

**A COMPARISON OF RUSSIAN NARRATIVES IN MOLDOVAN INTERNET  
NEWS TO RUSSIAN NARRATIVES THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AND  
EASTERN EUROPE**

by  
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## **Abstract**

As information becomes a more predominant tool of contemporary warfare, Central and Eastern Europe serve on the front line of information operations originating from the Kremlin. Though the use of propaganda is not a new phenomenon for the Russian government, the evolution of information warfare has become more potent than ever. Current research identifies many aspects of Russian active measures throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Although Moldova is considered part of Eastern Europe, less Western academic research focuses specifically on the case of Moldova compared to countries like Romania and Ukraine. More scholarly attention is required to characterize Moldova's relation to the broader Eastern European region. This study examines Moldova through a within case study and compares how Russian master narratives present throughout Central and Eastern Europe fit in Moldova using content analysis of internet-based news articles. The study finds that the broader master narratives of Central and Eastern Europe apply to Moldova with minor exceptions. Not only does the study contribute to a lack of focused research on Moldova but also helps to validate the Center for European Policy Analysis on eight Russian master narratives.

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## Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i> .....	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i> .....	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Tables</i> .....	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction</i> .....	<i>1</i>
<i>Literature Review</i> .....	<i>4</i>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Definition of Active Measures</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Limitations</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Changing Nature of Warfare</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Russian Master Narratives in Eastern Europe</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Tactics and Techniques of Russian Active Measures</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>The Vulnerability of Eastern Europe</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Discussion of the Literature</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<i>Hypothesis and Methods</i> .....	<i>20</i>
<i>Data</i> .....	<i>26</i>
<b>Data Acquisition</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Data Characterization</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Table 1:</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Data Analysis</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<i>Discussion of Results</i> .....	<i>29</i>
<b>Nesting</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Western Hypocrisy</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Russia as a Global Player</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Anti-Ukraine vs. Ukraine is not a Country</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>State Weakness vs. Central/Eastern European Domestic Weakness</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>No Anti-US Theme?</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	<i>35</i>
<i>Appendix A</i> .....	<i>39</i>
<i>Bibliography</i> .....	<i>41</i>
<i>Curriculum Vita</i> .....	<i>48</i>

## List of Tables

**Table 1: Internet News Sources Represented in Examined Sample\_.....** Error! Bookmark not defined.

**Table 2: Code Tree- Tabulation of themes/master narratives in Sample.** Error! Bookmark not defined.

## **Introduction**

As a result of the widening rift between Russia and the West, post-Soviet republics located in the buffer area between NATO and Russia face the difficult challenge of navigating relationships with two main orientations at odds with one another. Europe and the United States commonly referred to as the West, seek Moldova's development tied to Western democratic and capitalistic norms while Russia desires to return Moldova firmly into its own sphere of influence. Economic opportunities, political ideology, and cultural heritage all weigh heavily on the overall orientation of post-Soviet states like Moldova. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 in response to Ukraine's perceived Western pivot illustrates how impactful such decisions can be. To prevent former Soviet republics like Moldova from inalterably moving toward a Western trajectory, the use of directed influence campaigns in the information space of Moldova aims to sway the orientation of the country in Russia's favor.

Moldova is often forgotten when considering the power struggle between the West and the Russian Federation. Situated as a landlocked part of Eastern Europe's Black Sea region, Moldova is a small developing country rife with weak governance and a stagnant economy stuck between the influence of Russia and the West. Moldova's current government is split on its intent to join the rest of Europe as an eventual EU member. However, unlike post-Soviet republics in the Baltics, Moldova has not benefitted from attempting capitalism or democracy as hoped. Many Moldovans remember a time when they were part of a larger power that gave them stability in their daily lives. As a post-Soviet republic and former vestige of the earlier Russian empire, Moldova shares cultural similarities with Russia that ensure Russia's influence in

Moldova remains significant. On the surface, Moldova appears to demonstrate vulnerabilities that might make it susceptible to Russian active measures. The literature illustrates clear patterns of Russian influence operations in Eastern Europe. One trademark example is the use of anti-Western narratives in Russian controlled media. Unlike most of Europe, less scholarly research and analysis are available regarding Russian influence campaigns in Moldova, leaving questions about how Moldova compares to Russian influence observed in other Eastern European states. Does Russia treat Moldova similarly to other Eastern European states? One way to begin to answer this question is to examine, *How do anti-Western themes in Russian sponsored media in Moldova compare to Russian master narratives throughout broader Eastern Europe?*

Examining Russian influence/active measures in Moldova is important because Moldova is often neglected when considering questions of Russian influence in Europe. Overall, examining Russian narratives provides insight into the Kremlin's world view, priorities, view of current developments, and view of historical events.<sup>1</sup> This important insight is necessary to predict Russia's next move and prepare to defend against the next evolution in information attacks. Whereas the Baltic countries receive significant scrutiny, far less scholarly research exists regarding Moldova's challenges with Russian influence. Furthermore, as a former Soviet Republic, Russia considers Moldova to be within its near abroad and part of its "privileged interests." Examining how Russia

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<sup>1</sup> Rebegea, Corina, "Question More, But Not Too Much," in *Challenges in Strategic Communication and Fighting Propaganda in Eastern Europe: Solutions for a Future Common Project*. ed. Dan Sultanescu, Vol. 142. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series - E: Human and Societal Dynamics. (Amsterdam, Netherlands: IOS Press, Incorporated, 2019), 76.  
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jhu/detail.action?docID=5716768>.

operates in what it likely perceives as a less constrained environment in Moldova can lead to valuable insights for Western policymakers when considering Russian influence in other areas. Most importantly, identifying and validating Russian malign narratives is critical to bolstering defenses and resilience in both Moldova and abroad. Corina Rebegea describes the importance of master narratives to countering Russian active measures.

Understanding how master narratives are adapted to certain countries or groups within countries can help design public information campaigns, as well as more targeted educational programs for citizens, local media or other civic actors. This will enhance Western efforts to advance more resourceful public education programs will require more innovative and far-reaching public messaging and counter-narratives that can limit the scope and reach of Russian disinformation campaigns. It may be time for Western democracies and Euro-Atlantic institutions to start re-telling their story and thus rebuild a shared space of values, institutions and well-being.<sup>2</sup>

This study seeks to examine available literature from American and European governments, NGOs, think tanks, and credible journalism to frame the issue of Russian influence in Moldova. The predominant premise of existing Western literature converges on the theme that Russian active measures are a harmful practice that undermines credible democratic institutions and threatens a free and independent information sphere. Although this project's hypothesis agrees with the theme of existing literature, the project seeks to understand how Russia is operating within the information sphere of Moldova. Although the author acknowledges that Russia likely leverages its influence in multiple domains (economic, political, orthodox church, cultural/historical/language) this study

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 82.



will focus on the information domain of internet-based media. Furthermore, this research study aims to address the lack of focused research on the Republic of Moldova by conducting a within case study.

## **Literature Review**

### *Introduction*

The use of information by state actors to make targeted impacts on a person or population is undeniable. The Bolsheviks' use of agitation propaganda "agitprop" to foment revolution in Tsarist Russia was identified over one hundred years ago and has continued in various forms since.<sup>3</sup> Advances in technology caused methods and techniques to evolve just as the canon evolved into the intercontinental ballistic missile. In the age of mass digital information, targeted information became arguably the most compelling instrument for change in the history of humankind. Moreover, information can be used more cheaply than weapons of mass destruction and substituted for the impacts of more traditional forms of diplomacy such as trade and foreign aid. In other words, information makes an attractive instrument to harness when matched against better-resourced opponents. Russia today finds itself challenged financially while attempting to re-emerge as a world power and challenge the accepted tenants of the Western-dominated world order.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Senate, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (n.d.). Open Hearing, March 30, 2017 "Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns (pp. 10-29) (R. Godson, Author) [S. Rept. from 115th Cong., 1st sess.]. Retrieved April 20, 2019, from <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/openhearingdisinformation-primer-russian-active-measures-and-influence-campaigns>

One of the understood aims of the Russian phoenix is to regain influence if not outright control of the states that comprise the former Soviet Union. Renamed Russia's "near abroad" and area of "privileged interests," Russia claimed the right to protect its interests in this area almost as if it were Russian sovereign territory since 2008.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, "Russia aims to erode public support for Euro-Atlantic values in order to increase its own relative power. It exploits ethnic, linguistic, regional, social, and historical tensions, and promotes anti-systemic causes, extending their reach and giving them a spurious appearance of legitimacy."<sup>5</sup>

This literature review seeks to examine the existing body of research regarding Russian active measures in Central and Eastern Europe to illuminate how Russia may attempt to influence Moldovans' views of NATO. Through an examination of contemporary scholarly material in the English language, this review will evaluate the current body of knowledge in preparation for a focused research study considering Russian active measures in Moldova.

