error shows us the level of uncertainty and p-value helps to check the significance of the finding.

Our previous findings were confirmed here, as we can see that our independent variable (in this case a set of dummy variables of main identity) proved to have a negative effect on level of pride. In case someone chose Ukrainian as main identity, it simultaneously

meant that they could be named as less proud to call themselves citizens of Transnistria. The coefficient -0.73884 confirms this negative effect. Then, similarly to that, we have got a result of -0.29098 for those who chose Russian and -0.91434 for those who chose other as their main identity. Their p-values equaled respectively: 0.02838, 0.03687, and 0.02475. As my highest level of significance for this model was also limited to 0.05, all three of them were slightly statistically significant. Based on the coefficient – 0.04654, I can underline that changes in the independent variable – Moldovan as main identity also decreases chances for this respondent to be proud of living in the de-facto state, but by the size of its p-value 0.84170 I can sum up that this finding was not statistically important as it exceeded the highest level of significance.

Then proceeding to the control variables, it is important to highlight that all of them had a positive effect on the dependent variable. Variable standing for future plans for life and work in PMR has got a coefficient of 0.51185 indicating a positive influence on a dependent variable. By the p-value of 4.23e-05, or 0.0000423 for more familiar notation, this variable can be concluded to be the most significant. Supporters of the republic's independence also have proved to be more proud of being Transnistrian by the positive coefficient of 0.38159 and p-value of 0.00181. Finally, those who considered PMR to have good inter-ethnic relations received a positive effect on the dependent variable: 0.63885. P-value for this control was 0.0010 which can also be counted as statistically significant. By the size of R squared I can conclude that this model explains 32 % of all possible influences on our depended variable.

5.5.3 A correlation matrix based on the multivariate regression

Table 11

Variable	Q15	IDUkr	IDRuss	IDMold	IDother	Future in PMR	Independent	Safe
Q15	1.00000000	-0.17498980	-0.192724240	0.030075758	-0.10249950	0.36989973	0.293425795	0.37621928
IDUkr	-0.17498980	1.00000000	-0.111421045	-0.050333434	-0.02721697	-0.07204132	-0.078182496	-0.07762420
IDRuss	-0.19272424	-0.11142105	1.000000000	-0.167311414	-0.09047088	-0.20695461	-0.007267926	-0.10784974
IDMold	0.03007576	-0.05033343	-0.167311414	1.000000000	-0.04986939	-0.03756084	-0.004132723	0.06981607
IDother	-0.10249950	-0.02721697	-0.090470882	-0.04086930	1.000000000	0.06560632	0.060926655	-0.03027505
Future in PMR	0.36989973	-0.07204132	-0.206954609	-0.037560839	0.06560632	1.000000000	0.119577084	0.17040956
Independent	0.29342579	-0.07818250	-0.007267926	-0.004132723	0.06092665	0.11957708	1.000000000	0.21443072
Safe	0.37621928	-0.07762420	-0.107849739	0.069816066	-0.03027505	0.17040956	0.214430722	1.00000000

Correlation matrix demonstrates one more time a positive correlation between variable Future in Transnistria, aspiration for republic's independency and assessment of good inter-ethnic relations in the region and a variable being proud of living in PMR. At the same time, it underlines that changes occurring in the value of variable standing for interviewee's main identity, be it Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan or other, decreases students' level of being proud to reside in Transnistria.

In the correlation matrix I did not get a correlation which is higher than 0.7 or less than -0.7 . Proceeding from this, I may claim not to have multicollinearity in the correlation matrix. Multicollinearity is possible when there is a high correlation between variables in a regression (Field, 2009, p.198). It occurs in instances when two or more variables are very closely linearly related and can have a negative effect on the regression, and on the accuracy of the prediction.

5.6 Results from robustness tests

5.6.1 Durbin Watson test

Using R commander I ran Durbin Watson Test to check the assumption of independent errors. This is done by measuring autocorrelation and a p-value. According to the conservative rule I, values that are less than 1 or greater than 3 should cause troubles for the model (Field et al., 2012). The desired result should be as close to 2 as possible because that would indicate that residuals are uncorrelated. Value greater than 2 symbolizes a negative correlation, while a positive correlation is marked by a value below 2. Having run a Durbin Watson test for my model resulted in getting a value of 1.8358 which was quite good outcome as it is very close to 2, the best result. This means that assumption has been met. The p-value of 0.1074 also confirms this as it is bigger than .05, consequently it was not significant.

5.6.2 VIF test

Variance inflation factor (VIF) – a test that measures multicollinearity. It indicates whether a predictor has a strong linear relationship with the other variables. Myers (1990, cited in Field, 2012) suggested that a value of 10 should be of a researcher's concern. On the other hand, Bowerman and O'Connell (1990, cited in Field, 2012) argued that in case the average VIF is greater than 1, then a regression might be biased by a multicollinearity. And last but not least, it is said that values below 0.1 may cause problems, when Menard (1995, cited in Field 2012) warned that values below 0.2 are able to bias the regression model.

Table 12

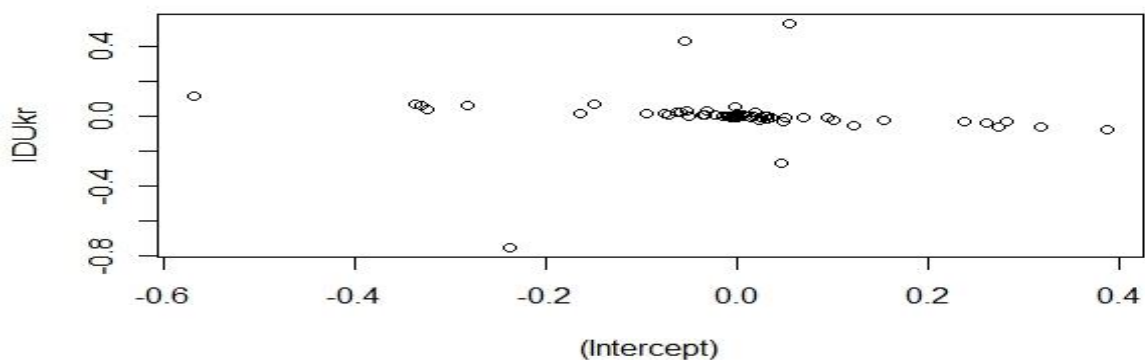
Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Main identity Ukrainian	1.038694	0.96274745
Main identity Russian	1.118212	0.8942848
Main identity Moldovan	1.047792	0.95438789
Main identity other	1.021432	0.97901769
Future work and life in PMR	1.095938	0.91246038
Independent	1.064917	0.93904032
Safe	1.091557	0.91612257
Mean	1.06836314	

In my model (see Table 12 for details) average VIF value is 1.06836314 which should not cause any problems. Because the result of vif test for my model is close to 1, it can be concluded that there is no collinearity.

5.6.3 Influential cases

Revealing the outliers in the model helps to test the stability of the chosen model through the whole sample and to reveal whether it was biased by any influential cases included. This can be measured by several residual statistics tools. In my case that was hat values or leverage values. Following the instructions from Andy Field (2012), I have calculated average leverage for my model using a suggested formula $(k+1)/n$. As a result I have got $9/190 = 0.04736842$. This falls into the desired result –number between 0 and 1, indicating that I have fairly reliable model which was not “unduly influenced by any subset of cases” (Ibid), and chosen case has full control and has good chances of influencing the prediction. I used DFBeta test to identify influential cases in my model. DFBeta - measures how much an observation has effected the estimate of a regression coefficient. Values larger than $\frac{2}{\sqrt{n}}$ are considered highly influential. In my case it was $2/\sqrt{190}$ which gave me a result of 0.144927536231884. In the dotplott below (Table 13) the influential cases are shown. As for the outliers (see Influence plot Appendix 1, Table A.1.4), I have run the regression model several times excluding the most influential cases, which in the end showed that these residuals do not influence the results of the model.

