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ABSTRACT

MOLDOVAN SECONDARY EDUCATION SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS'
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MULTICULTURAL APPROACHES TO PEACE EDUCATION
(MAPE)

by

Angela Șt. Trubceac

A key social driver in The Republic of Moldova, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been the establishment of a state education system that emphasizes cultural pluralism and interculturalism. Educational research about the Republic of Moldova shows an increased motivation among contemporary secondary education social studies teachers to incorporate multicultural education and to enhance their professional skills in helping students to deal with violence, conflicts, and interethnic, linguistic, and cultural tensions. In the Republic of Moldova, secondary education social studies are required by the state education system to teach civic and citizenship education for the purpose of developing a harmonious society. However, there are no formal or required multicultural and peace education dimensions in Moldova's system of education. In order for Moldovan youth to successfully understand the historic and contemporary ethnic and cultural diversity and political challenges of the Republic of Moldova, teachers must be prepared to teach multicultural and peace education. This study accordingly examines the experiences of 30 secondary level social studies teachers in the Republic of Moldova to further explore the ways that they adapt their teaching pedagogies and negotiate their personal experiences to include multicultural and peace education. Specifically, the intent of the study is to understand the unique phenomenon of multicultural approaches to peace education (MAPE) through the narratives of those 30 educators. The study employs a qualitative, phenomenological research method. Interviews revealed teachers' narratives of their experience of developing multicultural approaches to peace education while fulfilling their curricular and extracurricular duties. This study sheds light on teachers' perceptions and practices of developing multicultural approaches to peace education, resulting in implications for further practice and research. The major finding of this study is that Moldovan educators increasingly, but not fully, include MAPE in their teaching options. I argue that even though Moldovan teachers personally appreciate the idea of MAPE, they are not fully effective at teaching it because they are influenced by their own past experiences, their understanding of the tensions between multiculturalism and patriotism and between civic education and global education, and their own understanding of ethnic identities and language issues. While following the national social studies curriculum and educational policies that indirectly promote MAPE, teachers still allow their preferences to sneak into their daily teaching practices.

MOLDOVAN SECONDARY EDUCATION SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS'
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MULTICULTURAL APPROACHES TO PEACE EDUCATION
(MAPE)

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

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DEDICATION

To my family:
my mother Elizaveta Ploșniță-Goma,
my husband and friend Sergiu Trubceac, and my beloved sons Andrei and Darius.
Thank you for your patience, your infinite faith in me, in my potential and abilities.

Vă iubesc și vă mulțumesc enorm.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

I am interested in Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers' perceptions of multicultural approaches to peace education (MAPE) for two reasons: first, I am a high school social studies teacher from the Republic of Moldova, and, second, I have been challenged and initiated into peacebuilding by my son Andrei, a peacebuilder himself, who encouraged me to look anew toward history curriculum, my lesson plans, and pedagogy. There are currently no studies of the ways in which Eastern European social studies teachers understand and teach MAPE. The goal of this study is to understand how Moldovan social studies teachers understand and teach MAPE by drawing on the narratives of Moldovan high school educators.

The aim of this study is to determine how Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers perceive and operate MAPE. The study explores how social studies teachers conceptualize multicultural education in their classrooms and how they relate that practice to principles of peace education. The ultimate purpose of the research is to explore the relationships between teachers' understanding, attitudes, and knowledge of peace education principles and the practical application of those principles through multicultural procedures in their ethnically and culturally diverse classrooms. In short, I am interested in how social studies teachers in Moldova understand the role of multicultural education to support peace education and how they incorporate this understanding in their daily lessons. I am curious about the ways in which Moldovan secondary level social studies teachers approach history education while teaching about national war, multicultural conflict, and civic education. To what extent do teachers understand and utilize elements of peace education in this process?

For the purpose of the study, a few key terms need to be defined, including peace education, multicultural education, multiculturalism, interculturalism, and cultural pluralism. *Peace education* is the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to bring about behavioral change that will enable people to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural, to resolve conflict peacefully, and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national, or international level (UNICEF, 2011). Peace education's main guiding principles are inclusiveness, participation, cohesion, integration, partnership, and collaboration (UNESCO, 2017). According to Galtung (1983), the founder of peace and conflict studies, peace education does not solely focus on directly preventing acts of

violence [negative peace]; rather, it aims at creating a culture of peace in which structural violence is prevented and social justice is established [positive peace] (p. 283). *Multicultural education* is defined as form of learning that incorporates the histories, texts, values, beliefs, and perspectives of people from different cultural backgrounds (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). *Multiculturalism (Multiculturality)* is the presence and support of different cultural and ethnic groups within all social areas including schooling. *Interculturalism (Interculturality)* refers to a process of encouraging cross-cultural dialogue, interaction, human interdependence, equality, and cohesion in culturally diverse societies, challenging self-segregation tendencies within them, and building a collective identity (Council of Europe OP Services, 2019). *Cultural pluralism* includes acknowledging a right to preserve one's cultural heritage, the appreciation of the benefits of a diverse society, and active participation in, and appreciation of, the life and energies of the other (Eck, 2007). For this study, *culture* is defined in a broad sense, encompassing key components such as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, geographic areas, religion, educational background, class, gender, and sexual orientation. My understanding of multiculturalism as an educational concept is that it can be a powerful driver for social change, and that it can help teachers mediate and transfer ideas and values between generations, cultures, and civilizations.