### ***Definition of Active Measures***

Professor Thomas Rid defined the term active measures for a 2017 hearing before the United States Senate. "Active measures are semi-covert or covert intelligence operations to shape an adversary's political decisions. Almost always active measures

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<sup>4</sup> "The Economist. "Medvedev on Russia's Interests." The Economist. September 1, 2008. <https://www.economist.com/certain-ideas-of-europe/2008/09/01/medvedev-on-russias-interests>.

<sup>5</sup> Lucas, Edward and Peter Pomerantsev. "Winning the Information War Redux." Center for European Analysis, August 2016. <https://www.cepa.org/infowar-redux>.

conceal or falsify the source.”<sup>6</sup> One year later, Roy Godson, Professor Emeritus from Georgetown University, also provided a definition to the Select Committee on Intelligence for the United States Senate. “Active Measures are a term that came into use in the 1950s [Soviet Union] to describe certain overt and covert techniques for influencing events and behavior in, and the action of, foreign countries.”<sup>7</sup> Although other definitions exist, most modern scholars seem to converge on definitions similar to the two provided by Thomas Rid and Roy Godson. The term active measures will be used during this research study according to the definitions of Thomas Rid and Roy Godson.

### *Limitations*

In 2018, Dr. Alla Rosca identified that Moldova was among the least examined cases concerning Russian information warfare; despite being one of the weakest to resist such attacks. Dr. Rosca determined that Moldova is, therefore, a strong candidate for pervasive Russian information operations.<sup>8</sup> This literature review will examine the scholarly discourse on Russian information operations or active measures throughout Eastern Europe to arrive at possible behaviors that may also be present in Moldova. Additionally, this literature review will examine English texts or limited works in the Russian language translated into English. When considering the case of Moldova specifically, sources are available from regional think tanks and NGOs but do not always

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Congress. Senate. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Hearings before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns Panel I*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., 2017 <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-disinformation-primer-russian-active-measures-and-influence-campaigns-panel-i>.

<sup>7</sup> Testimony of Roy Godson. Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate. 2018. *Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns Panel*. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/S%20Hrg%20115-40%20Pt%201.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Rosca, Alla. “Media Security Structural Indicators: The Case of Moldova.” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 26, no. 3 (2018): 366. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/699571>.

meet the scholarly rigor needed for academic research and have been reviewed but not considered for this literature review. Through online research, the author found a preponderance of scholarly work describing active measures in Eastern Europe on a broad scale, but far less detail on how active measures sought to influence a target population toward a specific narrative such as anti-NATO.

Furthermore, even less scholarly research exists measuring the effectiveness of Russian active measures and influence campaigns.<sup>9</sup> A dearth of research on measuring the effectiveness of Russian active measures holds true for Eastern Europe and Moldova explicitly. Moreover, the lack of adequate measures stands as the most substantial academic gap for the study of Russian active measures for the community of interest at large.<sup>10</sup>

### *Changing Nature of Warfare*

Warfare evolves to make use of technological advances that might provide an advantage over the adversary. Scholars unanimously accept that information has become an evolutionary step of modern warfare. Although Russia has a history of using information operations to achieve political objectives, it was not adopted into Russian military warfare until around 2009, when Russia secretly trained soldiers in information operations. Nevertheless, Russia did not admit to their existence until much later. Information operations and Russian active measures are synonymous for this literature

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<sup>9</sup> Gerber, Theodore P., and Jane Zavisca. "Does Russian Propaganda Work?" *The Washington Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2016.1204398>.

<sup>10</sup> Rotaru, Vasile. "Forced Attraction? How Russia Is Instrumentalizing Its Soft Power Sources in the 'Near Abroad.'" *Problems of Post-Communism* 65, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2018): 36.

review. Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu declared information to be a weapon in 2015.<sup>11</sup> However, by 2019 Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia Valery Gerasimov made Russia's position unequivocal during a speech at a Russian military academy.

A new reality of future wars will consist of the transfer of military actions in [the information sphere]. At the same time, information technologies are becoming, in fact, one of the most promising types of weapons. The information sphere, without having clearly defined national borders, provides opportunities for remote, covert influence not only on critical information infrastructures but also on the population of the country, directly affecting the state's national security. That is why the study of issues of preparation and conduct of informational actions is the most essential task of military science.<sup>12</sup>

After confirming Russia's intention to use information as a tool of warfare, scholars examined how information warfare is used for political ends. Dr. Rosca again echoes the prevailing sentiment about information warfare. "The evolution of information's role in modern warfare has brought about changes in how states understand national security. This change is reflected in the existing literature on the topic, which indicates a trend toward blurring the line between war and peace and moving conflict into the public domain."<sup>13</sup> No longer is warfare practiced only by men in uniforms driving tanks, but information warfare is public. Vasile Rotaru, from Romania's National University of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest, reinforces this point by adding

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<sup>11</sup> "Shoigu: Information Becomes Another Armed Forces Component." Interfax, March 28, 2015, English edition. <http://www.interfax.com/newsinf.asp?id=581851>.

<sup>12</sup> Gerasimov, V. (2019, March 4). *Vectors of military strategy development*. Speech presented at General meeting of the Academy of Military Sciences, Moscow. Retrieved April 20, 2019, from <http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/>

<sup>13</sup> Rosca, "Media Security Indicators," 366.

that Russian information operations no longer fit cleanly within the military or intelligence services but can be supported by all levers of power.<sup>14</sup>

In many cases, scholars argue that active measures prevent Russia from expending national treasure to enact its will on a target population. Without having to deploy troops that can be expensive and politically costly, Russia can reclaim control over vulnerable states.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the cases of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 demonstrate that active measures may reduce the human and financial cost of traditional warfare but cannot stand alone.

### ***Russian Master Narratives in Eastern Europe***

Corina Rebegea of the Center for European Policy Analysis states, “Russia believes it is entitled to a gray zone of privileged influence along its borders and uses information warfare in order to create dissensions within the Euro-Atlantic alliance and erode public support for liberal democratic values to increase its relative power.”<sup>16</sup> To this end, Western scholars generally agree that Russian active measures attempt to promote Russia and weaken views of the West by synchronizing information operations toward specific master narratives. The Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) succinctly laid out eight major master narratives that apply to countries in Central and Eastern Europe which are congruent with the views of most Western scholars. 1) Anti-EU, 2) Anti-NATO, 3) Anti-US, 4) Central/Eastern European domestic failure, 5) Shared

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<sup>14</sup> Rotaru, “Forced Attraction?” 37.

<sup>15</sup> Giles, Keir. *The next Phase of Russian Information Warfare*. Vol. 20. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Riga, Latvia, 2016. <https://www.stratcomcoe.org/next-phase-russian-information-warfare-keir-giles>

<sup>16</sup> Rebegea, 75.

history, 6) Ukraine is not a country, 7) Western Russophobia, 8) Russia as a global player.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of how the message is propagated, each effort can usually be traced back to one of these eight master narratives. The narratives provide attempts to erode confidence in Euro-Atlantic systems and promote Russia as a natural leader for Eastern Europe. Dan Sultanescu describes Russia's complex approach to promote their ultimate goals.

Russia's contemporary methods of information warfare do not crudely promote the Kremlin's agenda. Instead, they are calibrated to confuse, befuddle and distract. Russia aims to erode public support for Euro-Atlantic values in order to increase its own relative power. It exploits ethnic, linguistic, regional, social and historical tensions, and promotes anti-systemic causes, extending their reach and giving them a spurious appearance of legitimacy.<sup>18</sup>

### *Tactics and Techniques of Russian Active Measures*

Additionally, scholars point out often that Russia does not merely promote their positions through mass media, often Russia sends several overlapping and often non-congruent messages that obfuscate Russian aims while simultaneously obscuring the information sphere to sow doubt about the information that people receive. More simply, Russia promotes ideas but also attacks ideas in several ways. This pattern has been noticed widely by Western scholars on the topic. Dr. Mason Richey summarizes the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 76.