Table 13



Thus, I can claim that yes, there is a correlation between feeling proud of being a citizen of PMR and willingness to identify with this newly established identity group. With

my findings it was confirmed that those who chose PMR as main identity are more proud of being Transnistrian than those who have stated to have other main identity. All other preferences of identities have got negative coefficients, which means that all of them are less proud of living in PMR. Authorities of the de facto state through their leverages and nation-building policies did not provide positive image of Transnistrianess. If level of pride among people will increase, then more residents of PMR will voluntarily affiliate with it. This, in turn, will indicate that policy makers have reached their goal and managed to create a Transnistrian nation with unique Transnistrian identity embedded with its culture, traditions, and symbols.

5.7 Factors affecting a choice of identity among citizens of Transnistria (based on findings from the qualitative research approach)

This section investigates what other factors have influence on the choice of main identity among people in Transnistria. Conducting interviews with people of different age, gender, nationality, and background enabled me to have a look from inside, hear their thoughts (reaction from the bottom-up) and grasp what are the reasons for some of them to affiliate with other identities rather than Transnistrian.

Having spent a significant part of one's life in PMR, should influence and inspire youngsters to affiliate themselves with this unrecognized republic, as living in the same conditions should develop the same identification among inhabitants of Transnistria. From the results of the quantitative part of my research I have learned that despite being born within Transnistrian breakaway state, many young people in the region choose other identities to be their main ones. Almost half of youngsters born in PMR, chose other identity than Transnistrian as their main identity. What I found very interesting was the question -why was that so? Therefore, addressing the research question – What influences the choice of main identity among the citizens of contemporary Transnistria?, I have studied the factors that should have impact on individuals willing to or unwilling to affiliate with this particular identity group (Transnistrian nation).

5.7.1 Socialization and citizenship

In the context of theories of nation-building, one can argue that socialization is usually the main mean transmitting national identification. Usually it would take place through family and other social contacts (Bloom, 1990). It is assumed that people choose their identity mostly because of what they have been taught by their parents, or they automatically inherent their main identity from their parents. In other cases, the main identity is being socialized through other institutions than families (be it school kindergarten, work, friends, media); that is to say the environment. During the interviews that I conducted a lot of attention was paid to these institutions that are responsible for one's attitude towards one's nation as well as cultivation and socialization of national affiliation among masses.

Citizenship is a special status of a person recognized under the law of a state that grants an individual with a set of rights and duties. Besides, if one possesses specific citizenship then this person is viewed as member of a specific society, nation. There are states that allow only one citizenship to their citizens, but there are also those who tolerate dual

citizenship among members of their community. When it comes to Transnistria, according to Article 3 of the republic's Constitution (2011), people here may have the citizenship of another country, dual citizenship. Due to the fact that PMR is not recognized de jure as a state, having a passport of another country (most often it is Russian, Ukrainian or Moldovan) enables citizens of PMR to travel outside. A male respondent (from the age group over 50 years old) who has lived in PMR all his life told me: "I am a Russian citizen. I have a passport of PMR and Moldovan passport as well". Two male respondents who after school have moved to Ukraine to gain their education confessed that they had to give up their passports of PMR before they could get Ukrainian ones, as in accordance with the legislation of the latter, it is not allowed to have multiple citizenships. A middle-aged female I met in Oslo said:

I have three different passports. I got my PMR's passport when I turned sixteen. Then before moving to Chisinau, where I wanted to study at the university, I made Moldovan passport, as it was easier to get in this way. After a while, I have heard that it was possible to make Romanian passport if you could prove that you had ancestors in Romania, I wanted to try that. I did not show my Transnistrian passport anywhere at that point. Now I still claim that I am from Moldova, but I have Romanian passport too. It is legal; there is nothing wrong with that.

As we can see for ourselves, living in the quasi state like PMR brings certain complications with it. On one hand, citizenship here serves as an element bringing population closer together as it is in other countries. On the other hand, due to the unrecognized status of the republic, people are forced to acquire citizenship of some other state which results in division of society. Such situation certainly has a negative effect on feeling attached to one's nation. This undoubtedly pushes people to refer themselves to another state than PMR, creating a link between an individual and any other preferable state, simultaneously making them less proud of being citizens of Transnistria.

5.7.2 National self-identity

As for the issue of national self-identity, in PMR it quite often does not match with one's citizenship and main language spoken. During the interviews I intended to approach people of different ethnicity, which enabled me to compare how they see themselves as well as to trace differences in their views. A female student from Tiraspol told: "I see myself as

Russian”. She laughed and then added: “In my internal passport (passport of PMR) it is noted that I am ‘hohlushka’ (slang nick-name for Ukrainians) as my mother is Ukrainian. Despite that, I also have Moldovan passport which I use to go abroad”. A great number of skilled workers from the whole USSR, especially from central regions of Ukraine and Russia, migrated to the lands between the Prut and Dniester after World War II. Such resettlement took place thoroughly planned first by Tsarist government and then by the Soviet leaders to explore and master the new territories (Stepanov, 2010). For some people, even though they live abroad for a long time, giving up their ethnic identity is not easy. A female respondent from the third age group stressed: “Notwithstanding that I have lived in Transnistria for almost half of my life, I see myself as Ukrainian”. At the same time, a representative of adult group over 30, born in Rybnitsa, admitted: “I feel as Moldovan. I do not feel like a patriot of PMR, I never felt bad for it and I never thought I could change anything there”. Such views support the opinion that there are many of those who reside in PMR but they are rather detached in relation towards Transnistria, plus there are those who (within various age groups) show their indifference towards PMR.

Nevertheless, there were also those who expressed more Transnistria-friendly views. A respondent from the second age group replied: “I consider myself as Transnistrian because I was born here and I am proud of that”. In the following sentence she said: “I think of myself as more Russian than Moldovan”. She added: “I do not like people in Moldova”. This statement she explained with a story from her own experience: when one would ask something in Russian, people in Moldova would respond in Moldovan on purpose, even though they know you do not understand their language. Such view confirms statements that most people in Transnistria never learned to speak Moldovan, and the whole population was heavily Russified (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013). Russian language in Transnistria plays a dominating role in all spheres of life. So, despite the ethnic affiliation, Transnistrians possess Russian identity as well (Beril, 2010). The imposition of such new identity was in some instances of a coercive nature, as well as it took place voluntarily in others.

During the conversation with a male respondent from the same age group it was said: “I have always called myself Ukrainian, I only said I was Russian when I wanted to make my father mad”. I have learnt that many young people in Transnistria think it is cool or more prestigious to pretend that they are Russian even if they are not. I got to know that my interlocutor was born in inter-ethnic family with Russian mother and Ukrainian father. In spite of that, he proceeded: “I am a patriot of PMR, I care a lot about it”.

An interviewee under 30 years old, who lives abroad now, confessed: “I consider myself to be Ukrainian. Before I lived in PMR for quite a long time, I went to school there. Therefore a feeling of being Transnistrian was also a part of me”. The most mature respondent of 70 years old told: “I see myself as Transnistrian. I’m proud to be one of Transnistrians because this is what we were fighting for”. This underlines the fact that people who lived through the war appreciate what they have achieved.

5.7.3 National pride and native language

National pride is a positive feeling people experience towards their country due to their national identity (Smith and Kim, 2006). It “involves both admiration and stake holding - the feeling that one has some kind of share in an achievement or admirable quality” (Kelley and Evans, 2002, p.303). National pride is definitely a multi-dimensional notion, as there are so many things about each country one could possibly be proud of. National pride can be explained by various factors like interests, tastes, upbringing, environment, and many other things. Emphasizing Moldova’s specialization in agriculture some people said: “I’m proud of our agricultural products. We have eco-goods at reasonable prices”. Another respondent stated to be proud of industrial power of PMR: “We produce quite good cognac, wine, shoes, canned food, bed linen, etc.”

As middle aged woman claimed: “I’m proud of our good people and also that we have places to work”. Because of the PMR’s uncertain economic and political prospects, many young talented and skilled people emigrate looking for better life conditions and financial support (Protsyk, 2006). According to Piotr Oleksy (2013), the de facto state of PMR always faced a problem of emigration. Confirming this view, one of my respondents emphasized that out of his class that consisted of 18 pupils only 6 of them remained in Tiraspol, meaning that two thirds of the whole class emigrated to, be it Ukraine, Russia or Europe. Despite its history with Moldova, many people still work there. By virtue to these circumstances, there were those who noted: “I dislike having a border and customs routines”, as those who live and work on different banks of the Dniester River have to cross borders twice a day.