This research offers a picture of Moldovan social studies teachers' multicultural approaches to peace education in their instruction of history and civic education curricula. This study's major finding is that Moldovan educators increasingly, but not fully, include MAPE in their teaching options. In this dissertation, I argue that even though Moldovan teachers personally like the idea of MAPE, the reality is that when bearing MAPE in mind, educators consider their own past experiences, balancing the tensions between multiculturalism and patriotism, between civic education and global education, as well as between ethnic identities and language issues. While following the national social studies curriculum and educational policies that indirectly promote MAPE, teachers still allow their preferences to sneak into their daily teaching practices. The main challenges, barriers, and obstacles to fully incorporate MAPE into classrooms are also discussed.

Exploring the state of multicultural education and peace education in Moldova over the last three decades, after the collapse of the USSR, has occupied my interest as a scholar for a long time, given my own experience as an educator, a Moldovan citizen, and a social studies

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teacher. Serious questions concern me: Why is there an increase in violence, intolerance, racism, bigotry, and mistrust in Moldova? To what extent do Moldovan teachers shape their individual curriculum to eradicate these plagues? To what extent do Moldovan teachers fear cultural diversity? To what extent do questions of multiculturalism and peacebuilding occupy Moldovan teachers' concerns in the classroom? To what extent do Moldovan teachers celebrate differences in peoples' values, customs, and traditions as positive and enriching? These questions have led to my research question: To what extent do Moldovan teachers develop concepts of multiculturalism and peace education in the context of social studies in a multiethnic country? Thus, this research was designed to explore the extent to which multicultural education is incorporated in Moldovan social studies teachers' classrooms and the extent to which such practices might incorporate practices of peace education.

Historical Considerations

This section provides contextual information about the research site of the Republic of Moldova (RM). For the study and for the better understanding of the context of the field, a brief description of history of the RM, its general secondary education, ethnic diversity, political dynamics, and societal problems of the country are provided.

The RM is a beautiful, multicultural European country, landlocked between Ukraine and Romania. It is also a relatively young democracy among others in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In order to understand the cultural situation and identity configuration in the RM today, I make some steps back into the complex historical background, looking up to the formation of the geopolitical sympathies, affinities, and identity feelings of population. To a large extent, this foray into history reflects the Moldovans' struggle for identity, which unveil all sorts of influences that Moldova has been exposed to over centuries, throughout several physical divisions and splits, and ulterior Russification and Sovietization. Consequently, the composition of its ethnic fabric, once unitary, gradually changed over time, transfiguring the identity. All of these left their imprint on the linguistic issues and explain the existing modern Moldovan identity conundrum.

Present day Moldova is located on a territory that was a part of the medieval Principality of Moldova, known as such since 1359 (Nantoi, 2013, p.15). The Moldovan Principality was a vasal state of the Ottoman Empire starting in 1538. In 1806, the Russian Empire began to expand

its control farther to the West, beyond the right bank of the Nistru (Dniester) River, which led to the six-year long Russian-Turkish war (1806-1812). The Bucharest Peace Treaty that ended the war forced the old Turkish Empire to cede half of Moldova's territory to the Russian Empire, located between Nistru and Prut Rivers, later to be called Basarabia (Bessarabia). In 1859 the other half of Moldova united with Valahia (Țara Românească) and in 1861 became Romania, which gained its full independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 1877-1878 Independence War. As a result of 1812 Bessarabia's annexation, the historical cultural and ethnic traditions, agrarian-patriarchal society and social structure was truncated, and the local landlord aristocracy (boyars) was dislocated, gradually losing its prestigious status, and was replaced by new social stratum — Russian administrative, military, and pre-industrial nobility, which took over the leadership of the new Basarabia, including the political and administrative structures, financial and commercial life. The only way for the local nobility to survive was by confirming their loyalty to the Russian tzar and new administration. Basarabia remained one of the most impoverished and economically underdeveloped provinces and a cultural backwater of the Tsarist Empire. Between 1812-1918, Bessarabia/ Moldova's largest ethnic community—the Moldovans or Romanians (depending on how people identified themselves)—was marginalized by the new Russian elite.

In 1859, the other half of the Moldovan Principality (located between the Prut River and the Carpathian Mountains) alongside with Muntenia (Wallachia or Țara Românească), the United Romanian Principalities, became the foundations of the modern Romanian state. Within that territory, the population called themselves Romanians. Despite their kinship with the newly identified Bessarabia, the Russian dominance divided the Romanian and Bessarabian populations: a part of it, led by local elites, turned toward Bucharest (capital of Romania) and another part gravitated toward Sank-Petersburg (the capital of the Tsarist Empire). Another group that is now a part of the Republic of Moldova—Transnistria—located on the left bank of Nistru River, did not identify itself with any other ethnicities. However, having a mixed ethnic population, after becoming a part of Russian Empire in 1791, Transnistria's inhabitants identified themselves with that entity (Nantoi, 2013, p.16).