<sup>18</sup> Sultanescu, Dan, Dana Sultanescu, and Daniel Buti. "Towards a Better Understanding of Anti- Western Propaganda & Building an Efficient Model to Fight Back," in *Challenges in Strategic Communication and Fighting Propaganda in Eastern Europe: Solutions for a Future Common Project*. ed. Dan Sultanescu, Vol. 142. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series - E: Human and Societal Dynamics. (Amsterdam, Netherlands: IOS Press, Incorporated, 2019), 10.  
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jhu/detail.action?docID=5716768>.

phenomenon, “Of special interest is the notion that Russia’s disinformation is potent because it does not necessarily establish falsehoods as true but rather pollutes political discourse such that news information consumers are led to doubt the very concepts of truth and objective political facts.”<sup>19</sup> The literature suggests that undermining the concept of truth in the information sphere can be as powerful a tool as promoting a counter-narrative. A prime example and case study of how Russia promotes narratives while simultaneously degrading the truth can be observed within Russia itself. Overall, active measures in Eastern Europe seek to cause dissension among groups united against a Russian action, promote fake news to create doubt on the internet as a conduit for reliable news, and manipulate interpretation or application of international laws to further Russian aims.<sup>20,21,22,23</sup>

Clint Watts, a fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, gave testimony to the United States Senate in 2017 and outlined the objectives of Russian active measures based on an examination of available research during a panel on disinformation and Russian active measures.

Russian active measures hope to topple democracies through the pursuit of five complementary objectives: one, undermine citizen confidence in democratic governance; two, foment and exacerbate divisive political fissures; three, erode trust between citizens and elected officials and their institutions; four, popularize Russian policy agendas

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<sup>19</sup> Richey, Mason. “Contemporary Russian Revisionism: Understanding the Kremlin’s Hybrid Warfare and the Strategic and Tactical Deployment of Disinformation.” *Asia Europe Journal* 16, no. 1 (March 2018): 101. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-017-0482-5>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>21</sup> Rosca, “Media Security Indicators,” 365.

<sup>22</sup> Sultanescu, “Towards a Better Understanding...” 11.

<sup>23</sup> Milan Šuplata, Milan Nič. “Russia’s Information War in Central Europe.” GLOBSEC Policy Institute, 2016. 2. <https://www.kremlinwatch.eu/userfiles/russia-s-information-war-in-central-europe15273208769101.pdf>.



within foreign populations; five, create general distrust or confusion over information sources by blurring the lines between fact and fiction, a very pertinent issue today in our country.<sup>24</sup>

### *The Vulnerability of Eastern Europe*

Scholars assess that since Central and Eastern Europe is geographically closest to Russia, Central and Eastern Europe is most vulnerable region to Russian influence operations.<sup>25,26,27</sup> “The main front line [for active measures] remains Central and Eastern Europe. Central and Eastern Europe are the main targets of Russian active measures due to their geostrategic importance to Russia.

For many states in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia is a valuable trading partner and energy provider which gives Russia a considerable position of strength with which to influence economic relationships in the region. Because of proximity and advantageous geography, Central and Eastern Europe can trade with Russia more efficiently and, therefore, cheaper than other large economies.<sup>28</sup> As the largest economy and energy provider in the region, Russia retains a crucial economic advantage that necessitates maintaining a cooperative relationship between much of Central/Eastern Europe and Russia. Furthermore, Russia views the positioning of Central and Eastern

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<sup>24</sup> Testimony of Clint Watts. Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate. 2018. *Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns Panel*, 30 March 2017, 30. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/os-trid-033017.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Sultanescu, “Towards a Better Understanding...” 12.

<sup>26</sup> Rosca, “Media Security Indicators,” 365.

<sup>27</sup> Rebegea, “Question More,” 78.

<sup>28</sup> Dubnov, Arkady. “Reflecting on a Quarter Century of Russia’s Relations With Central Asia.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/04/19/reflecting-on-quarter-century-of-russia-s-relations-with-central-asia-pub-76117>.

European states as a buffer from NATO to the West or Islamic terrorism from the South; therefore, maintaining strong influence within Central and Eastern Europe is a strategic priority for Russia.<sup>29</sup>

More profoundly, Russia shares cultural and historical heritage with the states of Central and Eastern Europe that provide additional levers of influence for Russia to exploit. Either part of the Russian Empire or Soviet Empire, a sense of shared historical memory, Soviet culture, Russian literature, and Russian language are powerful symbols often present in Russia's active measures in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>30</sup> The symbols resonate appreciably within the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries, which allows Russia to manipulate the past and create an attractive image that emphasizes a bond that is not present with the West.<sup>31</sup>

The body of literature available lays out the advantages that Russia enjoys in Eastern Europe more than other locations. First, weak institutions and poor governance in developing Eastern European countries make developing countries less resilient to active measures. Dr. Rosca explains how weak laws allow the media to operate mainly unchecked to regulation, which provides opportunities for Russian involvement legally and illegally.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, a general lack of media literacy within the populations, especially among the older generation, exacerbates the vulnerability and highlights the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Muzalevsky, Roman. "Russia's Strategy in Central Asia: An Analysis of Key Trends." *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, Winter 2009, 26–42. <http://yalejournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/094103muzalevsky.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Sultanescu, "Towards a Better Understanding..." 11.

<sup>32</sup> Rosca, Alla. "Media in Moldova: Between Freedom and Monopoly - Foreign Policy Research Institute." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, September 13, 2017. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2017/09/media-moldova-freedom-monopoly/>.

lack of resilience to hostile narratives. Government bodies responsible for monitoring and regulating the media are underdeveloped or powerless due to inexperience, corruption, and weak governance. Likewise, civil society groups focused on independent journalism, or fact-checking is usually either frail or non-existent in many states within Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>33,34</sup>

Certain groups within Eastern Europe are especially considered to be more vulnerable to Russian influence campaigns. First, members of the Russian Orthodox Church are considered to be vulnerable due to high levels of trust in the church, which is used as an instrument of state influence by the Kremlin.<sup>35, 36</sup> Ethnic groups are also particularly vulnerable in Eastern Europe. Due to social backlash from the greater community of Russian speakers, many Eastern European states avoid eradicating the Russian language. As a result, ethnic minorities continue to use the Russian language as their second language instead of the state's official language. By receiving news in the Russian language, minority populations are particularly exposed to targeted narratives and active measures.<sup>37</sup> Lastly, approximately 500,000 Moldovan migrant workers live in Russia and send remittances home. The large Moldovan diaspora in Russia makes up

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 114.

<sup>34</sup> Rosca, "Media Security Indicators," 371.

<sup>35</sup> Pertsev, Andrey. "President and Patriarch: What Putin Wants From the Orthodox Church." Carnegie Moscow Center. Carnegie Moscow Center - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/75058>.

<sup>36</sup> Matveev, Stanislav. "Contemporary Influence of the Russian Orthodox Church Within the 'Autocephalous' Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia." Kremlin Watch, April 10, 2018. <https://www.kremlinwatch.eu/userfiles/contemporary-influence-of-the-russian-orthodox-church-within-the-autocephalous-orthodox-church-of-the-czech-lands-and-slovakia.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> Curararu, Andrei. "Disinformation Resilience in Central and Eastern Europe (Moldova)." Ukrainian PRISM Foreign Policy Council, 2018, 231. [http://prismua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DRI\\_CEE\\_2018.pdf](http://prismua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DRI_CEE_2018.pdf).

approximately 20% of the Moldovan population. This group is inundated in Russian messaging due to their location.<sup>38,39</sup>

Besides vulnerable populations, often Russian television programming is more popular than national programming due to better production as a result of higher budgets. Licensing popular Russian programming can be highly profitable and, therefore, enticing for businesses and influential business owners. This model enables significant television exposure to a large population within an Eastern European country like Moldova.<sup>40,41</sup>

As a way to compare the messages and narratives of Russian information operations throughout Central and Eastern Europe Corina Rebegea and the Center for European Policy Analysis determined that all the messages promoted by Russian active measures in Central and Eastern Europe could be linked to eight major master narratives: *Russia as a global player, shared history, Western Russophobia, anti-EU, anti-NATO, anti-US, Central/Eastern Europe Domestic Failure, Ukraine is not a country.*<sup>42</sup>

### ***Discussion of the Literature***

One of the most substantial aspects of the literature was a comprehensive examination of the methods used by Russia to influence target audiences. Mainly viewed as a continuation of the strategy and methods of the KGB, modern active measures did not vary widely from Soviet methods but evolved for advances in technology. Much of the literature gave specific accounts and detailed analysis of how Russia attempted to influence populations.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Rosca, "Media Security Indicators," 374.

<sup>40</sup> Curaru, "Disinformation Resilience," 229.

<sup>41</sup> Rotaru, "Forced Attraction?" 37.

<sup>42</sup> Rebegea, "Question More," 78.