What is one of the most distinguishing and unifying factors for each nation is without any doubt a language. It is often named as an indicator of one’s identity. However, this is not a case in Transnistria as, in accordance to the Constitution of the Transnistrian republic (2011), Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian languages are equally recognized as official

languages in PMR (Article 12). For this reason, using language as an indicator of national identity here could be misleading or even wrong.

Respondents who claimed to have Russian as their native language usually said that they know few words in Moldovan only. For instance one interviewee told: “In Moldovan I know how to say words like milk or bread” or “I can understand only common few words in Moldovan. I believe I can make a sentence out of three languages together”, or “I can not speak Moldovan, I forgot most of it. We learned some of it at school but I never practiced it otherwise”.

There are instances when it is really difficult for some inhabitants of PMR to name what is their main or native language. A notion of native language varies for different people. For some it could be: a language used by mother, language used by father, language used by the family, language in which one thinks, language used at school, most often used language, or language that one masters most of all (Stepanov, 2010). A student who lives abroad now and whose parents were both Ukrainians, but one of them was Russian speaking and the other spoke Ukrainian, told:

The fact that my parents speak different languages does not affect our life in any way. When I lived in Tiraspol I also spoke mostly Russian as it is main language there. In spite of declarations that we have three official languages, Russian is most commonly used.

At the same time I received a response from an elder male respondent: “My mother tongue is Russian, but Ukrainian is also my native language. I love Ukrainian language and its people”. Then quite a different story was told by another interviewee: “My native language is Moldovan, on the other hand all three languages (Russian, Ukrainian and Moldovan) are my native”, as I found out later, her mother was Moldovan and father was Ukrainian. Her dad speaks ‘surzyk’ a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian while her mother and she reply in Moldovan. She continued that sometimes she likes to read only in Russian, but she thinks in Moldovan most of the time.

There are three official languages in Transnistria (Constitution, 2011), but as noted by one of the respondents not everybody understands all three languages. “I do not understand Moldovan, but all Moldovans can speak Russian which is a dominant language here”. Afterwards, he claimed: “We do not have any problems with communication with each other. It is never a problem”.

Based on experience from other countries, it is worth to mention that construction of any nation is easier with a help of one unifying language. The establishment of imagined communities among people is only possible with a help of language shared by masses, which, in turn, enhanced a feeling of solidarity among its members (Anderson, 1983). Russian was a main language in Russian Empire and then it remained as such in times of the Soviet Union. Living in the USSR with knowledge of Russian, as dominating language, increased one's chances for getting a better work or entering a prestigious university (Stepanov, 2010). Consequently, after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian language was honored to serve as unifying language in PMR too.

According to Stepan Beril (2010, p. 155), "Transnistria is a Russian enclave itself"; and "Russian language serves as a bridge in relations between the Russian Federation and PMR, so in this context there are no boundaries between these two entities" (Ibid, p. 169). Russian-speaking people are not interested in understanding their compatriots sometimes. While conducting a survey among students, I have got the impression that those who claimed to be Russian and spoke Russian on daily basis felt more confident in saying it out loud. Yet, other students who had different background were not comfortable to do so publicly. It soon became obvious that Moldovan-speaking students were used to being oppressed by the Russian-speaking majority in the region.

A Moldovan-speaking respondent explained that now many Moldovans act like they are Russian. From my personal experience, I may conclude that you can hardly hear people speak Moldovan on the streets of Tiraspol. As one respondent stated, even her teacher of Moldovan language spoke Russian outside of school. Every time she would visit her mother at work she would say: "Do not talk Moldovan to me, speak Russian". Usage of Moldovan language in public is limited and it seems like those Moldovans who live in PMR speak Moldovan only at home. They do not have a chance to use their language wherever they want as freely as others do. They do not want to attract attention or be misunderstood (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013).

The fact that there are three official languages in Transnistria is only stated on paper, which was confirmed by a respondent who confessed: "They can be Moldovan with you for five minutes, but if some Russian speaking people enter a room they switch to being Russian again". A Ukrainian speaking interviewee claimed not to have any troubles using this language, but as she added: "It depends on who I meet, if I know that a person knows Ukrainian then I would use it, if not then I would speak Russian instead". In response to a question which language she usually uses in the store or market I have head: "I use Russian,

of course”. At the same time the same person acknowledged the importance of having language proficiency in all three official languages. A respondent claimed that sometimes Russian-speaking people get in the company of those who only speak Moldovan, then they leave out from the conversation or somebody has to translate for them, while if you would go the market at one of PMR’s villages you meet people there who do not know Russian at all.

5.7.4 Meaning of PMR, peculiarities

It is hard to explain why people feel a connection between them and their homeland, why do they share a feeling of kinship among the compatriots. However, we are brought up with a thought that our state should be as important for us as our family. We hear of love that people around us feel towards our homeland. In such a way, living in the world where everybody loves their native land, we tend to share the same feeling. Ordinary people are taught to defend interests and territory of their land as for each country having its own territory is inevitable to ensure its survival. Through the mass education people are persuaded about how special and unique their nation, culture, etc. is. People are inculcated with love to their land and start to believe that it has a special meaning for them. This gradually becomes a natural feeling for inhabitants of each state.

Speaking of the meaning of PMR, the most common answers were: “It is my homeland, where I lived most of my life or my whole life”, “I feel at home while I’m there”, “PMR is my home”. When asked of peculiarities of Transnistrian republic, some stated: “It is not recognized as a state by other countries, also it is quite special that we have three official languages”, “PMR is a multiethnic state with its friendly people and good relations”. A respondent from the third age group stressed: “Nowhere in the world there is such a state that is willing to welcome all people”. He went on saying: “PMR is our only state the way it is and those who like it here live here”.

On the other hand, there are many of those who do not agree with the course of life in this de facto state. For instance, a respondent who lives abroad now said:

I like it there, but now when I come there I understand that everything is different. People are different from me in a way; we do not share the same views anymore as they have their mutilated and harshly Russified mindset.

Among the respondents there were those who argued: “For me PMR still lives like it is a part of the USSR. People here are afraid of changes, which is why there have been no alterations”. The statement that PMR still lives like it was in the Soviet times is true to an extent. Transnistrians never meant to disconnect their republic from the Soviet Union. For people living on the left bank of the Dniester River, the fall of USSR was an awful tragedy (Beril, 2010). Similarly to that, even the president of the Russian Federation called the collapse of the Soviet Union “a major geopolitical disaster of the century”(Putin, 2005). A respondent from Rybnitsa drew my attention to the fact that in her town they still have a monument to Lenin. From my own experience I know that there are two monuments to a leader of proletariat on the central street of Tiraspol as well. According to my interviewee, nothing in Transnistria has been renovated: “In PMR there are old buildings, old infrastructure, outdated furniture and equipment, etc.” Transnistria, in various ways, seems like a museum of the past Soviet history (Kolstø, 2000). During my stay in Tiraspol, I noticed that most of street names in the city are still capturing the spirit of a bygone era. Quite often in the central area of the city I came across the streets like: Revolt street, Y. Gagarin street, M. Gorkyi street, Y. Sverdlov street, V. Lenin street, Chapaev street, Clara Zetkin street, Frunze street, etc. Based on this, I may assume that people in Transnistria, as many other Soviet people, had difficulties to make their peace with the loss of their huge country and they have experienced a crisis of soviet civil identity. Attempting to adapt to the new realities of life, people on the left bank of the Dniester River still keep memories of glorious Soviet past in their minds and hearts. The notion of Transnistrianess is based on mainly traditions and customs of Soviet times. Accordingly, “Soviet past is creatively used to retrieve images, symbols and examples, enabling the Transnistrian authorities to create an idealized history and to spread the notion of a Transnistrian nation” (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013, p. 415).

5.7.5 Safety and inter-ethnic relations

In order to voluntarily become a member of some community it is pivotal that every individual feels safe and protected living together with others. Respect of every individual towards the others is quite important here. A pro-Russian individual (over 50 years old) said: “Ukrainians are my friends, I can live with them. Yet, I do not like Moldovans because they are thieves”. This is what his peer, ethnic Ukrainian female said:

Right after the war, there was a period of getting used to live together. Today there is no difference of what ethnic affiliation one is as everybody speaks the same language (Russian) with no regards to where you come from.

