

The Paradoxical Status of the Nonexistent State of Transnistria Within Its Geopolitical Framework: A Legal and Strategic Perspective

La paradójica situación del Estado inexistente de Transnistria en su marco geopolítico: una perspectiva jurídica y estratégica

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Cite as

İşcan T. The Paradoxical Status of the Nonexistent State of Transnistria Within Its Geopolitical Framework: A Legal and Strategic Perspective. SAP Netnography. 2026; 4:284. <https://doi.org/10.62486/net2026284>

Publication History

Submitted: 02-08-2025

Revised: 01-10-2025

Accepted: 28-12-2025

Published: 01-01-2026

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ABSTRACT

The geopolitical and legal paradox of Transnistria is examined as a de facto political entity located within the internationally recognized borders of Moldova that lacks formal international recognition. Through a qualitative, analytical, and philosophical approach grounded in realist and anti-cosmopolitan perspectives, the analysis explores Transnistria's strategic relevance in the post-Soviet space, with particular attention to Russian foreign policy and regional power dynamics. Central to the discussion is the feasibility of a peaceful and legally legitimate integration of Transnistria into the Russian Federation under international law, especially in light of local referendums, demographic configurations, and enduring pro-Russian identity narratives. The study revisits historical processes of Russification, arguing that Transnistria's Russian-ethnic and political identity cannot be reduced to Soviet-era construction, as it predates the formation of the USSR. It further examines the 1990–1992 conflict, the post-ceasefire status quo, and Russia's sustained military, political, and economic involvement in the region. Through comparative references to other unrecognized entities, the analysis highlights the constraints imposed by sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination, and non-intervention, positioning Transnistria as a paradigmatic frozen conflict that challenges the normative foundations of the contemporary international order.

Keywords: Transnistria; De Facto States; Russian Foreign Policy; Self-Determination; Frozen Conflicts; International Law.

RESUMEN

Se examina la paradoja geopolítica y jurídica de Transnistria como entidad política de facto situada dentro de las fronteras internacionalmente reconocidas de Moldavia, pero que carece de reconocimiento internacional formal. Mediante un enfoque cualitativo, analítico y filosófico basado en perspectivas realistas y anticosmopolitas, el análisis explora la relevancia estratégica de Transnistria en el espacio postsoviético, prestando especial atención a la política exterior rusa y a la dinámica del poder regional. El debate se centra en la viabilidad de una integración pacífica y legalmente legítima de Transnistria en la Federación Rusa en virtud del derecho internacional, especialmente a la luz de los referendos locales, las configuraciones demográficas y las narrativas identitarias prorrusas perdurables. El estudio revisa los procesos históricos de rusificación y sostiene que la identidad étnica y política rusa de Transnistria no puede reducirse a una construcción de la era soviética, ya que es anterior a la formación de la URSS. Además, examina el conflicto de 1990-1992, el statu quo posterior al alto el fuego y la participación militar, política y económica sostenida de Rusia en la región. A través de referencias comparativas con otras entidades no reconocidas, el análisis destaca las limitaciones impuestas por la soberanía, la integridad territorial, la autodeterminación y la no intervención, posicionando a Transnistria como un conflicto congelado paradigmático que desafía los fundamentos normativos del orden internacional contemporáneo.

Palabras clave: Transnistria; Estados de Facto; Política Exterior Rusa; Autodeterminación; Conflictos Congelados; Derecho Internacional.

INTRODUCTION

Transnistria, formally known as the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR) in Moldova, is one of the largest and possibly least recognized Cold War remnants, although its political standing is as essential as it has ever been three decades later. Among the current geopolitical conflicts in post-Soviet areas such as the breakaway regions of Donbas, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia, the case of Transnistria has been significant to the Russia-Ukraine War both geopolitically and economically. One might be inclined to believe that once Russia takes full control of southern Ukraine, it might annex Transnistria as well considering the Crimea case and the current Russia-Ukraine war scenario.⁽¹⁾

In this eventuality, an important question would be “How can Russia and Transnistria make this process of independence followed by unification in a non-belligerent and legitimate manner in terms of international law?” to begin solving this issue, one needs to analyze descriptively the secession process of the Transnistrian region in its historical context. According to scholar Jeremy Smith from Cambridge University Soviet Russification refers to a series of policies and practices implemented by the Soviet government to promote the dominance of Russian culture, language, and identity within the various ethnic regions of the Soviet Union. This policy aimed to assimilate and homogenize the diverse ethnic groups and nationalities that made up the Soviet Union into a unified Soviet identity with Russian as the dominant language. This study sought to determine if the breakaway area of Transnistria could be called “russified”, however, the findings revealed that the region’s local population has not been part of this policy, and it has remained ethnically Russian territory since the early ages. This research, which is based on cultural, identity, and ethnic aspects in Transnistria, clarifies the mistaken perception that the region has been russified.^(2,3,4,5)

Presently Transnistria is an unrecognized de facto post-Soviet state in terms of International Law.⁽³⁾ It has been recognized by only three other unrecognized and/or partially recognized pseudo-states: Abkhazia, Artsakh, and South Ossetia. On the other hand, Moldova has recognized Transnistria as the “Republic of Moldova as the AdministrativeTerritorial Units of the Left Bank of the Dniester under Russian military occupation”. Bearing in mind the European Union’s foreign policy on the matter of the legitimacy of the nonrecognized state is highly controversial.

The greatest Cold War arsenal is now located in Transnistria, a region that split off from Moldova in the early 1990s and is not recognized internationally. It is a storage facility that has some 20 000 tons of weapons and ammunition. Although in 1994 the ceasefire that would lead to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria was reached, its as of yet nonratification by the Russian State Duma has been seen by the EU as a confrontational and illegitimate act. On December 17, 2006, a referendum was held and ratified de facto in Transnistria for the region’s independence, with the pro-independence option obtaining 97,2 % of the votes.

From the perspective of the research problem of this research, considering “The Right to SelfDetermination of Peoples,” Transnistria’s “independence” toward its eventual “annexation” by Russia. Today, admitting secession or annexation is difficult when a third state is involved or when armed force is used. To be valid, state secession and annexation must comply with international law, highlighting acceptance of the predecessor state, adherence to the principle of territorial integrity, except in cases where that state violates the rights of an oppressed population, and upholding the full guarantee of human rights and humanitarian law.^(4,6,7,8)