From a Western point of view that generally views Russian active measures as a harmful practice, the examined scholarship focused on describing the target, methods, and objectives of active measures. The aim of such works are to highlight harmful practices that exploit and threaten Western interests for the sake of policy and public awareness. While considering the greater body of Western literature on active measures, articles proposing an alternative view of Russian active measures were not found in Western scholarly databases. On the other hand, a cursory examination of Russian literature on the topic proposed that Western accusations of Russia's use of active measures were overblown and linked to Russophobia. One article, Vasile Rotaru's, "Forced Attraction? How Russia is Instrumentalizing Its Soft Power Sources in the 'Near Abroad'" was the only article that differed from the rest of the examined literature by doubting the effectiveness of Russian soft power techniques against Russian speaking audiences. Unfortunately, the author's method was mostly persuasive in style and lacked empirical evidence needed to measure the effectiveness of Russian active measures.

Measuring the effectiveness of Russian active measures stands out as the most glaring gap in scholarship on the topic of Russian information operations. The overwhelming focus of the literature revolved around counteracting active measures instead of measuring them. According to Cameron Watt, Richard Shultz, and Roy Godson, a lack of dedicated effort to measure the impact or effectiveness of Soviet active measures existed in the Cold War as well.<sup>43,44</sup> The difficulty in objectively and reliably

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<sup>43</sup> Watt, Cameron. "The Proper Study of Propaganda." *Intelligence & National Security* 15, no. 4 (December 1, 2000): 160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684520008432632>.

<sup>44</sup> Godson, Roy, and Richard Shultz. "Soviet Active Measures: Distinctions and Definitions." *Defense Analysis* 1, no. 2 (1 June 1985): 110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07430178508405191>.

measuring impact and effectiveness are the largest barriers to growth in this area of research and should be considered as a strong need in the future.

The literature did capture scholarly discourse on the strategy of Russian active measures. Disinformation either seeks to promote a narrative, replace a narrative, or sow doubt and discourse in the prevailing narrative by confusing the truth.<sup>45,46</sup> Though none of the experts assessed which was the most effective technique, additional analysis examining the differences in the techniques could be helpful. Notably, the three main techniques are not exclusive and often run simultaneously.<sup>47</sup>

Although CEPA identified eight master narratives within Central and Eastern Europe, CEPA did not identify anti-LGBTQ narrative or anti-traditional values narrative as one of the significant narratives in Central and Eastern Europe. Although the sentiment is wrapped up in the anti-EU and anti-US narratives, no significant discourse deliberated on whether or not to consider such a narrative as a separate master narrative. Future research might consider examining the question further.

A third gap that identified in the literature review constituted a lack of focused scholarly analysis conducted on Moldova. Generally, Moldova was mentioned in the context of Eastern Europe with the occasional Moldovan fact referenced, but the scholarly examination of Moldova as a case study was not as common as other Eastern European Black Sea states such as Ukraine or Romania. The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania appeared to have the largest body of scholarly research on Russian

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<sup>45</sup> Wilson, Andrew. "Four Types of Russian Propaganda." Aspen Institute Central Europe, April 2015. <https://www.aspenreview.com/article/2017/four-types-of-russian-propaganda/>.

<sup>46</sup> Mason. "Contemporary Russian Revisionism," 103.

<sup>47</sup> Lucas and Pomerantsev. "Winning the Information War Redux."

influence in the information sphere. The Black Sea region also contains a good deal of research, especially Ukraine with the glaring exception of Moldova.<sup>48</sup> Focused examination of Moldova as it pertains to the Eastern European region is the primary area that this research study intends to contribute. By examining Russian active measures in the Republic of Moldova, better comparisons can be made to Russian active measures in other countries to more comprehensively understand the activity.

Upon reviewing the body of work considered for this literature review, due to the similar epistemological viewpoint of most of the scholarship considered, no significant disagreements in the literature were noted. Western scholarship maintains that knowledge ought to be based on independent facts and that minimizing bias is ideal. Soviets, on the other hand, viewed the pursuit of knowledge as inherently biased and therefore a tool to advance the interests of the state.<sup>49</sup> Russia today is considered to maintain the same view about knowledge and information through convenience and nationalism more than ideology.

All authors reviewed agreed that Russian active measures were a threat to Western values of transparency and freedom of speech. The literature review focused on Western scholarship, which includes a Western world view bias. Understandably, if sources from Russia were considered, differences in framing would likely arise. The bias of the Western view should be considered in any analysis of the scholarly work available on Russian active measures.

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<sup>48</sup> Rosca,. "Media Security Structural Indicators" 366.

<sup>49</sup> Berkhoff, Karel C. *Motherland in Danger : Soviet Propaganda During World War II*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/jhu/detail.action?docID=3301070>.

One area where the literature diverged slightly was on whether Russian active measures constituted a new phenomenon or simply a continuation of tactics, techniques, and procedures from the Soviet Union. Dr. Roy Godson testified before the U.S. Senate in 2017 that similar activity occurred within Russia as early as the Bolshevik revolution.<sup>50</sup> A long-time scholar and professor on the topic, Godson wrote extensively about Soviet active measures in his book, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* in 1984, and has since compared Soviet techniques to contemporary phenomena.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia Valery Gerasimov both contend that the weaponization of information into warfare constitutes a new step.<sup>52,53</sup>

Similarly, Western analysts examining the techniques of Russian active measures tend to view the phenomenon as categorically new. On the other hand, detailed analysis examining the techniques of contemporary Russian active measures seldom cites scholarly research conducted on Soviet active measures.<sup>54,55,56</sup> The main argument supporting that specific active measures techniques are new centers around the fact that

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<sup>50</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Hearings before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Disinformation: A Primer in Russian Active Measures*, 12.

<sup>51</sup> Shultz, Richard H., and Roy Godson. *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy*. 1st edition. Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984.

<sup>52</sup> "Shoigu: Information Becomes Another Armed Forces Component."

<sup>53</sup> Gerasimov, Valery. "Vectors of Military Strategy Development."

<sup>54</sup> Oren, Elizabeth. "A Dilemma of Principles: The Challenges of Hybrid Warfare From a NATO Perspective." *Special Operations Journal* 2, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 58–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23296151.2016.1174522>.

<sup>55</sup> Willemo, Jakob. "Trends and Developments in the Malicious Use of Social Media | StratCom." NATO Center for Strategic Communications Excellence, August 2019. <https://www.stratcomcoe.org/trends-and-developments-malicious-use-social-media>.

<sup>56</sup> Alba, Davey, and Sheera Frenkel. "Russia Tests New Disinformation Tactics in Africa to Expand Influence." *The New York Times*, October 30, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/30/technology/russia-facebook-disinformation-africa.html>.



the internet did not exist during the Soviet era; therefore, the fundamentally new mode of mass communication constitutes a new method of influencing targeted audiences.

Conversely, most of the academic sources cited in this study advocate that although the vehicle for propagating influence operations changed, Russia largely fell back on the familiar forms of propaganda to influence target audiences.<sup>57</sup>

The examination of characteristics of Russian active measures in the literature suggests that Moldova is likely a victim of targeted activity intended to influence popular opinion on NATO. Moldova appears to meet many of the vulnerable conditions identified in the literature on the Central and Eastern European region. Moldova was a Soviet Republic and still carries many of the historical linkages of shared history, culture, and language that are exploitable by Russia. Moldova still has a sizeable population that falls under the Russian orthodox tradition as well. Furthermore pensioners and ethnic groups tend to rely on Russian media sources for their information.

## **Hypothesis and Methods**

The goal of this paper is to examine whether the Kremlin treats Moldova the same as it treats other near abroad countries in Central and Eastern Europe with regards to directed media influence operations. Utilizing Moldova as a case study, this study aims to compare specific characteristics of Moldova to the characteristics attributed to the greater region of Central and Eastern Europe. One way to examine how Moldova fits into the region with regard to Russian active measures is to compare the narratives promoted in

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<sup>57</sup> Lucas, Edward. "Watch Out: Russia's Tactics Will Evolve." CEPA Center for European Policy Analysis, October 30, 2017. <https://www.cepa.org/russias-tactics-will-evolve>.

Moldovan media to narratives promoted more widely in Central and Eastern European regions. Since less scholarly analysis has been conducted on Russian active measures in Moldova compared to its neighbors Ukraine, Romania, and the rest of Eastern Europe, examining Moldova may provide more insight on how Russia views Moldova compared to its regional neighbors.

First, the underlying assumption for forming a hypothesis is that Moldova is a target of Russian active measures and is susceptible to such active measures. Dr. Rosca, one of the few scholars to apply Western scholarly rigor to the case of Moldova, described why former Soviet states tend to be susceptible to Russian active measures.