A middle aged housewife from Tiraspol stated: “We have good relations with Ukraine, and we have good relations with Russia. The latter supports us a lot and we want to be closer to them”. This support to her mind is shown by Russian army still dislocated in PMR and by monthly 15 dollar supplement to pensions. She proceeded: “We even try to regulate relations with Moldova”.

A student from Tiraspol was persuaded that people who only speak Moldovan can also come and live in PMR. Afterwards she announced: “In a while they will learn Russian as well”. A respondent living abroad from PMR argued that Transnistrians are a little bit hostile towards Moldovans as a result of conflict in 1992. Despite such situation, there are many people from the left bank of the Dniester River who have got Moldovan citizenship as they have relatives there or they need to go to Moldova quite often. According to him, “Those Moldovans who live in PMR (referred to as “our Moldovans” (Dembinska and Iglesias, 2013)) we accept as a part of us but we dislike those who come from Chisinau”.

In turn, ethnic Moldovan respondent informed that she did experience discrimination during her school years. “Russian children laughed at us, Moldovans, as we could not pronounce correctly some words in Russian” (some sounds in Moldovan are pronounced softer). While conducting surveys during my field trip to Transnistria I had a chance to hold a discussion among the students on the subject of main identity. From that experience I have got an impression that Russian students behaved much more arrogant and insolent whereas those who considered themselves to be Moldovans, Ukrainians, Bulgarian, Gagauz, etc. kept quiet and did not dare to contradict to the statements that “all people here are Russian, everybody speaks Russian, etc.”

According to one of female interviewee, currently living abroad, “Transnistria seems like an area controlled by KGB, but all people keep quiet as their every move is watched”. This view was supported by secondary sources which argued that no one, especially those who own some business, “wants to mess with the authorities” (Oleksy, 2013). My respondent felt bad living that way because she had a lot of questions and never could find any response. Everybody in PMR knows of their dependence on and influence from Russia, but they call it aid or support and “no one dares to talk about it or discuss it”. My respondent did not understand many things: why some topics were encrypted and not to be publically discussed,

why numerous overdue or smuggled goods were sold in supermarkets, why speaking Russian outside was acceptable while if someone speaks Moldovan they are given a suspicious look, or if someone speaks Ukrainian they are considered as outsiders.

Another respondent claimed, given the situation in Ukraine and due to work of Russian propaganda in PMR: “People start to dislike Ukrainians and everything connected to Ukraine”. After annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation, people in PMR, under the influence of pro-Russian media in the region, condemn attempts of the new authorities in the neighboring country to fight for their state’s sovereignty. More than that, the pro-Russian population believe that finally justice triumphed and Crimea was returned to where it belongs because as Vladimir Putin (2014) argued, it is a native Russian land (in Russian – *Iskonno russkaya zemlia*). Being inspired by the Crimean example, in March 2014 parliament of the PMR asked to be annexed to the Russian Federation as well (Zamok, 2014). These hopes were blown when the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the latter, Sergei Lavrov, insisted that Moldova provides PMR with a special status, affirming respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of Moldova (Panchyshyna, 2014).

A story about attitude among people of the multiethnic republic of Transnistria was told by the middle aged male respondent. He emphasized that at school they were taught to tolerate everybody and care for others. However, this was not what took place in real life. Children, as it is known, copy behavior from their parents. And in the Soviet past, it was common to label each ethnic community with a special nickname or make up jokes about some specific group. For example, ‘hohol’- meant Ukrainian, ‘kacap’ or ‘moskal’ – Russian, ‘khach’ – a name for everybody with Cacaasian looks, ‘zhydy’ – Jewish people; at the same time Moldovans were known to be victims of anecdotes where they were depicted as fools, while Estonian people were associated as being really slow. Yet, as my respondent stated: “Russians were considered as a better race”. People in PMR copied the same attitude and continue to use these labels towards each other. Doing so, they pretended to be Russian as it was supposed to be more prestigious.

5.7.6 Aspirations for PMR’s future

Within my findings, the majority of respondents replied that they would like to see PMR as a separate country. For instance, a male over 50 said: “I want PMR to be an independent state, my independent republic”. A student from Tiraspol stated: “I would like PMR to be independent. We have quite many industrial factories so we would be able to

provide for ourselves”. A respondent, coming from Ukraine who migrated to Transnistria in late 1980’s, underlined that she under no circumstances would like PMR to become a part of Russia. Furthermore, she claimed that PMR will never willingly be a part of Moldova as the latter “attacked us”.

Other views voiced by patriotically-spirited young man drew my attention: “I want PMR to be independent state but fully independent with no instructions from the Russian Federation and no interference into our business”. He added: “On the other hand, with regard to various international agreements and obligations, I think maybe it would be better for people living in PMR to stay in Moldova now”. The young interviewee stated: “Most of people would rather become a part of Russia that supports us all the time”. During one of the interviews I was told: “We want to be a part of Russia. Most people want that”. Having said that, the respondent added: “Moldovans maybe do not want that, but nobody would ask them. Otherwise, they can move back to Moldova”.

5.7.7 Nation of PMR- does it exist?

There is not much about the nation that can be considered as natural. All of its elements were once imagined, constructed, and then socialized to the masses. It was Anderson (1983), who claimed that nation is nothing more than an imagined political community, most members of which will never have a chance to meet each other. In spite of using one language (or at least one that is dominant which is Russian in the case of Transnistria) people still do not know other members of their society. This, by no means, deters them from believing in being members of the same community sharing the same national identity. It makes sense to argue that today we live in the world of civic nations that consists of people despite their origin or ethnical background. Members of civic nations share the same values, bear the same set of rights, and enjoy the equality as they are obliged to respect state’s law.

Most states consist of people whose ancestors have practiced mixed marriages, who have migrated or did something else to adopt a new identity. What I am trying to say is that pure nations as such do not exist. So, it is important to remember that nations as something natural is illusion (Renan, 1882) as all of them in their modern meaning were once constructed. Going back to Transnistria, it is possible to claim that it is an example of a civic nation as it consists of several ethnic groups. Population of Transnistria, including three biggest ethnic groups like Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans as well other minorities in the

region, managed to come together and did quite a lot to create a civic nation in their territory (Beril, 2010).

Modern national discourse is overflowing with talks about solidarity, and family metaphors. Nation is most often described as a big family, filled with feeling of brotherhood and disinterested friendship and sympathy between compatriots which after all still are strangers to each other (Kaplan, 2007). When asked of Transnistrian nation existence most of my respondents (currently living in PMR) replied: “We feel a connection with all the people who live in PMR”, “Yes, we all are children of Pridnestrovie”, or “We have Transnistrian people now we want to have an independent sovereign state”.

National identity derives from similarity to some people and difference from others (Hjerm, 1998). The war of 1992 stimulated differentiation between “us” Transnistrians and “them” Moldovans. The fact that population on the left bank of the Dniester River became aware of their difference with their neighbors, was used as a shaping force of specific Transnistrian identity. Pål Kolstø (2000, p. 148), insisted that this identity came into being due to influence of several factors, namely “language, geography, culture, and history”.

A female with Ukrainian roots from the elder age group shared her views: “Yes, we, people of Pridnestrovie, we feel a connection between us”. However, as she told me, given the situation in the east of Ukraine, tensions between people in PMR also increased. “Everybody is nervous and angry with Ukraine because of military actions”. Ukrainian side introduced new stricter customs rules. Besides that, people with Russian passports are not allowed to cross the border. This affected many individuals living from buying goods in Ukraine and selling them in PMR and vice versa.

Quite a different view was expressed by an interviewee who currently lives abroad: “I always thought that yes, we can make a nation and feel like we are one”. Then he continued that unfortunately due to Russian influence in this region people do not think this way. “Majority of people in PMR consider themselves as ancestors of the Russian Empire and then successors of glorious Soviet times”. Taking into consideration these circumstances people are not interested in making their own civic nation from scratch with no references to previous regimes and orders.