So far, Russia has supported Moldova’s territorial integrity and refrained from recognizing the validity of the referendum. Nevertheless, since the flaring up of the situation between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, the geopolitical tensions in Eurasia have been amplified and its geopolitical structure has been altered radically, and Russian foreign policy on Moldavian sovereignty has been changing drastically day by day. This case is already controversial considering how potential unification without military means would radically empower Russian hegemony and threaten the unipolar world order established principally by the United States of America and the EU (The West) after end the Cold War, nonetheless, still, the globe has seen some significant changes that show that international relations are evolving towards a multipolar system in which the United States of America is not the sole major power. Transnistria occupies 8 % of Moldovan territory but constitutes 40 % of its national industrial production and it is one of the largest producers of steel in the entire region. However, the truth is that the region survives thanks to Moscow’s support, which supplies it with gas and grants its people access to a Federation passport, affording them all the benefits of citizenship. This pseudo-state is also a hub of organ trafficking, white slavery, and what is most worrying on a regional and international level, illegal arms trade made even more possible as a result of the lack of INTERPOL jurisdiction over the region. On the other hand, Transnistria is also fundamental in developing critical relations between Moscow, the European Union, and NATO because Transnistria has a key location in Eastern Europe, bordering Ukraine, Moldova, and a tiny portion of the EU via Romania. Due to its geographical location, it might become a hotspot for tensions between Russia and the mentioned Western institutions. Since the early 1990s, Moscow has maintained a military presence in Transnistria. This presence gives Russia clout in the area and is viewed as a challenge to Western power in Eastern Europe. It can also be used as a negotiating tool with the EU and NATO. On the other hand, Moldova’s aspirations to join the EU and NATO are complicated by Transnistria’s unsettled status and the deployment of Russian forces. These organizations are apprehensive of accepting nations who are embroiled in territorial disputes, fearing that it would lead to instability and violence inside the alliance.

The historical record of member admission may be used to examine the trajectory of NATO’s expansion. The alliance has developed through many rounds of enlargement since its establishment in 1949 with 12 original members. Therefore the continuous expansion of NATO in the region that includes Romania and Bulgaria, in addition to the agreements signed by both countries with the United States, approving American military presence in the Black Sea has not only changed the geopolitics of the region but also created the idea in the Kremlin that both NATO and the European Union seek to isolate Russia from its neighboring countries, its “near abroad”.^(2,9,10,11)

What is Transnistria?

According to the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic's (Pridnestrovie's) Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Transnistria is a country in southeast Europe that sits on the left bank of the Dniester River inside the boundaries of the former Moldavian SSR, a strategically important region. The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic's official languages are Russian and Ukrainian, and most of the people are of Russian ethnicity. Transnistria was ruled by the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Ukraine, and the Soviet Union at various points in history; as a result, describing the ethical and ideological components is quite difficult.

The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (Pridnestrovie) auto proclaims itself as a "sovereign, independent, democratic, legal and secular state", though it is a non-recognized breakaway state in terms of International Public Law. Nevertheless, The Pridnestrovian state has its constitution, controlled territory, legislation, a market economy, developed financial and tax systems, modern communications infrastructure, army, militia, security service, national flag, coat-of-arms, and anthem. Speaking in political terms, The Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic was proclaimed on September 2, 1990, right after an armed conflict with Moldova.⁽⁵⁾

Transnistria is currently an agro-industrial zone and is not considered a Russian enclave in the same way as, for example, Kaliningrad or parts of Crimea. Transnistria operates as a de facto independent entity with its own government and military forces, and it does not officially form a part of Russia. Production and industrial capacity play a very significant role when it comes to commerce. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (Pridnestrovie) mentions the following information "Industrial production plays the leading role in the Pridnestrovian economy. The share of industry in the GDP is more than 30 %. Industrial enterprises make up more than 60 % of the total budget payments and extra-budgetary funds. More than 110 enterprises form the basis of the Pridnestrovian industry. The leading branches of the economy of the PMR are the electric-power industry, iron and steel industry, food-processing and light industries, engineering, metalworking, and production of building materials. Enterprises of the chemical industry, woodworking and furniture trade, printing, glass, flour-and-cereals industries contribute significantly to the Republic's economy. More than 500 producing enterprises are operating in the sphere of small business. The core types of industrial enterprises production are energy, rolling of ferrous metals, casting machines, electric machines and pumps, low-voltage facilities, cable goods, electrically insulating materials, cement, fiberglass, furniture, cotton fabric, shoes, garment, wine-cognac, and liquor-vodka products. The activity of the Pridnestrovian enterprises targets external markets – about 90 % of the total output is shipped to the CIS and Far Abroad countries. Thereby, the annual volume of export deliveries goes beyond \$ 800 million US dollars".⁽⁵⁾

Therefore, it is a factual instrument that the secessionist region might be considered an active actor commercially both in local, regional, and global terms. There is a very tangled scenario in the region and today this statehood is defined as a post-soviet frozen conflict region because the de facto statehood is officially recognized as part of Moldova.^(12,13)

Both culturally, ethnically and historically people of Transnistria identified themselves as Russian. The dissolution of the Soviet Union caused instability in the region since the new frontiers declared the Transnistria region as part of Moldova. Afterward, Moldova implemented genocidal policies in its process of pan-Romanian practices to fund a brandnew sovereign state: Moldova. The solidary effort of Moldavian independence resulted in the fullscale aggression of Moldova against the Pridnestrovian people in 1992. The armed conflict resulted in a considerably cruel war and Transnistrian people sought the help of the Russian Federation throughout this time.

Since 1992, the Transnistria dispute has been unresolved, and many actors in international relations believe that without its resolution, Moldova's accession to the EU and, if desired, its unification with Romania, cannot take place. Because no nation or union would want to be associated with an unstable nation where Russian military units are stationed.^(14,15)

Moreover, after the liberation of the Karabakh lands from the occupation of Armenia, the Transnistria problem appeared as the last "frozen problem" in the former Soviet geography, and this has been a threat to regional stability. Russia has no intention of losing its influence in Moldova by removing its soldiers from Transnistria because the local people still seek Russian support both in military, economic, and commercial terms.

On the other hand, losing this former Soviet republic to the West is not pragmatic for the current Russian Foreign Policy. Being between Romania and Ukraine, Moldova has been the "Trojan Horse" of Moscow in Eastern Europe, especially when there are pro-Russian governments in the region such as but not limited to Donetsk and Lugansk. The Transnistria region has a border with Ukraine, and the Russian Peacekeeping Force is still present. According to Moscow, it is in the Kremlin's interest to have Russian troops stationed near the EU border instead of a NATO base near the Russian border (Moldova) which makes complete sense in terms of Russian Pragmatism since the protection of the oppressed Russian communities in post-soviet regions is considered as part of current Russian political vision.

Currently, the Transnistrian statehood has its government, people, and territory however, to be well defined as a sovereign state in Westphalian terms, it seeks international recognition therefore it might be categorized as a "state nation" that does not exist in ontological terms. So, what is next? Seemingly, this frozen conflict might, directly and indirectly, influence Eastern Europe's geopolitical tensions in the current Russia-Ukraine War (2022-...) context. Transnistria's ambiguous and unknown political status draws attention to the region in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict context because the independence of the Donbas region might create a new seed of hope for the Transnistrian people since most of the population is looking forward to reuniting with the Russian Federation.⁽⁶⁾

So-called "Russification" Process of Transnistria in Russian Empire and USSR Epoch

First, the long-standing Transnistrian issue, which erupted into a war within the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in the late 1980s as the Soviet Union began to fall apart, is a dispute that dates from the beginning. This problem is viewed as a conflict based on land. However, the Russian administration of the time played a significant role in the emergence of this issue. It can be

argued that one of the primary causes of the issue was the presence of Russian and Slavic populations in the above-mentioned lands, which, from the perspective of most Westerners, could be considered “Russification.” However, this classification has been considered skeptical from non-Western perspectives because the people who had lived in there since the early ages claimed to be Slavic Russians.