Firstly, [former Soviet] countries are geographically close to Russia. Secondly, large segments of their populations lived in the former Soviet Union, speak Russian, and are familiar with Russian culture—or are ethnically Russian themselves. Thirdly, the countries of the “near abroad” are comparatively vulnerable because they are newly created states with a limited or non-existent tradition of sovereignty; they have weak government institutions, a high level of corruption, a fragile justice system, and a beleaguered independent civil society and media. Moreover, and most importantly, they remain in some ways economically dependent on Russia.<sup>58</sup>

Rosca’s description adequately describes not only former Soviet states broadly, but Moldova in particular which posits that Russian active measures actively target Moldova. Through a within case study examination of Moldova’s media landscape consisting of the categories of society, media outlets, media professionals, media bodies, and international networks, Rosca concluded that Moldova was not only targeted by active measures but unable to effectively identify and defend against Russian active measures.<sup>59,60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Rosca, “Media Security Structural Indicators,” 374

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 372.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 390.

Civil society groups within Moldova such as the Foreign Policy Association of Moldova, Institute of Public Policy in Moldova, and IDIS Viitorul support Rosca's view that Moldova is not only actively targeted by Russian active measures but impacted by Russian messaging. Interestingly, the three organizations also agree that Russian messaging in Moldova is especially prevalent in social media, television broadcasts, and internet news.<sup>61,62,63</sup> Generally, all three groups invest some effort into the identification of malign foreign threats to Moldova's information sphere; however, the main focus of all three civil society groups is to advocate for conditions to build resilience to such activity. Nonetheless, Victoria Bucataru, the former director of the Foreign Policy Association is quite clear on her stance,

“[Moldova's] vulnerability became clear when foreign actors started to aggressively exploit this openness to influence public opinion. By creating parallel realities and employing deceiving narratives—whether situational or strategic, external actors have sought to control, manipulate, and increasingly, disrupt the existing order in Moldova.”<sup>64</sup>

As a result of indications from reputable civil society groups that Russia conducts active measures within Moldova, this study proceeds under the assumption that Russian active measures target Moldova.

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<sup>61</sup> Bucataru, Victoria. “Media Literacy and The Challenge of Fake News.” Foreign Policy Association of Moldova and Freedom House Media-M Project, January 2018. [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/01-Fake\\_News-EN.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/01-Fake_News-EN.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> Ursu, Victor. “Foreign Experts Underline the Importance of the Strengthening Security of Information Space in the Republic of Moldova.” In *Strengthening Security of Information Space through Consolidated Resilience and Enhanced Cooperation*. IDIS Viitorul, 2019. <http://www.viitorul.org/en/content/foreign-experts-underline-importance-strengthening-security-information-space-republic>.

<sup>63</sup> Nantoi Oazu and Alexandru Platon. “Russian Propaganda on ‘Odnoklassniki,’ The Case of the Republic of Moldova.” Institute for Public Policy, 2018. [http://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Odnoklassniki\\_en.pdf](http://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Odnoklassniki_en.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Bucataru, “Media Literacy,” 1.

Like the rest of Eastern and Central Europe, Moldova consumes a significant amount of Russian television programming and news. Moldova also uses Russian social media platforms Vkontakte and Odnoklassniki as well as Facebook which are used to promote Russian narratives.<sup>65</sup> Unfortunately, media literacy is not a prioritized aspect of public education or public awareness, and government regulation is weak.<sup>66</sup> Outside of media-specific indicators, Moldova shares several linguistic, cultural, and historical factors with Russia as a former soviet republic and also with the Central and Eastern European regions as a whole. Given the similarities drawn between the characteristics of Moldova and other Eastern European countries, this study assumes that Russia promotes similar narratives in Moldova as other Central and Eastern European countries, especially former Soviet and Warsaw pact countries.

***Hypothesis: Moldova is targeted similarly as other former Soviet states in Central and Eastern European by Kremlin supported Russian active measures. As a result, narratives promoted from Russian media sources in Moldova will roughly match the Master narratives identified by the Center for European Policy Analysis.***

In order to test the hypothesis, this study will compare narratives collected from a sample of Russian supported internet news sources in Moldova to Center for European Policy Analysis's eight Russian master narratives promoted by the Kremlin throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The eight master narratives are derived from the work of Corina Rebegea, Dr. Martins Kaprans, and Dr. Urve Eslas of the Center for European

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<sup>65</sup> Nantoi and Platon, "The Case of Odnoklassniki," 3.

<sup>66</sup> Rosca., "Media Security Structural Indicators," 390.

Policy Analysis (CEPA) as applicable narratives to which nearly all Russian active measures could be traced throughout Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>67</sup> Through thematic content analysis of Russian language internet news articles, this study will analyze how closely narratives in Moldova compares or contrasts with broader Central and Eastern European narratives.

CEPA identified the following master narratives present throughout Russian active measures in Central and Eastern Europe:

1. Anti-EU: This master narrative applies to a variety of different messages that seek to criticize, embellish, or fabricate aspects of the EU or portray EU as a political or economic failure, as an unsafe place, or a threat to traditional values.<sup>68</sup>
2. Anti-NATO: A series of messages that promote NATO allies as unwilling and incapable of defending Eastern European countries or that NATO is aggressive and dangerous, which puts Eastern Europe's safety at risk.<sup>69</sup>
3. Anti-US: Messages criticizing America seek to portray the United States as "hypocritical, oppressive and exploitative." Furthermore, certain depictions promote the idea that the United States is a power in decline.<sup>70</sup>
4. Domestic Failure: These messages emphasize that corruption and socio-economic dissatisfaction are attributable to the West and that integrating with the European Union will not address Eastern Europe's fundamental problems.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Rebegea "Question More," 77.

<sup>68</sup> Rebegea "Question More," 77.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 79.

5. History: The theme of history works to paint a picture of the past that includes Eastern Europe into an embellished glorious portrayal of the Soviet empire's contributions to history while downplaying others' contributions. Additionally, Russia's symbolic fight against an imagined threat of fascism continues in contemporary messaging which portrays Russia as a noble character.<sup>72</sup>
6. Ukraine is Not a Country: By exaggerating aspects of history such as the Kievan-Rus empire, Russia promotes that Ukraine never had a shared identity, and that continued promotions of such are unjustified. Furthermore, Russia portrays current Ukraine as the puppet of other Western entities such as the CIA and not really a sovereign and independent country at all, just a large landmass in total disarray.<sup>73</sup>
7. Russophobia: In this master narrative, any criticism towards the Russian government or authorities such as President Putin is quickly labeled as anti-Russianism.<sup>74</sup>
8. Russia as a Global Player: Most often, Russia portrays itself as a champion of the underdog such as combatting American Imperialism in Syria and Venezuela, as well as safeguarding the world by fighting terrorism. This message is vital to advance the narrative that Russia is an influential world power strong enough to protect Eastern Europe.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 81.

## **Data**

### ***Data Acquisition***

For this research study, 150 Russian language internet-based news articles were queried and collected over 90 days ranging from 01 August 2018 to 31 October 2018. The time period of the collected articles is random and not tied to or correlated with any specific events in Moldova. The articles were collected by First Media Group, a contracted partner of the US Embassy Chisinau public affairs section as part of regular press monitoring. Permission was granted for the use and non-attributed independent analysis of the collected articles. First Media Group's criteria for selection of the media is based on articles trending via social media at the time of collection that appeared to be promoting a Russian narrative.

### ***Data Characterization***

All of the articles considered in this study originated from one of 13 Moldovan pro-Russian media news sources or seven Russian news sources reporting on Moldovan issues. Russian news sources such as Sputnik or RT with representation in Moldova or a .md domain are considered pro-Russian Sources in Moldova. The internet news sources considered are assessed to be pro-Russian from three main determinations: 1) the news source is owned or sponsored by a pro-Russian entity including Russia itself, 2) the preponderance of the news output promotes Russian interests or portrays Russia positively, 3) the news source either does not publish material critical of Russia, or refutes criticism of Russia. The assessment of the sources used in this research study was

made by First Media Group and the public affairs staff of the United States Embassy in Chisinau, Moldova.