At the turn of the 20th century, with the end of WWI, as with many other Central and Eastern European ethnicities, Moldovans passed through an emancipatory wave and a rapid rise in national awareness and nationalistic tendencies, including the construction of a nation-state

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and a discrete identity. After the Bolshevik Revolution (October 25-November 7, 1917), the area constituted itself as the Autonomous Moldavian Democratic Republic on December 15, 1917, as a result of the Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, still a constituent republic of the Russian Federative Democratic Republic. In about a month, on January 24, 1918, the Moldavian Democratic Republic leadership declared the country's independence from the Soviet Russia. These political meanders of the nascent republic culminated on March 27, 1918, when the Bessarabian local representative body (parliament), called *Sfatul Țării* [The Country's Council] proclaimed the unification of Bessarabia with Romania, under the military presence/ assistance from the Kingdom of Romania. This was a conditioned union (essentially a federation) with Romania, insisting on maintaining its provincial autonomy and its legislative body—Sfatul Țării. However, this unification highlighted continued ethnic disunity in the nation state: of the 135 deputies present, 86 voted in favor of the union, 3 voted against, 36 abstained (including the representatives of ethnic minorities: German, Bulgarian, and Ukrainian deputies), and 13 deputies were absent (Union of Bessarabia with Romania, n.d.). This union was reflecting a long-standing goal—the affiliation with Greater Romania—a national state that would incorporate all ethnic Romanians which were divided for centuries among the neighboring empires (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russian). The unification of these territories made Romania a great actor in South-Eastern Europe. However, all newly united territories (besides Bessarabia, there were Transylvania and Bucovina) included significant ethnic minorities, such as Hungarians and Germans (in Transylvania); Russians and Ukrainians (in Bucovina); and Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauz, and Bulgarians in Bessarabia. Jewish and Roma(ni) people populated all three regions.

The process of unification of Romanian territories and the ambitious modernizing nation-building process of the Greater Romanian after 1918 was difficult, often resulting in the discrimination of ethnic minorities. The dominant Romanian ethnic political elite saw the unification process as a nation-state reformation as one that privileged Romanian history, culture, and traditions. The process of training new national elites began through a growing network of educational institutions. In this endeavor, Romanian traditions and language were imposed upon ethnic minority communities, while they were often treated with suspicion. These discriminatory and assimilationists measures inevitably led to tensions between the Romanian administration and ethnic minorities, thus weakening inter-ethnic relationships and stability of the country. The

situation was aggravated during WWII when the prime-mister Marshal Antonescu's politics of persecution towards ethnic minorities (28.1% of the population in 1930) (Solonari, 2015, p. xx), conducted a process of ethnic purifying of Romania, targeting mostly Jewish and Roma population.

In the meantime, Transnistria was tacitly inherited by the Bolshevik Russia. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), created on the ruins of the Tsarist Empire, contested the unification act of Bessarabia with Romania. In response to that, in October of 1924, for obvious irredentist purposes to Bessarabia, the Communist Party of USSR established the Moldovan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) on the east bank of the Dniester River, at its border with Romania, as a part of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (King, 2000, Negură, 2013). Under Stalin's direct patronage and the demands of governing the MASSR region, the Soviet communist regime created the 'new' Moldovan national identity, language, and history (King, 1999). The Soviet propaganda contrasted the new invented terms 'Moldovan language' and 'Moldovan nation' with the traditional ones of 'Romanian language' and 'Romanian nation.' Moreover, in MASSR and later in Soviet Moldova (Moldavia), citizens could identify themselves as Moldovans, Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Gagauzians, or Bulgarians, but in no case as Romanians. Identifying as a Romanian was equivalent to an action against the Soviet state and an attack against the USSR territorial integrity and punished with deportation to Siberia or ostracization from society. Also, the use of the Latin alphabet fell within the clause of anti-Soviet actions (Cașu, 2006).

As a part of the cultural revolution in the 1920s and 1930s, a new generation of intellectuals trained in the Soviet educational system emerged that reinforced the context of radical cultural changes in Transnistria, and, after 1944, in the Soviet Moldova. Scholars call it the beginning of the cultural, linguistic, and identity degradation of the Moldovan ethnic population, which furthered the competing binary identities (Moldovan vs Romanian) (Musteață, 2012; Nantoi, 2013; Baar & Jakubek, 2017), the decline of the Romanian language, and implantation of foreign "values" [characteristics] to national interests over several generations (Moldovanu, 2008, p.125; Burlacu, 2018, p. 458).