Notwithstanding gaining independence, Moldova is one of the post-Soviet states that are unable to control all its territory. One of the factors leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Chisinau administration over its lands was ethnic nationalism. The Transnistria Issue is one of Moldova’s most significant issues in this regard. While Chisinau used force to enforce action to further strengthen the segregation between Moldovan and Transnistria society, this speeded up, and Russia became an effective power by intervening in the region that paved the way for its existence for the unification of Moldova and the Transnistria region. The control of the Transnistria region was intricate in the early 1990s.^(16,17)

Regardless of efforts, this objective has not been managed to accomplish. Russia, the European Union (EU), the United States (USA), and Ukraine can all work together or separately to find a solution to the issue. Although effective, no real progress has been made. Although Moldova asserts its sovereignty over Transnistria, the presence of Russian troops in the area is the main barrier to unification. The Transnistria region, on the other hand, fights for its independence and declares its desire to join Russia. The source of stability and peace for Russian peacekeepers in the area is Moscow. Transnistria has its constitution and foreign policy. If Moldova guarantees its broad autonomy and the ability to influence, it can become a federation that could guide the region.

The history of the Transnistrian region is closely entwined with that of the Russian Empire, which ruled the area from the late 17th to the early 20th centuries and had a significant impact there. We will look at the Russian ethnic and cultural roots in Transnistria and how they influenced the area during the period of the Russian Empire in this historical explanation. Transnistria was first incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1792 as part of the Second Partition of Poland.

After capturing Transnistria from the Ottoman Empire in the late 17th century, the Russian Empire began to encroach on the region. Transnistria was a sparsely populated region at the time, with many residents being Moldovans, Ukrainians, and some Russian Orthodox Old Believers. The Russian Empire steadily increased its influence in the area over the following two centuries through settling and economic growth. This process was made easier by the Empire’s encouragement of settlement in newly conquered areas, which led to a significant influx of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians into Transnistria in search of new lands and economic opportunities.^(18,19)

The roots of Russian ethnicity and culture in Transnistria date back to this period of settlement and economic development. As more and more Russians migrated to the region, they brought with them their language, customs, and traditions, which gradually became part of the local culture. The Russian Orthodox Church also played a significant role in spreading Russian culture in Transnistria, with its churches and monasteries serving as centers of religious and cultural life.

The Russian Empire’s influence over Transnistria grew throughout the 19th century as the region developed into a hub for trade and agricultural production. The Empire made significant infrastructure investments, constructing highways, bridges, and other public works, which aided in the growth of the economy. As more and more Transnistrians embraced the Russian language and way of life, the region’s cultural ties to Russia grew stronger. This procedure was made easier by the Empire’s Russification policy, which aimed to spread Russian culture and language throughout its domains.^(20,21)

However, there were significant challenges the Russian Empire had to overcome to rule Transnistria. With significant populations of Ukrainians and Moldovans who frequently resented Russian domination, the region was ethnically heterogeneous. During the 1905 revolution, a wave of political unrest that affected the Empire’s territories, including Transnistria, brought this tension to a head. In response, the Empire started enacting reforms that gave local governments more autonomy and promoted cultural and linguistic diversity.

However, the Empire’s attention was diverted to the war effort when World War I broke out, leaving Transnistria and other areas on the periphery of its attention. As a result, these reforms were short-lived.

To give a brief, Transnistria’s history during the Russian Empire epoch is marked by the gradual expansion of Russian influence and culture in the region. This process was fueled by settlement and economic development, as well as the Empire’s Russification policy. However, this approach was not without challenges because Russian control frequently clashed with the ethnic variety of the area. The Russian ethnic group first appeared in the area during the 18th century, when the Russian Empire acquired the Ottoman Empire’s possessions that would later form Transnistria. Due to its crucial role in the Russian Empire’s southern flank, the region’s strategic location on the banks of the Dniester River—a vital commerce route between Western Europe and the Black Sea—made it a crucial component. Building forts and garrisons to defend their borders against Ottoman invasions, the Russians developed a military presence in the area. Transnistria is still a contentious and complicated territory today, and its historical links to Russia continue to influence its identity and goals in terms of politics.⁽²²⁾

On the other hand, Transnistria is a region in Eastern Europe that has played an important role in the history of the Soviet Union. Located in the southwestern part of Ukraine, along the eastern bank of the Dniester River, the region has been the center of several conflicts throughout its history, reflecting its geopolitical importance as a gateway between Western Europe and the Russian Empire. During the Soviet Union era, Transnistria was part of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, which was itself part of the larger Soviet Union. However, the region’s population was predominantly made up of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, rather than ethnic Moldovans. In the late 1980s, as the Soviet Union began to collapse, tensions between the ethnic Moldovan government and the Russian and Ukrainian populations in Transnistria began to escalate. In 1990, Transnistria declared independence from Moldova, leading to a brief conflict between the two sides. In 1992, a ceasefire was negotiated, and Transnistria established itself as a *de facto* independent state, although it has not been recognized as such by the international community.

The roots of Russian ethnicity and culture in Transnistria can be traced back to the region's history as part of the Russian Empire. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Russian government encouraged the settlement of Russians in the region, which led to a significant increase in the Russian population. During the Soviet era, Russian became the dominant language in the region, and Russian culture and traditions were heavily promoted. According to historian Charles King, in his book "The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture," the Soviet government actively encouraged the development of a separate Moldovan identity, which was based on the Romanian language and culture, to weaken the influence of Russian culture in the region. However, this policy was not fully successful, and the Russian and Ukrainian populations in Transnistria maintained their distinct cultural identity.^(23,24)

- **Nicholas Romanov (Nicholas II) and Transnistria:** Nicholas II was Russia's final Tsar and ruler of the Russian Empire. Russian Empire in the Nineteenth Century: Transnistria was a component of the Russian Empire during the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Throughout Nicholas II's reign, the Russian Empire ruled Transnistria before and during World War I.
- **World War I and the Russian Revolution:** the turmoil generated by World War I and the Russian Revolution of 1917 resulted in the Russian Empire's demise. As a result, Transnistria, like other areas, witnessed political and territorial changes, which contributed to the region's complicated position in the early twentieth century.
- **Joseph Stalin's Role:** during the early to mid-twentieth century, Joseph Stalin was a notable leader of the Soviet Union. In the context of Transnistria, his role was principally related to World War II: As a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a non-aggression deal between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, Transnistria became a member of the Soviet Union during WWII. When Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, Transnistria was under German rule.
- **Liberation of Transnistria by the Soviet Union:** Stalin's policies and military techniques were critical in the liberation of Transnistria and other regions from Nazi Germany. This occurred in 1944, as the Soviet Red Army marched westward, eventually freeing Transnistria.