**Table 1:**

	<b>Pro-Russian Sources in Moldova</b>	<b>Russian Sources Reporting on Moldova</b>
1	<a href="https://ru.sputnik.md">https://ru.sputnik.md</a>	<a href="http://russian.rt.com/ussr/">http://russian.rt.com/ussr/</a>
2	<a href="http://aif.md">http://aif.md</a>	<a href="https://news.rambler.ru">https://news.rambler.ru</a>
3	<a href="https://eho.md">https://eho.md</a>	<a href="https://pnp.ru">https://pnp.ru</a>
4	<a href="http://www.kp.md">http://www.kp.md</a>	<a href="https://tass.ru">https://tass.ru</a>
5	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md">http://www.vedomosti.md</a>	<a href="https://tvzvezda.ru">https://tvzvezda.ru</a>
6	<a href="https://vkurse.md">https://vkurse.md</a>	<a href="https://novostipmr.com">https://novostipmr.com</a>
7	<a href="https://point.md/ru/">https://point.md/ru/</a>	<a href="https://riafan.ru/">https://riafan.ru/</a>
8	<a href="http://bloknot-moldova.md">http://bloknot-moldova.md</a>	
9	<a href="http://actualitati.md">http://actualitati.md</a>	
10	<a href="http://www.infotag.md">http://www.infotag.md</a>	
11	<a href="http://www.zdg.md">http://www.zdg.md</a>	
12	<a href="http://www.allmoldova.com/ru/">http://www.allmoldova.com/ru/</a>	<b>Pro-Russian Source in Ukraine</b>
13	<a href="http://esp.md">http://esp.md</a>	<a href="https://ru.tsn.ua">https://ru.tsn.ua</a>

**Table 1: Internet News Sources Represented in Examined Sample**

### *Data Analysis*

Content analysis was conducted by first translating the articles from Russian to English using Google Translate. Native Russian speakers were consulted to assist with occasional artificial translation inaccuracies. Then each article was coded/characterized by the primary identified micro-narrative of the article. Each article was only coded with one micro-narrative, the most prevalent micro-narrative assessed by the author. After the first level coding of micro-narratives, the micro-narratives were grouped into 11 themes. The themes were then compared to CEPA’s master narratives as indicated in Table 2. The author determined that the theme “Western Hypocrisy” fit equally well within the



master narratives of Anti-EU, Anti-NATO, and Anti-US. As a result, Western Hypocrisy was included in all three master narratives for tabulation. Instead of 150 articles being used for tabulation, 172 articles were considered since those articles labeled as Western Hypocrisy were triple counted. The complete data set consisting of the 150 articles, and first-level coding is available in Appendix A.

One example of an article being coded is from <http://www.sputnik.md> dated 23 October 2018, “Did the Western Media Turn Moldovans away from Russia, demonizing it – Poll.”<sup>76</sup> The article claimed that unnamed organizations within Moldova were purposely demonizing Russia to Moldovan audiences. Suspiciously, no mention of specific organizations were made. In the next paragraph, the article claimed that American aid money did not reach ordinary Moldovans but usually went to useless or ostentatious causes. The article then referenced a poll taken in conjunction with a French company IFop that illustrated that large percentages of French, Germans, English, and Americans did not believe their own media sources regarding Russia. The article then explained that Sputnik was a reputable and influential media outlet that reached over 50 million viewers monthly. Western analysts dispute Sputnik’s claim of reaching such a broad audience.<sup>77</sup>

The author listed the predominant micro-narrative of the article as Russophobia/anti-Russian discrimination based on the title, entry paragraph, and most prominent micro-narrative present. However, arguments can be made that the article also

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<sup>76</sup> Zimbelskaya, Daria, Andrey Petrik, and Alexander Khrolenko. “Did the Western Media Turn Moldovans Away From Russia, Demonizing It? - Poll.” Sputnik Moldova, October 23, 2018. [https://ru.sputnik.md/world\\_society/20181023/22649119/russia-moldova-sputnik-smi-pascaru.html](https://ru.sputnik.md/world_society/20181023/22649119/russia-moldova-sputnik-smi-pascaru.html).

<sup>77</sup> Lucas and Pomerantsev. “Winning the Information War Redux.”

addressed Western decay, and Russia as a global player. Nonetheless, in this study only the most prominent micro-narrative was counted. When tabulating the results, this article was then grouped into the theme Russophobia, which was then nested under the master narrative “Western Russophobia” as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2:**

*Table 2: Code Tree- Tabulation of themes/master narratives present within sample*

	Master Narratives	Total Articles Supporting Master Narrative	Percentage of Total	Themes Identified in Sample	Total Articles Supporting Theme
<b>1</b>	<b>Russia as a Global Player</b>	36	21%	Russian Leadership	22
				Unity with the wider Russian world	14
<b>2</b>	<b>Shared History</b>	23	13%	Historical Connections	12
				Shared Historical Memory	11
<b>3</b>	<b>Western Russophobia</b>	22	13%	Anti-Russian discrimination	11
				Russophobia	11
<b>4</b>	<b>Anti-EU</b>	25	15%	Anti-West/EU	14
				Western Hypocrisy	11
<b>5</b>	<b>Anti-NATO</b>	24	14%	Anti-NATO	13
				Western Hypocrisy	11
<b>6</b>	<b>Central/Eastern European domestic failure</b>	17	10%	State Weakness	17
<b>7</b>	<b>Ukraine is Not a Country</b>	14	8%	Anti-Ukraine	14
<b>8</b>	<b>Anti-US</b>	11	6%	Western Hypocrisy	11
* "Western Hypocrisy" was counted in master narratives 4, 5, and 8 bringing the total above 150 articles.					<b>172</b>

## Discussion of Results

### *Nesting*

During analysis, the author coded the primary message of 150 articles into 128 different micro-narratives, which then were organized into 11 themes. The 11 themes were then compared to CEPA’s eight master narratives. The themes derived from the sample nested cogently under the eight master narratives except for the Western Hypocrisy theme, which appeared equally applicable under the Anti-EU, Anti-NATO, and Anti-US master narratives. Nonetheless, the simplicity of the nesting of bottom-up

derived themes into CEPA's master narratives speaks to the validity of master narratives as a lens with which to examine Russian active measures within Central and Eastern Europe.

### *Western Hypocrisy*

"Western Hypocrisy" appeared independently enough in the sample to warrant its own theme. The theme covered a wide spectrum of issues that involved the European Union (EU), NATO, and United States (US), sometimes simultaneously. Usually, the micro-narratives present in the sample articles suggested that although the West communicated one message publicly, the West's actions did not match the stated intentions and were illegal, immoral or threatening. In addition to nesting under the anti-EU, anti-NATO, and anti-US master narratives in Table 2, "Western Hypocrisy" was also close to the theme of "Central/Eastern Europe Domestic Failure," but tended to set the blame on the West at large instead of a specific state's domestic issues. The theme of "Western Hypocrisy" transcends borders and systemic definitions to promote the idea the greater Western system is not what it seems, and conversely, Russia is a more reliable partner.

Western Hypocrisy is a broadly applicable theme and unique enough for consideration as a separate master narrative. Unfortunately, active measures are intentionally blurry to obscure intent and responsibility of the actor. By remaining difficult to detect and define, active measures are difficult to counteract. Since active measures themselves are challenging to define, understanding their objectives can also be problematic. Although Western Hypocrisy might make a good additional master

narrative, deconflicting definitions is the first step toward determining whether Western Hypocrisy is in fact exceptional enough to warrant inclusion as a separate master narrative.

### ***Russia as a Global Player***

During the conduct of content analysis, the most recurring master narrative present in the sample was the master narrative, “Russia as a global player,” which appeared in 21% of the sample. Promoting Russia as a world leader may be an emphasized narrative intended to displace Moldova’s European trajectory. Pro-Russian President Igor Dodon defeated pro-European candidate Maia Sandu elected in late 2016 on a platform of balancing foreign policy between the European Union and Russia. Russia established itself as an alternative power and leader in the region and needs to continue portraying the same image. During content analysis two themes appeared in the sample to nest under Russia as a global player master narrative seamlessly. First, “Russian leadership” appeared most frequently followed by “Unity with the wider Russian world.” The Russian leadership theme revolved around messages indicating that Russia was the natural leader of the region and naturally represented the issues of the region to the world.

Second, the Russian leadership theme depicted messages about what Russia was doing in response to Moldovan issues. Further examination noted that the validity of the claims made in the articles was dubious or unverified. Furthermore, “Unity with the wider Russian World” consisted of messages that sought to link Moldova with the other former Soviet countries and portrayed a viewpoint emphasizing that Russian speaking

countries were naturally aligned. Overall the preponderance of “Russia as a Global Player” appears to be an indication of Russia’s priority narrative for Moldova.

### *Anti-Ukraine vs. Ukraine is not a Country*

Interestingly, in Moldova, the theme of, “Ukraine is not a Country” did not resonate in the sample. Nonetheless, “Anti-Ukraine” narratives were present in 8% of the sample. Most of the articles depicted messages emphasizing that the Ukrainian government was violent, unreasonable, and brash; as a result, the Ukrainian authorities’ actions were having adverse effects on the environment and regional relationships. Additionally, articles categorized as anti-Ukraine blamed Ukraine for breaking up historical and beneficial relations with Russia such as in the church and trade. These narratives stopped short of suggesting that Ukraine was not a country. One consideration is that such a narrative might be too intense for Moldova, who likely sees itself as similar to Ukraine and might reject the notion. Additionally, the idea of Moldova not being a real country is often brought up by Romanian unionists who seek to rejoin Moldova to Romania. Promoting the theme might work against Russian interests in Moldova.