In June 1940, the second annexation of Bessarabia by USSR occurred as a result of the Stalin-Hitler secret pact of August 23, 1939. Thus, between June 28, 1940, and June 22, 1941, Bessarabia was a part of the USSR. In the summer of 1940, Romania was alone, without any

allies, facing a delicate situation on the eve of new looming world confrontation, on its desire to survive between two totalitarian regimes. Under the international pressures, in that summer of 1940, Romania had lost most of the gains after WWI. Under these conditions, in order to solve its territorial disputes, Romanian leadership collaborated with Germany and joined the Axis. Thus, on June 22, 1941, the Great Romania assisted Nazi Germany in its Blitzkrieg against the USSR, with the goal to regain some, if not all, of its lost territories (including Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina). Between June 22, 1941, and August 24, 1944, the territories of Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina were incorporated into the Romanian state, being controlled exclusively by the Romanian authorities. The goal was reached, and Marshal Ion Antonescu wanted to stop the participation of Romania in the war. However, Hitler managed to persuade Antonescu to continue the campaign to the East, promising to give back the Transylvania region (belonging at that time to Hungary, another ally) after the end of the war. Thus, Romanian military forces fought in WWII alongside Germany and its other allies on the Eastern front against USSR from June 1941 until August1944, tacitly engaged in a morbid competition with Hungary for Transylvania. Many Bessarabian men were enrolled in the Romanian army (including my both of my grandfathers). In August 1944, after the royal coup (King Mihai against marshal Ion Antonescu), Romania switched sides, changing its orientation in the warfare. In order to not wage war on its territory, King Mihai turned the weapons against Germany, engaging in the anti-Nazi war, alongside the Allied Coalition, an action seen by many as an act of salvation of Romania. After the Soviets "liberated" the region from the Nazis and Romanians, they fully integrated it into the Soviet Union, as one of 15 "sister republics." Romania was occupied by communist forces, too. The presence of the Red Army helped the Romanian communists to come to power by falsifying the election results. The new Romanian government was a new puppet of the Soviet Union. However, 140,000 Romanian troops were taken as prisoners of war (including both of my both grandparents: Ion Goma and Grigore Ploșniță). About 130,000 POWs were transported into the Soviet Union where many perished in prison camps (including my grandfather Ion Goma).

An intensive process of national-cultural building of the Soviet Moldavia began to align Moldova with other Soviet states (Negură, 2013, p.7). From 1944 until 1991, Moldova remained part of the Soviet Union. In the late 1980s, due to Gorbachev's 'Glasnost' and 'Perestroika' reforms, Moldova passed through a dynamic process that culminated with the declaration of an

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official language, Moldovan (a variation of the original Romanian language). On August 27, 1991, Moldova rejected Soviet control and joined other newly independent Eastern European states (Nantoi, 2013, p.21). Even that the Republic of Moldova is a common part of the ethnical and cultural Romanian space, under the Soviet rule, the term 'Moldovan people' and the politics of Moldovanism were created and emphasized. The politics of accentuating the difference between the Romanian and Moldovan people, language, alphabet, history, and identity was based on the concept of "the two languages and two peoples," in order to justify subsequent Soviet territorial ambitions.

This brief historical introduction shows how the land which now constitutes the Republic of Moldova has been a battleground for nations for centuries, with national control by the Turks/ Ottomans, Russians, Romania, and Soviets. Due to certain facilities provided by Tsarist Russia (in the 19th century) and the USSR (after World War II) waves of immigrants moved to Bessarabia. This explains how Moldova has become a common home for a large variety of different ethnic and religious groups. As a result of this long and embattled history, Moldova's cultural identity and linguistic practices have always been very complex. Ethnic and linguistic groupings have been alternately mixed up, oppressed, and ignored.

The Socio-political context of Ethnicity and Identity in Moldova

The politics of the RM is interwoven with long histories of ethnic and cultural conflict. Today, the main ethnic groups in Moldova include Romanians/ Moldovans, Russians, Gagauz, Roma, Jews, Ukrainians, and Bulgarians. These ethnic groups live around the country and more densely in certain geographical areas; for example, the Gagauz and Bulgarians concentrate in the Southern part and the Ukrainians mostly in the North-Eastern part. Some of these groups are more marginalized than others, in part due to historical circumstances. The Jews and Roma, for example, were persecuted by both the Nazi troops and Romanian authorities, suffering the tragedy of the Holocaust: between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews were murdered or died in various forms on Romanian soil in the war zones of Bessarabia, Bukovina, and Transnistria; 11,000 of the 25,000 Romani deported to concentration camps in Transnistria died (International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania, 2004, p.2-3). The Gagauz, who originate from the Turks and are Eastern Orthodox, are often seen as supporters of separation from or federalization of Moldova. Language groups include those who speak Russian, Gagauz, Ukrainian, Romani,

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Hebrew, Romanian or Moldovan, which is the official language. From a religious point of view, most of the population identify themselves as Eastern Orthodox Christians (90.1%), 0.5% of Moldovans adhere to the Catholic faith; the other 9.4% of population adhere to diverse Protestant denominations (https://statistica.gov.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=30&id=5582). Today, the 20,000 Jewish population in the RM is particularly small due to the Holocaust during the Antonescu regime and voluntary self-exile to Israel or to the West during Soviet rule (https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/MD).