During the Soviet era, Transnistria was part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, but it retained a significant Russian-speaking population. The Soviet government promoted the use of the Russian language in the region, and many Russians were employed in key positions in the local government and industry. The region became a center of heavy industry, with steel mills and chemical plants being built in Tiraspol, the region's capital. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought new challenges for Transnistria. The region declared independence from Moldova, which had also declared independence from the Soviet Union and sought to join the Russian Federation. Moldova, however, refused to recognize Transnistria's independence, leading to a conflict between the two sides that lasted for several years.⁽²⁵⁾

Transnistria's primary function during the Soviet era was as a hub of heavy industry and a crossing point between Western Europe and the Russian Empire. The region's ethnic diversity, which includes a sizeable population of Russian speakers, had an impact on the region's political developments, including the conflict with Moldova that erupted after the fall of the Soviet Union. Transnistria is still an unrecognized territory today, caught between its aspirations for independence and Moldova's and the world's opposition camp.

Transnistrian Separatism After the Dissolution and Independence of Moldova

The Transnistrian region is in the eastern part of Moldova and has a predominantly Russianspeaking population. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Moldova declared its independence in 1991, which was recognized by most countries. However, the Transnistrian region, with its strong Russian influence, did not recognize the newly independent state and instead declared its independence. This led to a conflict between Moldova and Transnistria, which lasted for several years and had a significant impact on the region's political and economic development. This historical investigation will explore the reasons behind the Transnistrian separatism after the dissolution and independence of Moldova, examining the region's historical background, political and social factors, and the current situation.

In 1918, after the fall of the Russian Empire, Transnistria was included in the newly formed Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1940, Transnistria was annexed by the Soviet Union and became part of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. During the Soviet era, Transnistria was an industrial hub, and many Russians were sent to work in the region's factories. As a result, the population of Transnistria became predominantly Russian speaking, with a significant Ukrainian minority. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Moldova declared its independence, and a new constitution was adopted, which recognized the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. However, the Transnistrian region, with its strong Russian identity, refused to recognize the new state and instead declared its independence. The conflict between Moldova and Transnistria began in 1992 when Moldova attempted to retake the region by force.^(26,27,28)

Speaking of the political and social factors, the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria had both political and social roots. On the one hand, the Transnistrian separatist movement was fueled by the desire to preserve Russian influence in the region. The predominantly Russian-speaking population saw Moldova's independence as a threat to their identity and feared that the new state would attempt to suppress their language and culture. On the other hand, the conflict had economic and social roots. The Transnistrian region was an industrial hub, and many of its factories were owned by Russians or by the Russian state. After Moldova's independence, the new government attempted to nationalize these factories, which led to tensions between the two sides. Additionally, the Moldovan government's economic policies were seen as favoring the western part of the country, which further alienated the population of Transnistria.⁽²⁹⁾

Because of these separatist ideas and Moldavian resistance, the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria remains unresolved.

The region is recognized as an independent state by a few countries, including Russia, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. However, the international community, including the United Nations, does not recognize Transnistria as an independent state and regards it as part of Moldova. The region's economy has suffered because of the conflict, and poverty is widespread. The separatist government has been accused of human rights abuses, and the region is often described as a "frozen conflict".

Transnistria War 1990-1992 and Ceasefire with Moldova

Violence and human rights abuses were prevalent throughout the Transnistrian War on both sides. The separatists were supported by the region's Russian-speaking population, which had long felt left out by the Moldovan government. Meanwhile, Moldova received assistance from the West, which saw the conflict as a threat to the region's stability. A cessation of hostilities was declared in 1992 following several years of fighting, but the conflict is still ongoing. Although Transnistria continues to function as a de facto independent state with its government, armed forces, and economy, the international community somehow doesn't recognize it.

The Transnistria issue was on the agenda as the Soviet Union's final years approached. It gained autonomy in the second half of 1989 and went to a referendum under the rule of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, which is in Transnistria. In 1989, the referendum in question was held throughout the region, rather than in cities and towns separately and at different times. It lasted from December of that year to November of the following year. Protests erupted in Transnistria following the referendum process. The decisions made in Chisinau had a significant impact on what happened in Transnistria. Because Moldova, a republic within the Soviet Union, was one of the most vocal countries seeking to leave the union. This was to be adopted in Moldova in September 1989. In the official and minority language law submitted to the Parliament, minorities were forbidden to choose the language of instruction. Additionally, these discussions accelerated ethnic-based divisions and polarizations between Russians (30 %), who make up about 60 % of Transnistria's population, and Ukrainians (28 %) agree with Chisinau's decisions and Moldova's agreement with Romania. opposed the merger request.^(30,31,32)

The Transnistria War of 1990-1992 was a conflict that erupted in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union. It was fought between Moldova and the breakaway region of Transnistria, which had declared independence in response to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The war lasted for over two years and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people, as well as the displacement of tens of thousands more.

The Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was a part of the Soviet Union in the 1980s, which is when the Transnistria conflict began. At the time, a sizable Russian-speaking population lived in Transnistria and was wary of Moldova's growing nationalism and desire for independence. The Supreme Soviet of the Moldavian SSR passed a resolution in 1990, as the Soviet Union was disintegrating, designating Moldavian as the only official language of the republic. The Russian-speaking populace viewed this as a threat. In response, several local authorities in Transnistria proclaimed their region's independence from Moldova and established the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic (TMR). Many of the people in the area who spoke Russian supported the TMR, as well as, as well as by the Soviet 14th Army, which was stationed in the area. Moldova, however, did not recognize the TMR's independence and began a military campaign to retake control of the region.^(33,34,35)

The conflict quickly escalated into a full-scale war, with both sides engaging in violent clashes and atrocities. The TMR was able to gain the upper hand, thanks in large part to the support of the 14th Army, which provided the separatists with weapons, ammunition, and logistical support. Moldova, on the other hand, was poorly equipped and had little military experience, making it difficult for them to gain a decisive advantage on the battlefield.

The conflict was further complicated by the involvement of outside powers. Russia was seen as a key player in the conflict, as it had many troops stationed in the area and was sympathetic to the separatist cause. Russian officials argued that the conflict was a matter of protecting the rights of Russian-speaking people and that Moldova was attempting to suppress their cultural identity. This argument was used to justify Russia's involvement in the conflict and the support it provided to the separatists. In 1992, after two years of fighting, a ceasefire was finally brokered between Moldova and the TMR. The ceasefire was largely the result of pressure from the international community, which had grown increasingly concerned about the violence in the region. The ceasefire agreement called for a cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of troops, and the establishment of a joint peacekeeping force made up of Moldovan, Russian, and TMR soldiers.^(7,36,37)

Boris Yeltsin, the first President of the Russian Federation, had a significant role in the Transnistria conflict, particularly during the early 1990s. His actions and policies influenced the situation in Transnistria in several ways:

- **Support for Transnistrian Separatists:** during the early phases of the conflict, Yeltsin's Russia supplied diplomatic and military backing to Transnistrian rebels. This aid included the provision of guns and assistance to Transnistrian paramilitary troops. Under Yeltsin's leadership, the Russian government voiced sympathy for the Transnistrian cause.
- **Mediation Efforts:** Yeltsin assisted in mediating discussions between the contending groups in Transnistria. The Russian Federation, together with Ukraine, participated in the tripartite mediation attempt with Moldova and Transnistria in 1992. This mediation resulted in the signing of the "Memorandum on the Principles of Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Dniester Region," which established a ceasefire and laid out principles for a peaceful resolution.
- **Russian Military Presence:** Yeltsin's administration kept a military presence in Transnistrian, including the Russian 14th Army. This military presence was a point of contention in talks between Russia and Moldova, with the Russian Federation originally hesitant to withdraw its troops.
- **Negotiations:** to find a peaceful settlement to the crisis, Yeltsin's government engaged in diplomatic discussions with Moldova and Transnistria. These talks attempted to resolve Transnistria's political position and security issues within Moldova, and they resulted in the formation of a Joint Control Commission with Russian, Moldovan, and Transnistrian

involvement.