Gellner (1983) argues that people belong to one nation if they recognize each other as members of the same society and if they share the same culture. Proceeding from this, I may claim that some citizens of Transnistria do see themselves as well as other inhabitants of PMR as equal voluntary members of one society. On the other hand, I doubt that all of them voluntarily became members of it as some of them became rather hostages of the situation.

For instance, Moldovans residing in PMR happened to be in a strange situation – they have also been attacked by authorities in Chisinau, but now they are not sure how should they identify themselves. Moldovans in PMR- are they still part of Moldovan ethnos or now they acquired status of diaspora, or should they now give up their previous identity and adopt a new one, Transnistrian, instead. When it comes to Russian speaking majority in the PMR, they do not accept Moldovans residing in Transnistria as equal. Even my respondents confessed that they do not trust Moldovans. Simultaneously Transnistrian Moldovans are also looked down at in a way, not to mention the fact that they are often victims of humiliation while their rights and freedoms are limited.

Once people on both banks of the Dniester River recognized each other as members of one society as they all shared Soviet identity. Transnistrian society managed to preserve at least two positive features once inherent to Soviet society. According to Beril (2010), first of all, they managed to keep internationalism or a tradition of rather positive inter-ethnic relations. This statement I find quite problematic and rather debatable as I have witnessed the discriminating attitude that some of the citizens are given due to their national identity. Second, they remained loyal to their adherence to Russian language and to supra-ethnic Russian culture. As stated before, Russian language here plays a dominating role in all spheres of life. Therefore, with no regard to one's ethnic affiliation, Transnistrians inherited Russian identity too (Ibid).

5.8 Summary of findings

In this section I have analyzed what has been done by the authorities of the secessionist republic (top-down) in order to establish a state with a specific Transnistrian nation, then with the help of quantitative method applied for this study I have learned how do young people in PMR perceive themselves, and finally I have investigated how do people respond to the state's policies (bottom –up), since getting people's thoughts about policies that have been implemented in their territory improves our chances in learning more about establishment of a Transnistrian national identity.

Representatives from both gender groups, various ethnic communities, different age clusters, and Transnistrians residing in and outside of PMR were included in my sample. Respondents with these characteristics were expected to have potential differences in their perspectives and perceptions. Although my findings are limited to the size of sample, I may claim that gender was not an important variable in my project. It was hard to trace any

differences in answers of my respondents with regard to gender. Gender was not a significant variable in the quantitative part of the research too. Similarly to that, in the quantitative part variable age also was not significant as it did not affect the model under study. In the section elaborating on bottom-up responses to the nation-building policies undertaken by the leadership of the de facto state, differences with regard to age in answers obtained were more visible. Younger respondents tended to follow the popular trend - they were rather narrow minded and preferred to choose Russian as their main identity, even if it was at odds with their ethnic identity (with no profound explanation or reasons for this). More mature interviewees were able to make a profound analysis of the situation, were more Transnistrian-friendly, and showed more respect to other ethnic groups residing in PMR.

People, currently residing in PMR, were discreet criticizing anything about their leadership. They tended to complain on Moldova's atrocious policies and contribution to frozen conflict. Those who live in PMR today believe that their neighbor is to blame for all their misfortunes, while Russia is perceived by the majority as a helper or a friend in need. From conversations with former Transnistrians, who reside outside of the de facto state, I may claim that they were more self-confident, able to evaluate and analyze the intricate situation taking place in PMR as well as to criticize policies implemented by the PMR's authorities aimed at nation-building. Representatives of different ethnic groups presented contradictory perspectives on life and challenges they face every day. Ukrainians and Russians emphasized the importance of support and aid provided by the Russian side, whereas Moldovans shared stories of their discrimination and oppression by the Russian-speaking majority. Based on my findings, I may argue that not all ethnic groups residing in PMR are equally respected, tolerated and not all their cultures and languages are equally maintained. The usage of languages other than Russian is rather limited in all public spheres, whereas Russian enjoys its status of a predominant language in the region that has mostly Russian political elites at the top of the de facto state.

Assessing political leader's attempts aimed at nation-building in PMR, it must be said that they did not use all the instruments available in order to create a positive image of Transnistrianess. As a result, Transnistrian authorities failed promote Transnistrian patriotism among the masses as well as they did not spread and maintained national attachment and common national identity to all citizens. Based on my sample, I argue that people do not respond positively to the state's nation-building policies, as Transnistrians are not encouraged via education, media, tokens of banal nationalism, and political elite to cultivate their own identity. It was Moldovan side or an external threat that contributed and enhanced unity and

consolidation of forces of people residing on the left bank of the Dniester River. Then Soviet history and positive myths about common history have served as a basis for establishment of unique Transnistrian nation.

Conclusion

Emergence of new de facto states on the international arena inspired many scholars to study them. Thus, PMR's success in state-building, in spite of lack of its recognition, became a topic of many studies. However, not much research has been done on whether people residing together for more than two decades have managed to establish a new identity group, a new Transnistrian nation.

This thesis has contributed by studying the notion of Transnistrian nation as a "dual phenomenon" (Hobsbawm, 1990). First, based on secondary sources focusing on top-down approach I studied origins of the Transnistrian identity group from above. This was accomplished by looking at policies pursued by secessionist state's leadership aimed at creation of a Transnistrian nation. Then the results obtained were compared with responses from the bottom (bottom-up approach), namely how ordinary people perceive themselves (results from the quantitative research method analysis) and how state's policies are received by the population (conclusions based on interviews with citizens of Transnistria). Of course, there are certain limitations to this study that need to be considered while drawing generalizations to the larger population as data collection did not take place through a more structured random sampling technique.

In this thesis I argue that despite being born in the de facto state of Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic, most of young people residing there still opt for their ethnic identity or rather identify themselves with other preferred state instead of affiliating themselves with PMR's identity group. Based on the sample selected for this thesis, it was proved that there is a correlation between level of national pride and willingness to affiliate with one's homeland, namely Transnistria. Results obtained through the qualitative research approach enabled to draw some conclusions regarding the factors that have an impact on the choice of main identity among the citizens of the secessionist republic. The empirical findings indicated that among these factors there were:

- unrecognized status of the Transnistrian republic which unwittingly encourages people to affiliate themselves with another state, simultaneously making them less proud of being Transnistrian;
- unfair distribution and limited access of media (including TV channels and printed sources especially in Moldovan language) which leads to deliberate infringement of rights of certain group of people who feel excluded and oppressed by the Russian speaking majority;

- imperfect educational system which does not have full control over the educational programs. By copying the system of education from the Russian Federation it simultaneously imposes Russian identity and encourages cultivating Russian culture;
- dominating role of Russian language, on one hand, serves as an unifying tool and universal mean for communication, when, on the other hand, it undermines role of other languages used in the region making them unpopular and not prestigious;
- social contacts between citizens of the de facto state of PMR prove that some acquaintance are approved by the majority while the communication with others is rather limited (division based on ethnic affiliation);
- lack of knowledge, respect and pride in tokens of banal nationalism is resulted from lack of interest among the inhabitants of the secessionist state to promote their own Transnistrian culture, traditions and holidays which also leads to cultural fragmentation;
- restoring memories and myths of glorious past of the Soviet times at some point was the ground for the establishment of a new community identity. But then it created an illusion of the Soviet past revival making no development neither in reality nor in people's minds.

It needs to be noted that creating a new identity in PMR, of course, has been a challenging process. People of Transnistria consist of a mixture of local ethnic Ukrainians, Russians and Moldovans making it a mosaic of different ethnic groups. People inhabiting PMR today once have shared a strong common Soviet identity that brought them together. Then, in early 1990's, two identities collided on the opposing banks of the Dniester River: on one side, this confrontation was fueled by the Moldovan language policy conducted in Chisinau, on the other by Tiraspol with its pro-Russian views and dominating Russian language.

Due to differences in culture and language as well as taking into account circumstances like geographical position and historical background (Kolstø, 2000), it could be argued that on the left bank of the Dniester River new identity has emerged. This statement was confirmed by the respondents who claimed: "Yes, we all are children of Pridnestrovie", or "We have Transnistrian people". Only two decades have passed since Pridniestrovian Moldovan Republic started its struggle for recognition, when in order to be called a nation a long time along with a great number of transformations and psychological

processes are needed, so that masses would be willing to identify themselves with a new identity or a nation.