The liberation of Moldova from the Soviets in 1991 led to internal disagreement about Moldova's future: whether to align with Romania, the European Union, or Russia. The emancipation of Moldovan ethnicity and the desire to free itself from the central power of Soviet Union in the late 1980s fueled the fears of some segments of the ethnic minority populations about the possibility of the unification of Moldova with Romania or joining the EU. This led to conflict between those who wanted to create a separate Moldovan state and objected to any alliance of Moldova with Romania, the EU, or any other western entity. This conflict has been particularly severe in Transnistria, which was supported by the Russian Federation and in the Gagauz region. This conflict came to a head on September 1990, when the Transnistria and Gagauz elites began a separatist movement from Moldova, climaxing with two separate armed conflicts: in the Gagauz region (Fall 1991) and Transnistria (March 2—July 21, 1992). Eventually, the Moldovan and Gagauz leadership came to terms: The Gagauz gained autonomy (Gagauz Yeri - Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia). The Transnistrian conflict escalated into a full-fledged civil war, resulting in an estimated 1,000 people killed, 2,000 wounded, 3,000 refugees, and over 100,000 forced from their homes during 1992 (Prisac, 2018, p. 294). Consequently, the Moldovan government tried to tone down their openly pro-Romanian (perceived also as anti-Russian) position and began to pay more attention to ethnic minorities' rights.

Following a ceasefire in July 21, 1992, over the Transnistria conflict, Moldova has been engaged in a complex situation called 'frozen conflict'—a situation in which active armed conflict has ended but no peace treaty has been signed. For the last 29 years, a new generation of citizens has grown in both parts of the RM – in Transnistria and the autonomous Gagauz Yeri region, and in the mainland Moldova, with at least two different self-identifications. Even though Transnistria is *de jure* a common part of the territory of RM, *de facto*, the Moldovan government does not have any control over it. Despite claiming sovereignty, the Transnistria region is located within the internationally recognized borders of Moldova, lacking much coveted international recognition.

Since Moldova gained its independence in 1991, it has strived to develop a pluralistic democracy. Moldovan society is often engaged in debates around the state language(s), national identity, democratization, and the potential trajectories of further societal development. All of this makes Moldova a particularly challenging place to teach multicultural education and peace

education. Further, the researchers found that the national language policy does not help the problem and scholars have found a deep split in population, divided into two categories and reflecting two identity discourses: Romanian identity discourse and the discourse of Moldovan identity (Moldovanu, 2008, p. 125).

Further complicating Moldova's national identity is the longstanding presence of political corruption and injustice. In 2017, Transparency International indicated that the RM's corruption index was 30 (The scale is from 100 [no corruption] to 0 [high levels of corruption]) (Transparency International, 2019). In 2018, the corruption index was 33, ranking the country in the 117th position among 176 countries, placing Moldova between Niger and Pakistan (Transparency International, 2019). The scourge of corruption has penetrated all societal and governmental structures, including education (Rahman, 2017). Many critics argue that the oligarchic political elite does not recognize any law above itself and its corporate interests. Politicians from all sides of the political spectrum do not address the nation's ethnic conflicts. Instead, they exploit latent interethnic animosities and traditions inherited from the Soviet past. Government policy has avoided addressing uncomfortable topics or addressing practical issues that could improve cultural conflicts in the nation and that could build the foundation for the emergence of authentic social cohesion and common identity as citizens of the Republic of Moldova (Groza et al., 2017, p. 5).

Another example of the political problems facing RM is that the government is often-changing (as of 2020, there have been 18 governments in 26 years) without much improvement of the social, economic, and political conditions of the country (Antonov, Gamanji & Cruc, 2010; Moşneaga, Mohammadifard & Corbu-Drumea, 2006). The political uncertainty of the nation and its poverty—Moldova is the poorest country in Europe (United Nations Development Programe 2019, 2010)—has led citizens to emigrate from the country at the rate of 106 per day (Redacţia Unimedia [Unimedia Editorial], 2017). A recent survey conducted in 2018 by the Institute for Public Policy in Moldova, shows that half of all Moldovan citizens would leave the country if they had the chance to do so, mostly due to poverty, corruption, and lack of future opportunities (Necsutu, 2018). This phenomenon is projected to continue in the next decades and contribute to a significant population decline in the future (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2018). Likewise, many of the small communities in the RM are characterized

by a lack of harmony, cohesion, and communication between different ethnicities and marginalized groups. Groza et al. (2017) have argued the following about Moldova:

> The Moldovan society is divided along ethnic and linguistic lines. A crisis of identity, lack of social cohesion and increasing identification with many groups of identity is one of the most serious challenges that hinder the development of Moldova and does not allow its people to promote common interests such as economic development and the constitution of a functioning state to be receptive to citizens. (p. 5)

Some scholars refer to the different identities of Moldova as "chronic diseases" (Coretchi, 2013, p. 9) or "nested identities" (Nantoi, 2013, p. 15) that have further aggravated the political situation, widening the divide of the Moldovan population between pro-Romanian, Pro-Western, and pro-Russian camps. These issues continue to impede the country's efforts to become a functional democratic entity dominated by harmonious societal relationships. Moldova's population and political elite faced the demise of communism with optimism, jumping into the process of building democracy, turning the economy from a state-planned-control model to a market driven path, and trying to catch up quickly with the rest of the Europe in the domains of democratization, liberalization, and privatization.