### *State Weakness vs. Central/Eastern European Domestic Weakness*

Content analysis derived a theme of “State weakness,” which represented articles depicting Moldova’s inability to safeguard its people or unchecked corruption. Such articles were present in 10% of the sample. The messages were likely intended to criticize the pro-European government ahead of parliamentary elections expected in late 2018. The “State Weakness” theme was found largely to be synonymous with the master

narrative, “Central/Eastern European Domestic Weakness.” The label State weakness should be considered as a more succinct yet more encompassing way to describe, “Central/Eastern European Domestic Weakness.” State weaknesses do not limit the focus to domestic issues alone. For example, criticizing a state’s inability to secure advantageous international deals would be an example of state weakness, but not necessarily an example of Central/Eastern European Domestic Weakness. Overall the theme of “state weakness” and master narrative of Central/Eastern European Domestic Weakness was almost entirely synonymous, which serves as another validating data point for the use of CEPA’s master narratives as a helpful model by which to examine narratives in Central and Eastern Europe.

### ***No Anti-US Theme?***

Although anti-EU and anti-NATO narratives were explicitly present in the sample, anti-US narratives, by contrast, were implicitly represented. In the analysis, “Western Hypocrisy” as a theme was counted for in anti-US master narrative due to the applicability and similarities. Although the sample mainly portrayed the United States as a threatening and harmful entity, the message was not promoted as the primary theme, but rather a second supporting theme. Content analysis during this research study focused on more direct and explicit narratives. Going forward, if content analysis were conducted again, implicit messages should be coded and considered as well. It would be inaccurate to state a lack of anti-US rhetoric in the sample, but this method did not capture the narrative clearly.

It is also possible that anti-US rhetoric simply was not as prevalent in the random sample of articles collected for this study. Moreover, the relative acceptance of the United States as a strategic partner and source of development aid, attacking the United States, could be risky for Moldovan media sources. First, the United States Government funds independent media outlets in Moldova in order to promote freedom of press and counter oligarchical control of media ownership in Moldova. As a result, sustained explicit anti-US narratives would likely attract unwanted scrutiny of media sources funded by the United States or applying for funding from the United States. Second, the United States can draw attention and refute poorly substantiated narratives which may expose the originating sources as less credible. Third, Russia may perceive a more imminent threat from Moldova's association with the European Union and NATO and therefore prioritizes those narratives over anti-US narratives in Moldova.<sup>78</sup> Overall, despite a lack of explicit narratives counted in this study, it would be inaccurate to portray that no anti-US sentiment exists in the Russian narratives promoted in Moldova.

### *Summary*

Overall, the research conducted in this study found correlation between narratives present in the sample of Moldovan internet-based news articles examined in this study with eight Russian master narratives presented by Corina Rebegea of CEPA. From the sample of Moldovan internet news, every single article linked to one of eight master narratives. The least correlated master narrative was Anti-US, which still linked to 11 articles or 6% of the total sample, which is still compelling since 6% of the modified

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<sup>78</sup> Rosca, "Media Structural Indicators," 374.

sample of 172 articles meant that 11 articles linked to a single master narrative. Eleven articles supporting one master narrative as the lowest correlation still illustrates a targeted effort to promote the master narrative as opposed to being explained as mere coincidence. Conversely, 21% of the sample correlated with the master narrative “Russia as a Global Player” which is significant.

As a result, the findings of this study make two conclusions. First, that Moldova is targeted by Russian active measures in much the same way as other Central and Eastern European countries. Second, CEPA’s master narratives model appears to be a valid and helpful tool in examining Russian active measures in Moldova. Furthermore, small exceptions noted above may prompt further examination or lead to discussion on adapting CEPA’s master narratives in order to improve the narratives model overall.

One drawback identified in this study was the limited tabulation of micro-narratives within the articles. This study coded a single micro-narrative for each article considered, but future research should incorporate methods to account for all micro-narratives present in the sample in order to create a more comprehensive result. Although this study contributes only a small and narrowly focused contribution to the greater body of research, it does provide a dedicated focus on the case of Moldova which is lacking in Western scholarly attention.

## **Conclusion**

Despite technological advances, Russia still seeks to use information as a weapon to divide, confuse, and rally the sentiments of those under its perceived sphere of influence as it did over 100 years ago. Although the methods may have evolved with



modern mass communication, the intentions of Russian active measures have not. As the phoenix rises from the ashes of the Soviet Union, Russia no longer hides the fact that information is a logical extension of warfare. Information operations can be used to exploit freedom and transparency inherent in democracies to create significantly harmful effects. Burgeoning democracies in Eastern and Central Europe are especially at risk. Not only does Russia aim to exert control over its “privileged interests” within the “near abroad” but the fragile developing democracies have the most institutional vulnerabilities and least resilience to harmful Russian messaging. The former Soviet Republic of Moldova is a prime example of an Eastern European state particularly at risk for Russian active measures.

As Russia demonstrates a significant capacity to interfere in the democratic and sovereign processes of other nations via information operations, increased attention has been placed on identifying and understanding the phenomenon of contemporary Russian active measures in order to counter them and build resilience. Methods of influencing audiences are evolving at the rate of technology and must be continuously monitored in order to effectively identify and counter the activity. The gravity of the problem cannot be understated.

As disinformation efforts intensify, diversify and become more insidious, our speed in recognizing, labeling and shielding ourselves from these attacks will be critical for rebuilding Western information (and societal) resilience. Greater public understanding of disinformation can help citizens become more careful and responsible consumers of information in the digital domain and key stakeholders in pushing back against malicious attempts to undermine societies.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Rebegea, “Question More,” 83.

In an effort to better understand the narratives produced from Russian active measures, Corina Rebegea presented the Center for European Policy Analysis's work on the development of Russian master narratives present in Central and Eastern Europe. Rebegea and CEPA posited that nearly all narratives present in Central and European could be traced to one of the eight master narratives that Russia promoted. The concept provided a model by which researchers could interpret Russian narratives in order to understand intentions and priorities.

Moldova is a case that is often included with Eastern Europe with regards to intuitional development and post-soviet characteristics. Nonetheless, not much Western scholarly research exists devoted to the case of Moldova to fully substantiate such claims. As a test of CEPA's master narrative model, this research compared a sample of internet news articles from pro-Russian sources to the eight master narratives. Overall the study found that Russian narratives in Moldova fit compellingly into the eight master narratives with minor exceptions and outliers.

The implications for the research study are twofold: first, the eight master narratives were further validated as a useful model with which to examine Russian narratives in Central and Eastern Europe. Secondly, the study characterized the case of Moldova through a small qualitative study in order to better understand how Moldova is understood by Russia and what narratives Russia prioritizes in Moldova.

The study presents a logical follow on research opportunity. New research could examine the prioritization of Russian narratives in Moldova which may help to better understand Russia's intentions and priorities in Moldova, as well as give insight into how

Russia views its own popularity and status within the minds of Moldovans and the broader post-Soviet world.

Overall, the study reminds the world that Russia seeks to increase its relative power by gaining influence and control over states in its periphery. Active measures are a key component of Russia's strategy. If established institutions and states do not continue to prioritize the identification, examination, and countering of Russian active measures, then Russia's relative power can increase and the West will be unable to arm Eastern Europe to combat Russia's malignant influence let alone protect its own states' national security and Western security as a whole. national security.