- **Impact on Transnistria's De Facto Independence:** Yeltsin's policies, as well as the Russian Federation's role, contributed to Transnistria's de facto independence and self-government. Russia's assistance helped to establish Transnistria as a de facto entity, which has remained outside of Moldova's sovereignty for decades.

The ceasefire has largely held to this day, although tensions between Moldova and Transnistria continue to simmer. Transnistria remains unrecognized by the international community and is still considered part of Moldova by most countries. The region is heavily dependent on Russia for economic and military support, and there are fears that any attempt by Moldova to reassert control could lead to a new outbreak of violence.

Furthermore, the Transnistria War of 1990-1992 was a complex conflict that was driven by a variety of factors, including ethnic tensions, political rivalries, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The involvement of outside powers, particularly Russia and the European Union (indirectly), further complicated the conflict and helped to prolong the fighting. While the ceasefire has brought a measure of stability to the region, the underlying issues that sparked the conflict have yet to be fully resolved, and the situation in Transnistria remains a source of ongoing concern for Moldova and the international community.

Overall, the conflict between Moldova and Transnistria has continued to simmer since the 1990s, with occasional outbreaks of violence. The situation is complicated by the fact that the international community does not recognize Transnistria as an independent state, and Moldova maintains that the region is part of its territory. In recent years, there have been some efforts to negotiate a settlement to the conflict, but a lasting resolution remains elusive. The roots of Russian ethnicity and culture in Transnistria can be traced back to the region's history as part of the Russian Empire. During the Soviet era, Russian culture and traditions were heavily promoted in the region, and the Russian population remained distinct from the ethnic Moldovan population. The conflict between Moldova and Transnistria continues to this day, fueled by historical, cultural, and political factors.^(38,39)

Present Transnistrian Political Situation in Moldova

The dispute about Transnistria's political condition has raged on since the fall of the Soviet Union. Transnistria broke apart from Moldova in 1992. The area has turned into a geopolitical battleground because it is home to many Russian-speaking people who identify themselves as Russians. While the separatist administration of Transnistria views the region as an independent state, Moldova regards Transnistria as a part of its territory. Given its major security and geopolitical ramifications, the political situation in Transnistria continues to be of concern.

Historical Factors

Transnistria's political situation has been a source of contention since the Soviet Union's demise. Transnistria is a state that split away from Moldova in 1992. The area has turned into a geopolitical battleground because it is home to a large population that speaks Russian and identifies with Russia. Despite the separatist administration of Transnistria's assertions to the contrary, Moldova views Transnistria as a part of its territory. As it has substantial security and geopolitical consequences, the political situation in Transnistria continues to be of concern.

The political situation in Transnistria

Currently, Transnistria is governed by a separatist government, which views the territory as a separate state. Russia exerts enormous influence over and financial assistance to the separatist government. The area has its government, constitution, and currency, but none of the UN's member states recognize it. The region's internal affairs, including law enforcement, taxation, and education, are under the control of the separatist administration. The region's economy is heavily dependent on trade with Russia and Ukraine, and it has limited economic ties with Moldova.^(40,41,42)

Transnistria, on the other hand, is seen by Moldova as a part of its territory, and the country has worked to reintegrate the area. Moldova has offered a federal solution that would grant Transnistria autonomy within Moldova and has made efforts to settle the dispute through peaceful discussions. The separatist Transnistria administration, nevertheless, has rejected this idea and demands complete independence.

A president, who is chosen every five years to lead the government, is in charge. Vadim Krasnoselsky was elected as the leader of Transnistria in 2016. The 43 members of Transnistria's parliament are chosen every five years.

There is a functioning government and a stable political environment in Transnistria. Russia, which supports the separatist administration by giving the area financial and military assistance, does so. The status quo in the region is in the Russian government's strategic interest because it serves as a buffer between Russia and NATO.

Security implications

The region's security is significantly impacted by the political climate in Transnistria. The area has become a battleground and a source of conflict between Moldova and Russia. Moldova is a pro-Western nation that wants deeper links with NATO and the EU. On the other hand, Russia views Moldova as falling inside its sphere of influence and wants to continue exerting its power there.

Both sides of the Dniester River have seen a military increase because of the Transnistria conflict, with Moldova and Transnistria maintaining distinct armed forces. Numerous refugees, primarily of ethnic Moldovan descent, have also left the nation because of the circumstances. Additionally, the area has developed into a hub for organized crime, human trafficking, and smuggling, creating serious security issues.⁽⁸⁾

Moldova's Political Situation

The president of Moldova serves as the head of state in this parliamentary republic. In addition to being elected for a four-year term, the president and parliament are also elected. Moldova's current leader, Maia Sandu, was chosen that year.

As a result, the conflict with Transnistria has had a significant impact on the complicated political situation in Moldova. Transnistria's reintegration into Moldova is something Moldova aspires to undertake, however, there are obstacles in the way. Russia backs the separatist administration, and the region that is seeking independence is unwilling to give it up tempo.^(43,44)

Defense of the separatist part and Russians

There are a few reasons to support both the Russian government and the Transnistrian separatist administration. First and foremost, Transnistria's separatist administration embodies the region's populace. Most people in the area identify as Russians and do not want to be part of Moldova. The separatist administration has given the area a reliable and effective government that has kept the peace. Second, given the sizeable Russian-speaking population in Transnistria, the Russian government has a legitimate stake in the area.

Russia's Role in the Conflict

The Transnistrian dispute involves Russia significantly. It keeps a military presence in the area and offers the separatist administration financial and armed support. It is in Russia's interest to keep things as they are in Transnistria since it serves as a strategic buffer between NATO and Russia. Despite criticizing Russia for its part in the situation, the international world nonetheless supports the separatist government. In response to Russia's involvement in the crisis, the European Union and the United States have implemented economic sanctions.

International Recognition

The political climate in Transnistria has recently become more complicated, in part because of the ongoing confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. This chapter seeks to present a broad picture of the current political situation in Transnistria while taking into account the geopolitical setting, threats from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, and related concerns. In this chapter, we will also examine the significance of Russia for the political, economic, and social deontology of Transnistria today.

The absence of recognition for Transnistria has had some repercussions, including limitations on its capacity to participate in international organizations and receive foreign assistance, as well as limitations on its people's freedom to travel and conduct business abroad.