Education, Ethnicity, and Identity in Moldova

The transition of Moldova to a democracy in the 1990s and early 2000s also included educational reform. Today's Moldovan secondary education consists of two tracks: general and vocational. The general secondary education includes two parts: the middle school (called gymnasium)—grades 5-9—and the high school (lyceum)—grades 10-12. The vocational track is called the professional lyceum. The languages of instruction in Moldova under the Soviet rule (1940-1941, 1944-1991) were Moldovan for Moldovan children and Russian for all non-Moldovan ethnic groups. However, since the Moldovan/Romanian language (there is no difference between them) was adopted as the official country's language in 1989, state policy has emphasized that all citizens should study the Romanian language. Nearly two-thirds of all students currently study in schools where Romanian is the language of instruction. However, schools serving the needs of minorities and schools with Russian, Gagauz, Ukrainian, and Bulgarian as the language of instruction are also present. Students of other smaller nationalities

(Roma, Jewish, Polish, and German) are also permitted to study their mother tongues as a separate subject.

Moldova is a very ethnically and politically divided society, where the lack of peacebuilding skills among the generations is observable. During the last 29 years, since the declaration of independence, bullying, fighting, juvenile criminality, domestic violence, aggressive behavior, drug use, and human trafficking have increased and become serious societal problems. The orientation of Moldova's Ministry of Education towards the modernization and reform of the educational system has as a main objective the development of a knowledge-based economy, which would ensure a high standard of living for the population, while at the same time being the promoter of development and progress (Secrieru, 2007, p. 36). At the same time, the state education system attempts to address societal problems by teaching students the principles of equity and equality, non-discrimination, quality, relevance, and centering on pupils as direct beneficiaries. For example, the new Code of Education (2014) is a determination to teach progressive principles in the state curriculum, focusing on such tenets as:

> freedom of thought, as well as independence from ideologies, religious dogmas and political doctrines, and student's right to an opinion, social inclusion, equality, recognition and guaranteeing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including the right to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, secular education, transparency, etc., and the educational activities are related to national reference standards and good national and international practices. (Codul Educației, Capitolul II, n.p.)

However, from my 25 years of teaching experience, despite the official educational banner—"education centered on child's interests and needs"—a competitive learning atmosphere still overshadows the classrooms. This environment does not provide full opportunities for children to develop self-esteem, respect, and appreciation of others; it does not offer full support and proper education in the formation of life skills, thus undercutting their development as engaged members of a diverse society, coping with diverse social risks and problems. Besides the tensions inherent from post-Soviet times among identity, social studies teachers find themselves caught in the battle over the "symbolic monopoly on the historical truth" (Negură, 2013, p.9). Given the socio-political divisions in the nation, some Moldovan ethnic teachers continue to promote Moldovan identity, while others openly cultivate a Romanian identity.

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Ethnic minority teachers also promote their own identities, thereby revealing dissonance between intellectual discourses on the components of national/ethnic identity (Negură, 2013). These divisions are often seen in a debate over celebrating different holidays and manifestations, such as Europe's Day (May 8th) versus Victory Day (May 9th), honored respectively by Pro-EU and Pro-Russian camps, or commemorating the Union Day (March 27th) by Pro-Romanian groups. At the same time, the victims of Stalinist deportations are openly commemorated, while official commemoration of the Holocaust victims has only recently begun.

Thus, two major problems facing the history and civic education in Moldova can be seen: First, educators are still driven by teaching general knowledge instead of focusing on life skills, activism, citizenship, and community engagement; second, teachers oscillate between teaching ethno-nationalistic versions of history and a cultural-pluralistic version of a unified 'civic nation' that is inclusive of peace and multicultural education. Therefore, most teachers teach MAPE (at least some aspects of it) because they must follow the state policy. Hence, educational authorities' efforts to teach active citizenship and to build a civic nation fails, due primarily to a lack of consensus by educators (Posțan, 2017). Also, from my personal experience as a high school history teacher, most instructors do not focus much attention on how instructional methods can craft peace skills and/or how peace education and multiculturalism can be effectively used. Rather, a narrow nationalistic approach to history teaching is favored, imbued with self-victimization and blaming other approaches. The history, civic, and citizen education in the Republic of Moldova is at the intersection of the political-identity discourse (Musteață, 2010; Anderson Worden, 2014).