Transnistrian identity is rather fragile as it is exposed to various temptations. One of my respondents resumed it: “People in Transnistria do not know what they want, neither know they who they are. However, they understand which side gives more money”. Opposition to Moldovan identity and illegitimate status of PMR encouraged the creation of Transnistrian identity. However, when the threat is taken out of picture, what is left is constant reminders and impulses from the Russian Federation of similarities and consistency between two peoples as well as languid steps of PMR’s authorities aimed at creation of own Transnistrian culture and traditions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Tables from the robustness tests

Table A.1.1 Basic diagnostic plots

Q15 ~ IDUkr + IDRus + IDMold + IDother + Q14.PMR + Independent + Sa

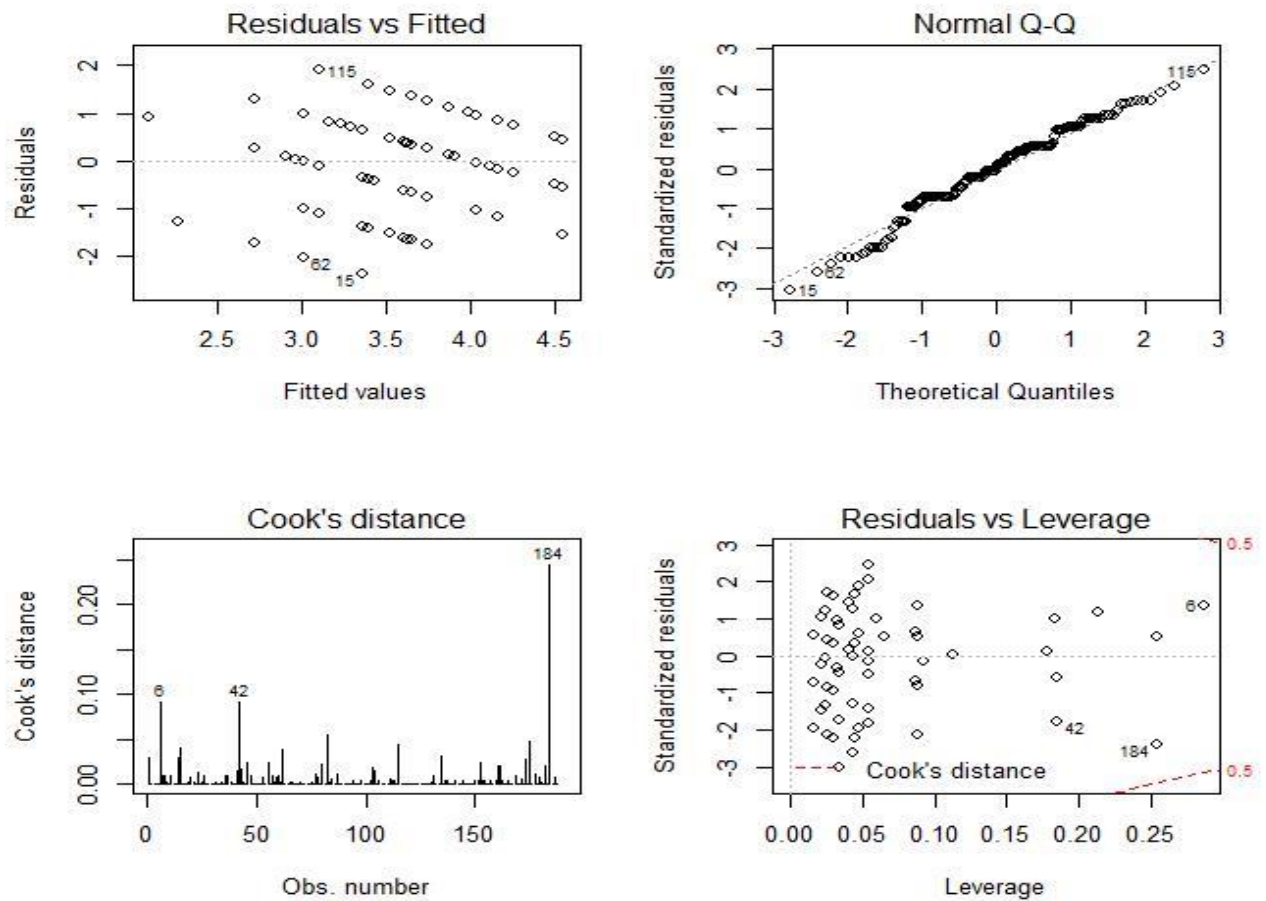


Table A.1.2 Effect plots

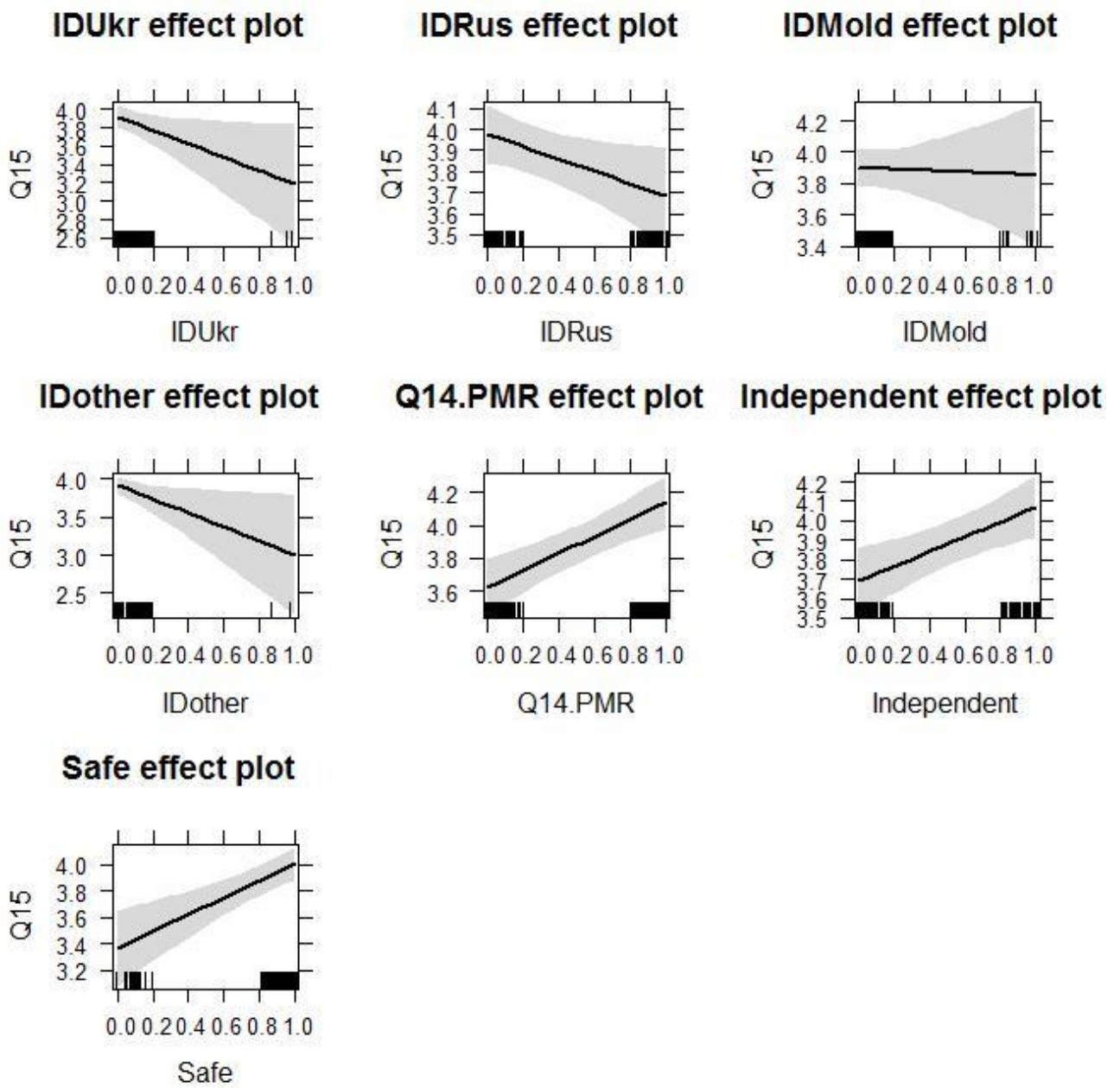
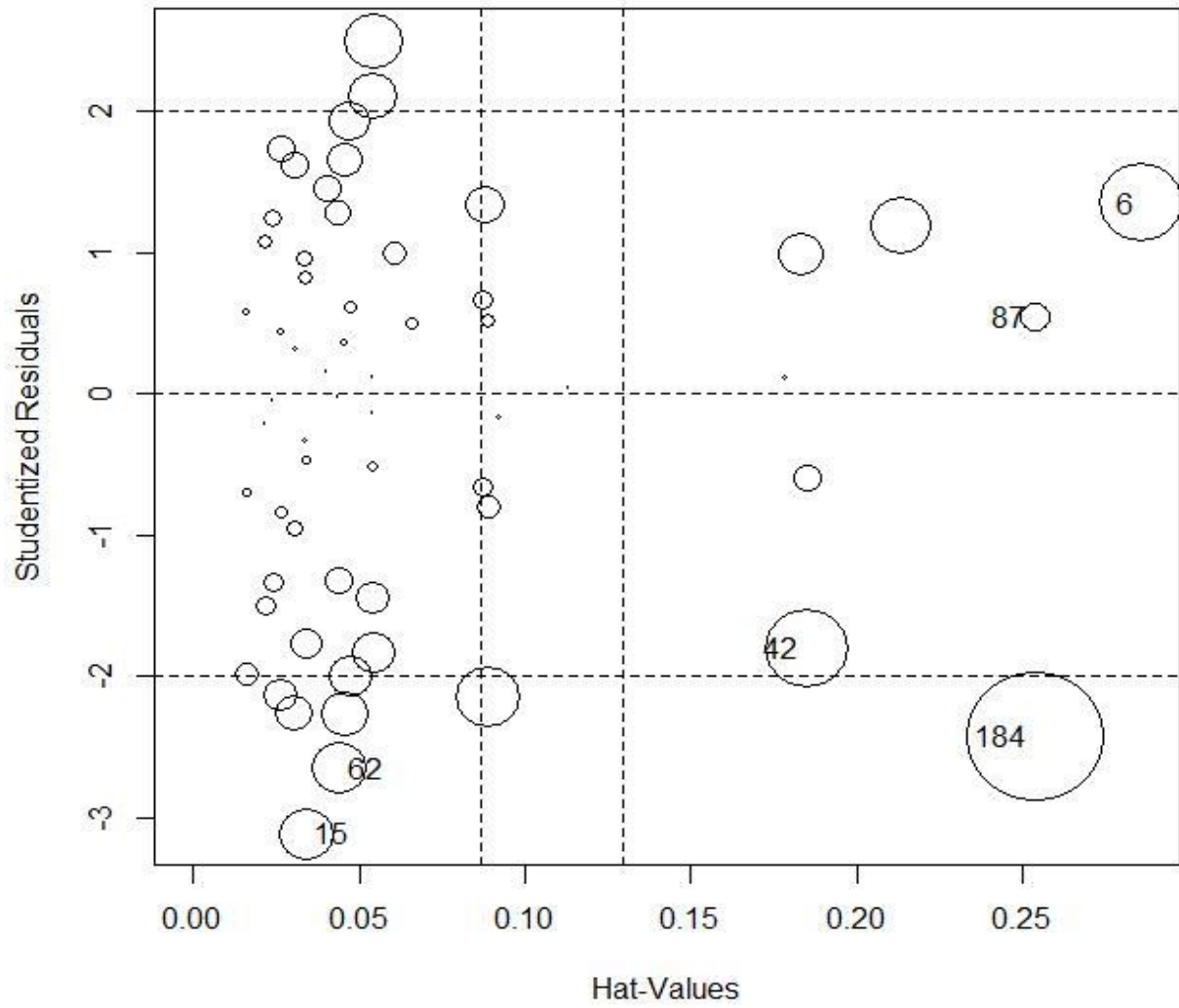


Table A.1.3 Influence plot



Appendix 2. Survey (in Russian)

Опрос о предпочтениях идентичности (ID_____)

Опрос является анонимным. Все полученные данные будут использованы исключительно в научных целях. Результаты опроса ни в коем случае не будут опубликованы.

Если Вы желаете продолжить свое участие в интервью укажите пожалуйста свой e-mail или номер телефона _____

1. Возраст: _____

2. Пол (поставьте галочку ✓):

Мужской	
Женский	

3. Вероисповедание: Я считаю себя (поставьте галочку ✓):

Православным	
Католиком	
Мусульманином	
Атеистом	
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить): _____	

4. Место рождения (поставьте галочку ✓):

В Тирасполе	
В другом городе ПМР(Бендеры, Рыбница, Дубоссары, Григориополь, Каменка, Днистровск, Слободзея)	
В деревне в ПМР	
За пределами ПМР (укажите где именно) страна _____ город _____	

5. Образование: факультет _____ Курс: _____

6. Выберите свой вариант:

	Да	Нет
Мой отец работает		
Моя мать работает		

7. Хоть один из моих родителей работает как (поставьте галочку ✓):

Фермер	
Бизнесмен	
Учитель	
Государственный служащий	
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить): _____	

8. Мой родной язык (может быть несколько вариантов) - _____

9. Я свободно владею следующими языками (поставьте галочку ✓):

Русским	
Украинским	
Молдавским	
Английским	
Немецким	
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить):	