# Appendix A



For the full data set in .xlsx format, click

Appendix A: Code Tree to Nelson, Francis COMPARISON OF RUSSIAN NARRATIVES IN MOLDOVAN INTERNET NEWS TO RUSSIAN NARRATIVES THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Theme	Micro-Narrative	Link
1. Russian Leadership	1. Russians investor in Moldova are genuine partners that build the business relationships between the parties.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180921/22009816/Moldova-Russia-voprogov-dovostanogo-otnosheniya.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180921/22009816/Moldova-Russia-voprogov-dovostanogo-otnosheniya.html</a>
	2. Moldova needs Russian business more than Russia needs Moldova.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	3. Moldovan authorities consult with Russia on reintegration of Transnistria ("big brother")	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180822/22042463/Chinainarum-moldove-ruce-business-lase-ostape.html?utm_source=cam&amp;utm_medium=od&amp;utm_campaign=proe&amp;utm_content=ru-ostape">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180822/22042463/Chinainarum-moldove-ruce-business-lase-ostape.html?utm_source=cam&amp;utm_medium=od&amp;utm_campaign=proe&amp;utm_content=ru-ostape</a>
	4. Moldovans trust Russian media more than European or American media.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180822/22042463/Chinainarum-moldove-ruce-business-lase-ostape.html?utm_source=cam&amp;utm_medium=od&amp;utm_campaign=proe&amp;utm_content=ru-ostape">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180822/22042463/Chinainarum-moldove-ruce-business-lase-ostape.html?utm_source=cam&amp;utm_medium=od&amp;utm_campaign=proe&amp;utm_content=ru-ostape</a>
	5. Russia offers new economic opportunities for Moldova and other post-Soviet countries.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24897-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24897-3/842118/</a>
	6. Russia protects people of Transnistria, legally, politically and economically.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	7. Russian peacekeeping operation is the only guarantee for regional stability that protects Russian-speakers from external domination and terrorism.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	8. Russia could protect people of Transnistria from terrorists and ensure stability in the region better followed by other parties that have their interests in the region.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	9. Russian officials and business people come to Moldova with a mission to help Moldova flourish.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	10. Russia proved to be a good-faith partner to Moldova, always giving more than getting in return.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	11. Russia invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Moldova's economy ("big brother")	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	12. Russia offers new opportunities for students from Moldova.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	13. 2015 is announced to be the Year of Moldova in Russia, and 2020 - Year of Russia in Moldova.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	14. Moldova cannot survive without Russia.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
	15. Moldova and Transnistria have shared future, with Russia.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20180821/22021086/Militer-investicii-dodon-jakono-ukrae-vojna.html</a>
2. Civilizational unity with the Russian-speaking universe	1. Pro-Russian president Dodon is a true defender of traditional family values from the degrading Western influence.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	2. Pro-European leaders cannot understand realities of family life because some of them (Maya Sandu) don't even have children.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	3. Numerous Orthodox churches in Moldova is the evidence of the civilizational unity with the Russian-speaking world.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	4. Moldovan top leadership has close connections with the religious authorities of the Russian Orthodox Church. President Dodon confirmed that Church of Moldova belongs to Russian Orthodox church. Patriarch of Russia awarded Moldova's president with "Sergiy Radzhevič" medal for his active support of church-public initiatives.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	5. Dodon's gift to Putin - a unique antique collection of prayers dedicated to Orthodox saints and martyrs.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	6. Moldovan Church will forever preserve the unity with the Russian Orthodox Church.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	7. Russia's ongoing political Moldova can rely on the support of Russian competitive organization.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	8. Humanitarian cooperation with the Russian Foundation is very important for Moldova.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
	9. Russian-speakers in Moldova should feel protected by the sense of belonging to the Russian speaking world led by Russia.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>
10. Traditionally friendly, brotherly relations between Russia and Moldova are upon the shared spiritual world between our nations.	<a href="http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html">http://ru.spntrk.md/economic/20181031/22011093/Ido-odno-Putin-Russia-je-glavnoe-privetstvo-Moldove.html</a>	
3. Historical connections	1. Moldova was thriving in the Soviet Union. Now Moldova needs to support those who defended our friendship with Russia, defended our history and language.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	2. Heritage about "good old times" and the Komonoi youth when Moldova was part of the USSR.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	3. Russians in Transnistria should be allowed to vote in Moldova's elections and support the socialists who will defend against pro-European West.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	4. Transnistria should be represented in the Parliament to re-iterate the respect that Russians and pro-Russian Moldovans deserve.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	5. Many prominent figures in the Russian history were born/raised in Moldova (Ivanovo, Sovorov). The new generation should cherish the memories of these Moldovan heroes in the Russian history.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	6. Dodon sponsors a new documentary "History of Moldova" produced by NTV Moldova by a pro-Russian Moldovan news crew. In Moldovan language, dubbed in Russian.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	7. The Socialist Party of Moldova celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the October revolution in Russia, along with "all people of good will who value and respect the principles of socialism, equality and social justice."	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	8. Veterans of fascismism in Moldova cooperate for the 100th Anniversary of the 2nd world war organization.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	9. Russia invested in a monument to an ordinary Moldovan person who saved 3 Russian girls in the 80s.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
	10. Leader of the Russian-patriotic club in Moldova is planning a number of events to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Moldova's liberation from fascism.	<a href="https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/">https://www.kp.md/q&amp;ly/24900-3/842118/</a>
4. Anti-Russian/discrimination	1. Doctors refuse to help Russian-speaking patients	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	2. Russian population is discriminated minority in Moldova. Nobody ever helped them to learn the language and the culture of the majority.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	3. In Moldova, only Romanians are allowed to be proud of their language and ethnicity. Russians, Gaguz or Ukrainians are all victims of Russophobia, afraid to speak out about their ethnic backgrounds and heritage.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	4. Moldovans actively openly spread negative information about Russia and Russian speakers in Moldova thus marginalizing them.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	5. Pro-European openly ignore and disregard opinions of Russian-speaking population in Moldova.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	6. Anti-Russian discrimination is a destabilizing factor hindering the unification of Transnistria with Moldova.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	7. Moldovan authorities intentionally target Russians as an attempt to manipulate public opinion by creating stereotypes.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	8. As an attempt to de-radicalize education, nationalist authorities in Moldova ruled to throw away all school text books in Russian.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	9. Anti-Russian discrimination in Moldova remains an impediment to resolve the Transnistria issue.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
	10. Only recognition of the Russian language as the second state language will help reunite Transnistria with Moldova.	<a href="http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac">http://www.vedomosti.md/news/romany-vrach-eto-v-vojny-no-ne-hotyat-oshahiv-pac</a>
5. Russophobia	1. Certain pro-Western organizations intentionally demonize Russia in Moldovan media.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	2. In spite of the ban on the Russian TV in Moldova on the premises of "fighting the propaganda", Russian media continues to receive the ratings for public trust in Moldova.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	3. There is only one small museum dedicated to the history of WWII in Chisinau, because Russophobic Moldovan authorities prefer to forget the historic connections between Moldova and Russia.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	4. In spite of the enforced Russophobic sentiments in Moldova, high school children go out of their way to visit the small museum dedicated to the history of WWII.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	5. Ban on the Russian TV programs in Moldova only pushed the Russian media public trust ratings higher.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	6. Many European leaders support neo-fascists, which causes violence and minorities. Pro-Europeans in Moldova represent a threat for the Russian state and Russian-speakers in Moldova.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	7. Russophobia is a growing trend in the world, but provocations against Russians are falling.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	8. In response to Russophobic trends, the Russian speakers need to strengthen their solidarity through organizations of compatriots. Russia adopted a new policy to facilitate migration of Russian-speaking compatriots to Russia.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	9. The main goal of the Russophobes is to break the unity of the Russian-speaking and Slavic people, to kill their history and cultural traditions.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
	10. Western Russophobes created a totally distorted and deceptive perception of the current situation in Russia	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/world_society/20181021/2249115/Russia-moldova-spntrk-emi-pacaru.html</a>
6. Anti-West/EU	1. Moldova's accession to the EU will lead to complete disappearance of the nation.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	2. International Monetary Fund undermined the financial sovereignty of Moldova and other European countries.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	3. IMF Forces Moldova to raise prices for goods and services and to reduce social benefits/pensions in the country.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	4. Euro-Social Union can open new markets for Moldova and therefore is better than EU.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	5. Many infectious diseases in Moldova are transmitted from Europe.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	6. Britain was the first disintegrated by the EU, but Eurocraticism in Europe is still growing.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	7. Pro-Western IMF in Moldova is not trustworthy.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	8. Pro-Western Democratic party discarded Moldova's internationality.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	9. After 9 years of the rule of the pro-EU forces in Moldova, the country is in the dire state.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	10. The pro-Western Moldovan government does not appreciate the uniqueness of the Gaguz minority.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	11. The EU/West profits more from cooperation with Moldova than Moldova does.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	12. The Western influence demoralized the healthcare in Moldova. Doctors' offices became money-making machines and lost the human touch.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	13. Many deputies in the European parliament support fascism.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	14. Constant disagreements between the EU and the EU demonstrate the Western bureaucracy and hypocrisy.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	15. Pro-European leaders in Moldova are responsible for bringing the country down.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>
	16. US Military base in Romania is a threat to Moldova's security.	<a href="https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html">https://ru.spntrk.md/colum/20180911/21847699/Mfmi-dobry-dogodnye-podni-moldova.html</a>



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## **Curriculum Vita**

Francis “Scott” Nelson is a U.S. Army Officer currently serving in the Republic of Moldova. For the past 15 years, Scott served the U.S. Army in a variety of roles and assignments specializing in operational planning and policy implementation. As a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Scott earned a Bachelor of Science degree with merit in International Relations. Despite transferring into the Army, Scott's allegiance holds true to the midshipmen during the annual Army-Navy football game. A native of Florida, Scott is an avid traveler who currently resides in Chisinau with his wife Kristin.