The tensions in interethnic relations in Moldovan society are due in large part to historical context and to the opportunistic geopolitical choices of the Moldovan political elites, all of which contribute to further disunity of the nation. Discrepancies between official policies dominate the political and cultural narratives, thus, greatly influencing the educational realm. For example, even though Moldovan educational authorities are strongly committed to teach civic and citizenship education for the purpose of developing a harmonious society, there is no sound emphasis on formal or required multicultural, cross-cultural, and peace education in Moldova, as well as adequate teacher education experiences that might offer an adequate training. That is why the practice often says something else. This assumption is based on curriculum, my own experience, and empirical evidence of the kind included in this study.

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The Republic of Moldova System of Education

The educational system of The Republic of Moldova represents educational units and institutions of different types and levels, including elementary, general (secondary), and vocational training. The compulsory K12 system includes four stages/ levels: 1. Early education—Kindergarten; 2. Primary/elementary education (grades 1-4); 3. Secondary education (level 1), middle school (grades 5-9); and 4. Secondary education (level 2), high school (grades 10-12). Secondary education also includes Secondary Technical Education (for graduates of middle school) and Post-secondary Technical Vocational Education (2 years, for graduates of high school). The upper stages of the higher education system (Tertiary education) are: Graduate level—Bachelor's Degree; Master's degree studies; Doctoral and Postdoctoral degree study programs. The age groups corresponding to the educational levels are: Pre-primary education— 3-6 years; Primary education—7-10 years; Secondary education level 1 (middle school)—11-15 years; Secondary level 2 (high school)—16-18 years; Tertiary education (College/University)— 19-23 years and older.

According to the report, *Educaţia în Republica Moldova: Publicaţie Statistică 2017/2018* [Education in The Republic of Moldova: Statistical Publication: 2017-2018], in the 2017-2018 school year, the educational system of the Republic of Moldova included 1,458 early education institutions, 1,243 primary and secondary schools, 86 vocational institutions, and 29 higher educational institutions. The report found that the school population gradually declined 21% over the 2010-2017 period. The statistics show that during the past five years, the Moldovan education system has enrolled only about two-thirds of the school age population. However, the *school enrollment ratio* differs depending on the age category: "the highest enrollment level is in the case of persons from age group 7-15 years (87.7% in the 2017-2018 school year)" (p. 9), the characteristic age for the public compulsory socialization. For 269,576 (80,6%) students, Romanian is the main language of instruction, whereas for 64,350 (19.2%) students, Russian is the main language of instruction. For 517 (0.2%) students, other languages are used for instruction (Educaţia în Republica Moldova: Publicaţie Statistică 2017/2018, 2018, p. 46).

In the 2017-2018 school year, educational and training activity in the education system was provided by 37,600 persons (administrators, educators, and teachers), which is 22.8% less than in the 2010-2011 school year. The *female teaching staff* is predominant in all levels of education, registering the highest number in primary and secondary general education (86.0%).

From about 30,000 graduates of middle school, 42.0% continued to study at the high school and 41.9% in vocational institutions (Biroul Naţional de Statistică al Republicii Moldova [National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova], 2018, p. 9-10). Overall, in the 2017-2018 school year, there were 1,500 history and social studies teachers in elementary and secondary schools, 515 less than in the 2010-2011 school year (Biroul Naţional de Statistică al Republicii Moldova [National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova], 2018, p. 50). Years of experience of pedagogical staff in elementary and secondary schools in 2017-2018 is as follows:

up to 2 years	from 2 to 5 years	from 5 to 10 years	from 10 to 15 years	from 15 to 20	20 years and over
5.2%	*6.2%*	*9.8%*	*10.5%*	*10.6%*	*57.7%*

Ages of pedagogical staff in elementary and secondary education schools in 2017-2018 are as follows:

Group Age	Total		Urban		Rural	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
	28,552	*100*	**12,465**	*28.67*	**16,087**	*71.33*
Up to 30 years	3,146	*11*	1.335	*10.7*	1.811	*11.3*
30-39 years	5,722	*20.1*	2.749	*22.1*	2.973	*18.5*
40-49 years	7,290	*25.5*	3.396	*27.2*	3.894	*24.2*
50-59 years	7,577	*26.5*	2.957	*23.7*	4.620	*28.7*
60 years and more	4,817	*16.9*	2.028	*16.3*	2.789	*17.3*

These figures are in line with the more general societal picture of Moldova as an aging society (Ministerul Muncii, Protecţiei Sociale şi a Familiei Republicii Moldova [Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family of the Republic of Moldova], 2012).

From the point of view of minority language position, in Moldova there are four types of minority educational institutions:

- Schools with Russian as the language of instruction, where representatives of different minorities traditionally study;

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- Schools with Russian as a language of instruction, where the mother tongue (Ukrainian, Gagauz, Bulgarian) exists as a mandatory school subject;
- Schools and classes with Russian as the language of instruction, where the mother tongue is studied as a subject and 1-3 subjects are taught in another language;
- Schools and classes with native language (Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Polish, German) as the medium of instruction. (Belitser & Gerasymchuk, 2008, p. 86)

Most national minority students attend schools with Russian as the language of instruction. Beginning in 1989, of the pre-university institutions (elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools) 260 (17.4%) use Russian as the language of instruction and 114 (7.6%) have some classes with Russian as the language of instruction and some classes with Romanian as the language of instruction.