10. Я считаю себя (выберите не более 2 ответов – самая важная идентичность и – если у Вас есть несколько – вторая по важности идентичность) (поставьте галочку ✓):

	самая важная идентичность	вторая по важности идентичность
Приднестровцем		
Русским		
Украинцем		
Молдованином		
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить)		

11. Я гражданин (выберите несколько вариантов, если это необходимо)

(поставьте галочку ✓):

Приднестровской Молдавской Республики	
России	
Молдовы	
Украины	
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить): _____	

12. Как давно Вы живете в Приднестровье? _____ лет

13. Вы когда-то были за границей?

да

нет (просьба уточнить где именно) _____

14. В будущем я бы предпочел/а Жить и работать (может быть несколько вариантов):

	поставьте галочку ✓
в Приднестровье	
в России	
в Украине	
в Молдове	
в Румынии	
в Европейском Союзе	
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить):	

15. Я горжусь тем, что являюсь жителем Приднестровской Молдавской Республики

(поставьте галочку ✓):

Очень горжусь	
Скорее горжусь, чем нет	
Мне безразлично	
Скорее не горжусь	
Совсем не горжусь	

16. Укажите, пожалуйста, насколько Вы согласны или не согласны с каждым из следующих утверждений: Приднестровье должно иметь больше политических и экономических контактов с (поставьте галочку ✓):

	Полностью согласен	Частично согласен	Нет твердого мнения	Частично не согласен	Категорически не согласен
Россией					
Украиной					
Молдовой					
Румынией					
Европейским Союзом					

17. В будущем я хотел(а) бы чтобы Приднестровье стало (поставьте галочку ✓):

Признанным независимым государством	
Частью Молдовы	
Частью России	
Частью Украины	
Частью Евросоюза	
Другой ответ (просьба уточнить):	

18. Самый важный праздник для меня это (поставьте галочку ✓):

День Республики 2 сентября	
День Конституции ПМР 24 декабря	
День Победы 9 мая	
День города Тирасполь 14 октября	
Праздник Октябрьской революции 7 ноября	

19. Как Вы оцениваете межнациональные отношения в ПМР?

	поставьте галочку ✓
Очень хорошие	
Скорее хорошие, чем плохие	
Скорее плохие, чем хорошие	
Очень плохие	

20. У Вас есть близкие родственники (родители, родные братья или сестры, супруг/супруга) (может быть несколько вариантов) в (поставьте галочку ✓):

Приднестровье	
России	
Украине	
Молдове	
В других странах (просьба уточнить)	

Спасибо за внимание!