In conclusion, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and the so-called former "NagornoKarabakh/Artsaj" (officially "Karabagh that belongs to Azerbaijan iu jure") are the only nations in the world who acknowledge Transnistria. Moldova sees Transnistria as a crucial part of its nation. For many years, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has served as a mediator in negotiations to try and find an explanation about the status of Transnistria (OSCE). A peaceful conclusion to the conflict is still elusive, and in the Camp area, Transnistria's continued legal non-recognition is a significant problem.^(45,46,47)

Moldova and Russia continue to disagree over Transnistria's political and social status, with the former claiming the territory as part of its sovereign state and the latter providing political and economic support to Transnistria. The unresolved conflict between Moldova and Transnistria has resulted in a stalemate, with Transnistria maintaining de facto independence. In recent years, there have been some efforts to try to restart talks between Moldova and Transnistria, with Russia acting as a mediator. However, no significant progress has been made, and the situation in the region remains precarious. Transnistria is not the only unrecognized state in the region. Only a few countries recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two other breakaway territories that have declared independence from Georgia. NagornoKarabakh, another unrecognized state that declared independence from Azerbaijan and is recognized by only a few countries, is another unrecognized state.⁽³⁾

Russification refers to policies aimed at spreading Russian culture and language to nonRussians. These programs date back to the late 18th century but acquired prominence in the 1860s. Previous narratives that asserted a coherent goal by the tsarist administration to integrate non-Russians have been debunked by recent history. Nonetheless, St. Petersburg considered Russian to be the empire's main language, and it was natural for non-Russians to study Russian as a method of inter-ethnic communication. While the USSR officially opposed Russification, the Soviet administration was far more effective than its tsarist predecessors in expanding the Russian language.⁽⁹⁾

In terms of Soviet Russification, it was an important deontological question to justify Russian "self-help doctrine" based on foreign policy in Transnistrian territory, and the result was quite unpredictable since the case of Transnistria as a result did not correspond at all to the definition of Russification.^(48,49,50)

The investigation's central question was whether Russian assistance in Transnistria— commercial, military, political, and economic—was legitimate in terms of foreign policy given so-called "Soviet Russification". However, it should be highlighted that the term "russification" does not accurately describe the situation in Transnistria. Most people in Transnistria are already Russian, and the early 1990s hostilities were brought on by the fall and collapse of the USSR. Other Soviet republics had similar instances, and the circumstances of the Ukrainian War were comparable.

25 million Russians were made to leave their homeland in an instant after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia was the most divided country in the world; thus, its citizens faced many challenges. The historical approach of the USSR, particularly in the 1930s, was to fortify national elites in each nation, including Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Ukraine. But as the central government fell apart in the late 1980s, the nationalist elites of the republics decided to seize control, seize resources, and radicalize their language.

Nationalist elites most routinely used the tactic of creating an internal enemy to assume blame for all issues. The issues in the former Soviet Union, particularly Moldova, were attributed to Russians and communists. Following their coup, the elites made choices including outlawing the use of Russian. The Russian community in Transnistria was furious over this decision, which led to protests, fights, and finally bloodshed. The dispute was made worse by the harsh policies of the Moldavian government toward the Russian-speaking population. The Soviet Union's 14th Army, which was stationed close to Transnistria, was unable to overlook the persecution and killing that was going on. The Transnistrian militia was helped by the 14th Army, which enabled them to fend off raids from Moldova. A truce that is still in place today was established after only a few months of fighting. The Russian-speaking populace of Transnistria has progressively developed a unique national identity. It's important to stress that "russification" doesn't apply here. They were barred from using Russian to integrate them into Moldovan culture. The right of people to preserve their language and culture was violated because of this cultural genocide. Transnistria, Moldova's most developed and industrialized area, has long had a large ethnic Russian population because of historical migration patterns.

According to Alexandre Dugin, historical and cultural continuity would stress the historical, cultural, and linguistic continuity between Russia and the breakaway republics. He contends that because these areas and Russia have historical, linguistic, and cultural ties, they ought to be viewed through the lens of Westphalian Eurocentrism as an alternative viewpoint and as an integral component of the larger Russian cultural sphere. Transnistria may be seen as a comparable situation, although due to international public law principles and Moldavian sovereignty, this is not a widely held opinion in terms of being recognized to be part of Russia, therefore this may be considered as a non-orthodox view in accordance with the international community.⁽¹⁰⁾

Theoretical Analysis according to Dugin

- Philothei and Russian Geopolitical Conduct: Philothei's philosophies have historically influenced the Russian perspective on empirebuilding and expansion, emphasizing the integration of religion and state policies.
- Russification through Language and Religion as antecedents:

The Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union often employed language (promoting Russian) and religion (promoting the Russian Orthodox Church) as tools to integrate diverse territories.

These policies aimed to create a unified national identity and were particularly evident in regions like Transnistria.

Influence of Alexander Dugin and Putin's Vision: Alexander Dugin's philosophies, particularly his concept of Eurasianism, have reportedly influenced Putin's geopolitical strategies.

This perspective sees Russia as a unique civilization, distinct from Western Europe, with a destiny to lead a renewed form of empire reminiscent of both the Romanovs and the Soviets.

Distinctiveness in Imperial Expansion: unlike other empires, the Russian expansion was characterized by the integration of language and religion into its governance and identity formation strategies. This approach is evident in how the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union managed their diverse populations, aiming to create a cohesive national identity.^(51,52)

Military aid was provided by General Lebed and the 14th Army voluntarily rather than in reaction to directives from Moscow. The Russian-speaking community in Transnistria still faces prejudice and is not fully protected, as is the case in the Baltic republics, where the Russian population is marginalized, and the Russian language is prohibited in a variety of contexts.

Since the problems in Transnistria are more complicated and have a longer political and historical history, they cannot be explained by so-called Soviet Russification. The facts of the Russian-speaking community in Transnistria are not well captured by the term "Russification." The Transnistria dispute brings to light the issues that polarized nations multiethnic inhabitants, particularly Slavs (Russians and Ukrainians), were concerned about Romanian dominance and the loss of linguistic equality and multiculturalism.

To summarize, Transnistria has a largely Eastern Orthodox Christian population, with Russian being the most spoken language. This reflects the region's historical links with Russia, as well as its cultural character within the larger setting of Moldova confront as well as the need for post-Soviet governments to protect minority rights and adopt inclusive policies.

Another concern is that Russia would rebuild a narrative that would allow it to address the multiple difficulties that come with restoring power in the post-Soviet sphere and predominance in Euro Asia. One of the investigation's main aims was to analyze the circumstances under which Russia would need to develop a narrative to confront the many challenges it would encounter as it strove to retake control of the post-Soviet environment and reassert hegemony in Eurasia. The fact that Russia no longer seeks to dominate Eurasia is crucial to emphasize from the standpoint of Russian foreign policy. Russian foreign policy focuses on self-defense against NATO's aggressive and expansionist goals, which were initially designed to fight the USSR but have lasted for a very long period after its collapse.⁽⁹⁾

As an instrument of American military force, the nations that make up NATO have granted the supranational organization part of their decision-making authority. Russia has frequently maintained that its goal is not to rule the entire planet. They use collaboration, equality, and mutual benefit as the cornerstones of their foreign policy agenda. Foreign policy is viewed differently than it was in earlier decades since the world is today perceived as multipolar, with several power centers in different areas, including the economic strength of China and India. The post-Soviet area is characterized by organic economic development as opposed to institutional blocs.⁽¹¹⁾

It should be observed that the world was unipolar immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union; nevertheless, it has since become multipolar, and this has been Russia's key rhetoric used in the context of post-soviet separatist republics like Crimea and the RussiaUkraine war. Furthermore, given the ubiquitous Westphalian Eurocentrism in international relations, might Transnistria's sovereignty be acknowledged to terminate its non-recognition? According to the research, as a supporter of international law, Russia

not only abides by but also actively promotes strict adherence to international law, especially the ideals outlined in the UN Charter.

As a result, under the current circumstances, recognition is extremely unlikely; however, in the event that Moldavians act aggressively toward Russians living in Transnistria, it may in the future resemble the Donbas conflict of 2022 (a Russian military operation). Even if this is a prospective vision within the context of this scholarly study, political dynamics cannot be completely predicted when it comes to such important subjects that interact with international law principles within the possibility of war.

The investigation also emphasizes the right of the people to self-determination and the territorial integrity of sovereign states. The fact that international law specifies criteria for their application, such as the non-intervention principle, shows that these concepts are not at odds with one another. Russia highlights the importance of maintaining national integrity as a voice for the entire people and asserts that it is operating in accordance with international law.^(53,54)

The right to self-determination exists to prevent governments from abusing their authority to repress, discriminate against, or infringe upon the freedoms and rights of others, including their right to cultural identity and the right to speak their native tongue. The article highlights instances of prejudice toward the minority of Russian speakers in the recently elected administrations of Moldova and Ukraine. It declares that Russia protects and respects international law and that it considers all available lawful course of action alternatives. The results of this research demonstrate that Russia recognized the Donbas territory in reaction to what it believed to be a scheme of extermination and revenge by the Ukrainian government. However, it does point out that Transnistria no longer has any basis for recognition and that, notwithstanding the lack of a true removal, Russia has shown amazing tolerance. The statement further emphasized that Russia's choices are taken in compliance with international law and issued a warning against extrapolating the events in Donbas to Transnistria.⁽¹²⁾

The research continues by suggesting that considering international legal norms like territorial integrity and self-determination would be necessary to abolish Transnistria's unrecognized status. Russia's approach in this respect is based on its commitment to international law and its assessment of the particular facts and legal basis of each instance.

There are various reasons why the region of Transnistria is significant to demonstrate the necessity of peoples' self-determination in the face of the Russian Federation's "help" to allegedly threaten Russian minority if we see Russia as an older brother who is always protective. This study vision investigates the relevance of Transnistria in demonstrating the necessity of individual autonomy, especially in light of Russia's protection of vulnerable Russian minorities.

CONCLUSIONS

According to the research, Russia's desire to safeguard its citizens is sensible and evident, and it is supported by the fact that Russian nationals and people with Russian passports may be found in Transnistria. Putin's repeated declarations about Russia's commitment to protecting Russian-speaking communities are used to highlight the detrimental impacts of killing, discriminating against, or violating the rights of people based on their ethnicity. One of the key findings is that certain patterns are significant when it comes to the moral foundations of international politics: Western nations are likely to not tolerate damage being done to their population. It claims that Russia cannot ethically ignore the killing of its people. After Transnistria's unrest subsided, Russia refused to recognize the election's results. But if a danger materialized, Russia would consider the available information, its arguments, any relevant international law, and the real situation before planning. The argument that no country would agree to its population suffering unjustified damage at the hands of another government is emphasized throughout the research.

Finally, the narrative points out that Transnistria's importance lies in demonstrating the necessity of individual self-determination, particularly considering Russia's support for the imperiled Russian minority. It asserts that Russia's actions are driven by a desire to protect the freedoms and liberties of its population. The text emphasizes the importance of considering both international law and the situation when determining whether to recognize or aid threatened communities, though this cannot and will not necessarily guarantee to solve the non-existent, unclear status of Transnistria or recognition of that territory given that Moldovan sovereignty seems to be respected in the current scenario and Russia and Moldova maintain bilateral diplomatic relations.

If the current status quo is maintained, neither the recognition nor annexation of Transnistria's territory will be possible. This leaves the frozen conflict status of Transnistria in limbo and warrants further study, especially since Russia seems to continue to protect Transnistria both militarily and economically.

On the other hand, whether it could be considered feasible for Transnistria to be annexed to the Russian Federation legitimately and legally to clarify the paradoxical political status has been a very complex question mark that explores the potential for annexing Transnistria to Russia through diplomatic and non-violent methods. Because each incidence is unique, a direct projection cannot be made, according to the research findings. This prospective point emphasizes the relevance of the research and claims that the possibility of annexation cannot be determined in the absence of particular facts and decisions. Rather than guesswork, it is preferable to rely on facts, verification, and international rules. The paragraph mentions the Security Council and other processes.

According to Russian Federation authorities, the findings disprove the notion of using diplomacy and peaceful means to annex Transnistria to Russia. It underlines the need to consider the characteristics and circumstances of each situation while admonishing against making erroneous generalizations. The literature emphasizes the need to use precise judgments and verified facts rather than political speculation. The frozen conflict solution emphasizes the presence of global bodies like the Security Council and implies that any future decision or action on Transnistria would need a thorough analysis and study of global laws and norms. It suggests looking into diplomatic and peaceful alternatives to unilateral annexation within the framework of global cooperation and decision-making processes.

With the knowledge provided above, it is possible to conclude that annexing Transnistria by diplomatic and peaceful means is unlikely. The investigation emphasizes the need to carefully assess the situation as well as relying on information and general

methods. The need to pursue a settlement within the confines of international cooperation and norms is shown by this. Due to the current moral and political climate in Transnistria, a diplomatic strategy that upholds recognized international norms and seeks a peaceful resolution is required.

This investigation has done a critical examination of the political situation in Transnistria, a state that is not recognized by the international community, to solve the problem caused by Transnistria's ambiguous de facto status. Additionally, it evaluated how realistically Russia used the self-help attitude while making judgments. Studying the legitimacy and legality of Transnistrian referendums, contrasting Transnistria's situation with that of other breakaway states, and examining how Transnistria has been able to settle its disputes with Moldova thanks to Russia's self-help doctrine were among the research's objectives.

The results imply that Transnistria's position as a breakaway state—one that is not acknowledged by the international community—additionally contributes to a problem with identification inside the region. For Transnistria, it is difficult to establish a nation-state operational definition based on Westphalian sovereignty notions. Russian help and military protection have had a significant impact on the de facto state's economic and dynamic aspects, and referendums have been used to gauge popular opinion on Russian reunification.