Appendix 2.1 Survey (in English)

Survey on choice of identity ID_____

Please answer the following questions. Your answers will be used for this study only. Individual data will not be exposed. In case you would like to continue your participation in the interview, please give your telephone number or e-mail _____

1. Age:
2. Gender (please tick the right answer ✓):

Male	
Female	

3. Religion - I consider myself (please tick the right answer ✓):

Orthodox	
Catholic	
Muslim	
Atheist	
Other (please specify):	

4. Birth place - (please tick the right column ✓) :

Tiraspol	
Other big cities of Transnistria (Bendery, Rybnica, Dubossary, Hrihoriopol, Kamenka, Dnistrovsk, Slobodzeya)	
village in Transnistria	
Outside of Transnistria (please specify _____)	

5. Education: (specify program of studying)_____Year of studying:

6. Choose your variant (please tick the right answer ✓):

	Yes	No
My father is working		
My mother is working		

7. At least one of my parents is occupied as (please tick the right answer ✓):

Farmer	
Entrepreneur	
Teacher	
Public officer	
Other (please specify):	

8. My native language is _____

9. I freely speak the following languages (please tick the right answer ✓):

Ukrainian	
Moldovan	
English	
Russian	
German	
Other (please specify) _____	

10. I perceive myself as (choose not more than two options and rank your answers as the most important identity and then second most important identity) (✓) :

	Most important	Second most important
Transnistrian		
Moldovan		
Ukrainian		
Russian		
Other (please specify)		

11. I am a citizen of (choose few options if needed) (✓):

Transnistria	
Russia	
Moldova	
Ukraine	
Other (please specify) _____	

12. How long have you been living in Transnistria? _____ years

13. Have you ever been abroad?

No
 Yes (please specify where)

14. In the future I would prefer to Live and work in (rank your answers from 1 to 7 where 1 is the most desirable vision of future and 7 least desirable) :

	rank from 1 to 7
Transnistria	
European union (not including Romania)	
Russia	
Ukraine	
Romania	
Moldova	
Other (specify) _____	

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am proud of being a part of Transnistrian self-proclaimed republic (✓) :

Very proud	
Rather proud than not	
Rather not proud	
Not proud at all	
I am indifferent	

16. Please tell how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Transnistria should have more political and economic contacts with (✓):

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Нет твердого мнения
Russia					
Ukraine					
Moldova					
Romania					
EU (not including Romania)					

17. In the future I would like Transnistria to be (✓) :

Recognized independent state	
Part of Moldova	

Part of Russia	
Part of Ukraine	
Part of EU	
Other option (please specify):	

18. The most important holiday for me is (✓):

Day of Republic of PMR 2d of September	
Day of PMR's Constitution 24 th of December	
Victory Day 9 th of May	
Day of Tiraspol 14 th of October	
October revolution holiday 7 th of November	

19. How would you evaluate the inter-ethnic relations in PMR ?

	✓
Very good	
Rather good than bad	
Rather bad than good	
Very bad	

20. Do you have some relatives (not more distant than second cousins) in
(give several options if needed) (✓):

Transnistria	
Russia	
Ukraine	
Moldova	
Other countries (please specify)	

Thank you for your attention!

Appendix 3. List of interviews

ID	Gender	Identity	Age	Interview's location	Date	Follow-up interview via skype
1	Female	Moldovan	20	Tiraspol, PMR	08.12.2013	-
2	Female	Russian	22	Tiraspol, PMR	10.12.2013	03.09.2014
3	Male	Ukrainian	26	Oslo, Norway	20.01.2014 and 25.08.2014	-
4	Female	Moldovan	30	Oslo, Norway	09.04.2014	14.09.2014
5	Male	Ukrainian	32	Lviv, Ukraine	05.08.2014	08.10.2014
6	Female	Russian/Transnistrian	47	Tiraspol, PMR	04.12.2013	-
7	Female	Ukrainian	51	Tiraspol, PMR	06.12.2013	21.09.2014
8	Male	Russian/ Transnistrian	70	Tiraspol, PMR	05.12.2013	18.08.2014

Appendix 4. Maps



Figure A. 4.1 The map of the Republic of Moldova

Source: Official website of Republic of Moldova, available at <http://www.moldova.md/en/start/>, accessed on 25.11.2014

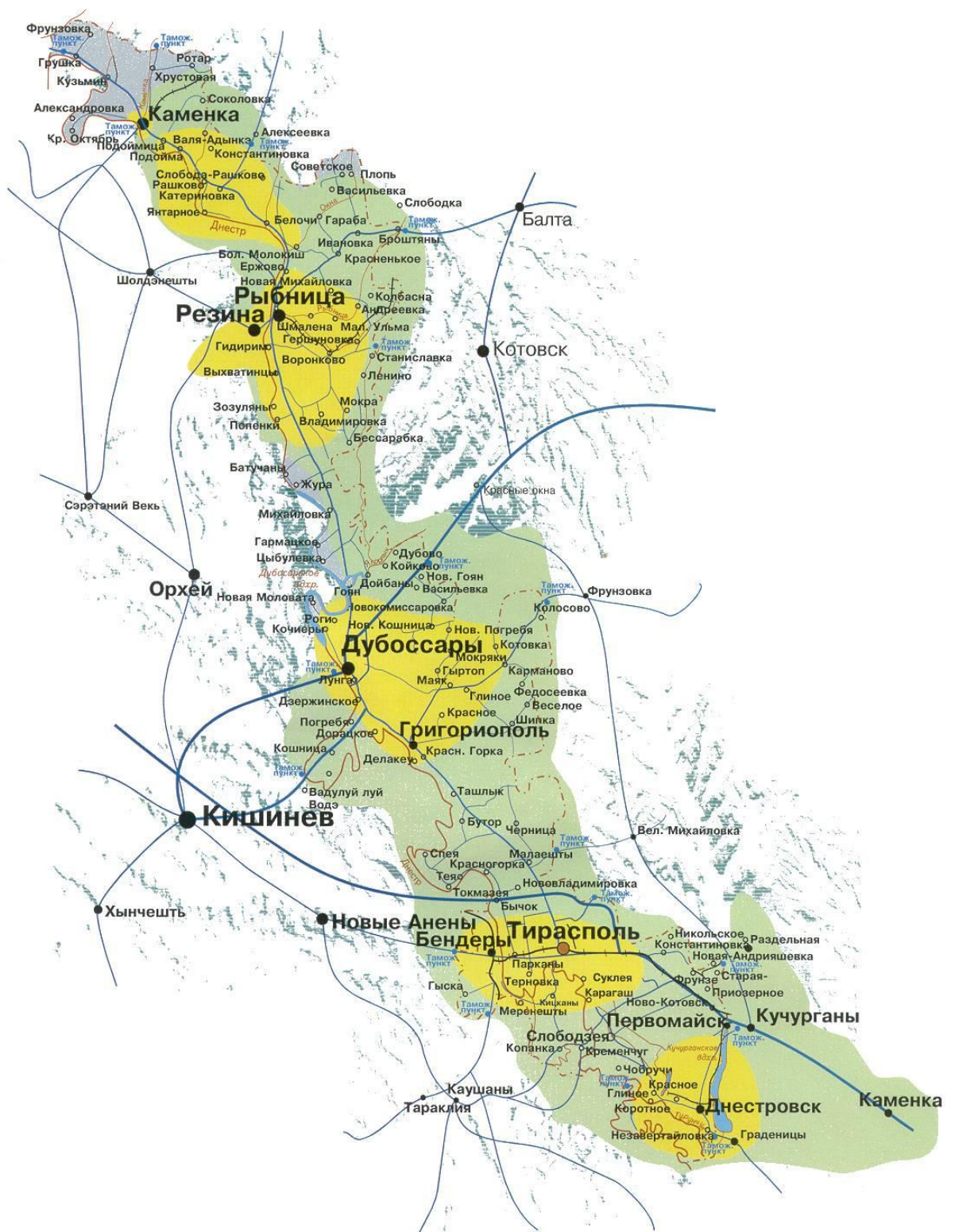


Figure A.4.2 The map of the PMR

Source: The map of the PMR (in Russian), available at <http://www.dci760719.idknet.com/Gorod/pmr.htm>, accessed on 25.11.2014



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