Given these factors, it is crucial to understand that diplomatic and nonviolent methods must be employed to end the Transnistrian dispute. Analyzing Russia's pragmatism in making decisions and adherence to the right of people to self-determination is vital. It could be possible to understand the challenges that Eurocentric Westphalian systems have in dealing with frozen conflicts by comparing South Ossetia and Abkhazia to earlier breakaway states. In the end, maintaining Russia's advantageous position over the Russified post-Soviet region depends heavily on Russian self-help. The European Union and Russia would need to have a plan for finding common ground and have a thorough understanding of the geopolitical dynamics at play to address the Transnistrian issue.

By examining these complexities and developing a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at work, policymakers, academics, and stakeholders can work together to find a peaceful and practical solution that respects the aspirations and rights of the Transnistrian population while successfully addressing the region's larger geopolitical issues. This will allow us to better understand the causes determining the result of the frozen and unresolved Transnistrian war, with Russia's foreign policy playing a critical role. Furthermore, although a major section of the people in Transnistria were of Russian descent, the word "Russification" does not accurately depict the situation there from a Russian perspective. The 1990s war was a result of both the fall of the Soviet Union and local nationalist struggles. The Soviet Union's support for nationalist elites in each country aided radicalization and the rise of interethnic violence.

Table 1. Analysis of the Current Situation in Transnistria and Russia's Policies Using the Motricity and Dependency Approach

Motricity	<p>Power Zone: In the Russian self-help doctrine concerning frozen conflicts: Russia has significant control over decision-making and actions in the pro-Russian zone. This zone represents Russia's capacity to shape and direct the geopolitical dynamics of the Transnistrian crisis. Russia leverages its diplomatic, economic, and military resources to assert its interests and preferences, aiming to resolve the crisis. Russia can exercise its motricity, such as making independent policy decisions and strategic moves, to advance its desired outcomes. There is no active armed conflict in Transnistria, status quo. Cultivated Russian culture and language in Transnistria.</p>	<p>Conflict Zone: Tensions, disputes, and challenges emerge because of the frozen conflict between Moldova and Transnistria. Opposing geopolitical interests, territorial disputes, and disagreements over the political status of Transnistria between Russia, the secessionist region, and the Western block. The conflict zone involves methodological dependence, as different actors may rely on diplomatic negotiations, negotiations, or third-party mediation to manage and potentially resolve the conflicts. The conflict zone also highlights the need for motricity, where Russia and other stakeholders must navigate complex negotiations and strategic decisions to address the underlying issues and deconstruct the crisis.</p>
Dependence	<p>The Autonomous Problems Zone Encompasses issues and challenges that can be addressed independently by Russia or other stakeholders without relying heavily on external assistance: Implementing policy initiatives. Engaging in diplomatic dialogues. Enacting confidence-building measures to alleviate tensions and promote stability in Transnistria. Russia-Ukraine War news. Increasing Russophobia in the West. Anti-Russian campaigns through sending more arms and weapons to Ukraine and neighboring regions, including Moldova. Russia's methodological dependence comes into play as it determines the most effective ways to address these autonomous problems, either through direct action or collaborative efforts with other parties. Here, motricity is displayed through the proactive identification and pursuit of solutions that contribute to the deconstruction and resolution of the crisis.</p>	<p>The Exit Zone Signifies the desired outcomes and objectives of Russia's self-help doctrine in relation to the Transnistrian crisis. This is the culmination of Russia's efforts to deconstruct the crisis and resolve Transnistria's undefined de facto status. The exit zone involves: Achieving a sustainable resolution that may include formal recognition of Transnistria's status Or a peaceful reintegration into Moldova. Integration of Transnistria region to Russia as Crimea case Or other negotiated arrangements in-between Russia, Moldova, and Transnistria with Western observation Russia's methodological dependence is evident in its reliance on diplomatic strategies, negotiations, and coordinated actions with other international actors to achieve these outcomes. Motricity is showcased through the active pursuit of exit strategies that align with Russia's geopolitical goals and contribute to resolving the crisis.</p>

When considering the development of a narrative that will allow Russia to handle the issues that have arisen in its process of doing so in the post-Soviet space and Eurasia, it is crucial to emphasize that Russia is not aiming to restore domination or hegemony in the region. It bases its foreign policy on respect for international law and the interests of both parties. Russia, which argues that NATO was founded to resist the former Soviet Union, continues to oppose the organization's aggressive and expansionist goals.

Regarding the acknowledgment of Transnistria's sovereignty, Russia stands in support of protecting both international law and the geographical integrity of independent states. Regardless of the presence of the concept of people's self-determination, it must be utilized responsibly and not as a justification for tyranny or breaches of human rights.

To summarize, Russia appears to have no aim of Russification or hegemony in the area, preferring to maintain its post-Soviet status and mutually beneficial collaboration. Though there is no abundantly clear interest of Russia expanding its territory to Transnistrian region, even though the political commercial and economic support is notable in the region, and there are geopolitical interests that cause problems to Moldavian sovereignty, and in legitimate terms, none of the referendums of independence or annexation of Transnistria considered legitimated or recognized by the international community due to lack of compliance with international jurisdiction. The current political situation appears to be nihilistic from a deontological standpoint, yet there are hazards and geopolitical challenges to the area.

The situation in Transnistria, as well as the developing problem of separatism in the postSoviet area, may be evaluated via a variety of theoretical lenses supplied by major geopolitical and realist thinkers. With the fall of the Soviet Union, what was once a cohesive nation was divided into 16 sovereign entities, each confronting its own internal and external issues regarding national identity, self-determination, and foreign geopolitical forces.

According to realist scholars Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, Russia's activities in Transnistria and backing for separatist groups might be seen as efforts to optimize security and preserve a sphere of influence on its near perimeter. In this context, Waltz's structural realism suggests that in an anarchic international system, states are primarily motivated by self-preservation and power accumulation, as evidenced by Russia's desire to prevent Western institutions, such as NATO and the European Union, from advancing toward its borders.

Mearsheimer, on the other hand, emphasizes the relevance of offensive realism, arguing that strong countries are fundamentally inclined to pursue regional hegemony as a method of ensuring their security. As a result, Russia's backing for Transnistria and other separatist groups is consistent with a policy to avert an increasingly dangerous security climate near its borders.

In terms of Transnistria's future and regional separatism, recent developments indicate that geopolitical tensions will remain high. The existence of "frozen" wars, as well as Russia's sustained backing for these areas, signal that uncertainty and instability will continue to exist. This is worsened by ongoing tensions between Russia and the West, which have far-reaching consequences for security and politics throughout the post-Soviet area.

With the element of separatism, ethnic identity, common history, and political and economic goals will continue to be key challenges. Geopolitical theorists argue that such movements are not just motivated by local goals but are often controlled by external powers aiming to expand their influence or destabilize their competitors.

The future of Transnistria and other separatist movements in the post-Soviet area will be shaped by the interaction between local autonomy ambitions and big power objectives, particularly Russia's desire for security and regional domination. Understanding these events via realism and geopolitical theories gives vital insight into the power dynamics at work, implying that settling such conflicts would need a thoughtful strategy that considers both local reality and international security concerns.

FINANCING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Talya İşcan.

Data curation: Talya İşcan.

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