The total number of pupils instructed in main spoken languages				
Romanian	Russian	Ukrainian	Bulgarian	Roma
269.576	131.574	374	171	0
(78.0%)	(21.8%)	(0.06%)	(0.02%)	0%

There are two schools where Jewish history, culture, and languages (Hebrew and Yiddish) are studied. Currently, most Ukrainian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian children study their mother tongue as a school subject: the Ukrainian language is studied in 37 schools (5,984 pupils) (The Transnistrian area is not included); the Gagauz language is studied in 52 schools (29,483 pupils); and the Bulgarian language is studied in 30 schools (7,925 pupils) (Belitser & Gerasymchuk, 2008, p. 86-87).

The Context of the Republic of Moldova Social Studies Curriculum

The official Moldovan education is divided in two big areas: the socio-humanistic area and the sciences (in Romanian called '*profil umanist*' vs. '*profil real*'). The social studies curricula specifically advocate for 'socio-humanistic education' (in contrast with the area of pure sciences) by which is meant to emphasize the role of traditional humanistic and social studies disciplines and good educational practices. These curricula focus on general knowledge, human values, and intellectual skills, plus basic skills for adapting to and surviving in today's world,

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such as communication, collaboration, conflict management, problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision making.

The social studies curricula in the Moldovan official educational documents are called *Socio-Humanistic Education,* which begins in the elementary education cycle. This includes the following subjects: *History, Civic Education, Education for Society, Moral-Spiritual Education,* and *Geography*. These disciplines are mandatory for middle and high school students. The school subject-matter, *Education for Society*, included in the National Educational Framework in the Fall of 2018, intends to gradually replace *Civic Education*.

The National Educational Framework approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research of the RM for the 2018-2019 academic year includes a variety of options under *Socio-Humanistic Education*. The elective subjects included in this component for grades 1 to 4 are: Religion, Economic and Entrepreneurial Education, Intercultural Education, and Human Rights Education (PLANUL-CADRU pentru învăţământul primar, gimnazial şi liceal, 2018c, p. 17).

For the middle school cycle (grades 5 to 9), it offers a wide range of alternative disciplines such as: Economic and Entrepreneurial Education; Social and Financial Education; Learning to Think and Act Strategically; Education for Equality and Gender Equality; Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship; Education for Community Development; Film Education, A World to See; History and Local Culture; Religion; Intercultural Education; Education for Tolerance; the Art of Moral Behavior; and Lived History—Told History (grades 6-9) (PLANUL-CADRU pentru învăţământul primar, gimnazial şi liceal, 2018c, p.18). History is taught twice per week, and the other subjects are taught once per week during the four years of the middle school cycle.

In high school (grades 10 to 12), students are divided into two profiles based on personal interests: real profile (where students' studies focus on science and technology subject matters) and humanist profile (where students' studies focus on languages and social studies disciplines). For example, students in real profile are taught history only two times per week, compared with their humanist profile school mates who receive instruction in that subject three times per week. However, the Civic Education and Education for Society disciplines are taught to both profile students the same amount of time (once per week).

The optional/elective subjects included in the National Framework under the "Socio-Humanistic Education" component for the high school are: Economic and Entrepreneurial Education; Introduction to Sociology (grade 11); We Learn to Think and Act Strategically; Education for Gender Equity and Equal Opportunities; Education for Community Development; Film Education, A World to See; European Integration for You; To Know Each Other Better; Harmonious Family Relationships; and the Ethics of Family Life (grades 10-12) (PLANUL-CADRU pentru învățământul primar, gimnazial și liceal, 2018c, p. 32).

The National History Curriculum official document for both subsections of secondary education (middle school and high school) states:

> The mission of history, as a school discipline, is primarily focused on understanding the past of their own people and the diversity of the cultural and historical traditions of the peoples of the world in order to remove prejudice and encourage tolerance among people. Therefore, the teaching of history must be based on the idea of reconciliation and the positive reciprocal influences among peoples. History lessons should educate students and provide younger generations with new ideas and, at the same time, prevent the emergence and development of conflicts. In a society with a real democracy, a scientific polemic is needed, but it must have a careful and balanced aspect within the educational process. (Istoria: Curriculum Național pentru Gimnaziu (cl. V-IX), 2010a, p. 3; Istoria: Curriculum Național pentru Liceu (cl. X-XII), 2010b, p. 4)

The above paragraph emphasizes the key points of MAPE in Moldovan history curriculum: recognition and respect of the other, tolerance, anti-bias, anti-homophobic, reconciliation, and dialogue, as crucial aspects and concepts for achieving a real pluralistic democracy.

The school discipline, *Education for Society*, harnesses the European reference framework, consisting of 20 competences for a democratic culture (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 11) (See Appendix 6), and it is presented in both middle school and high school curricula (Curriculumul disciplinar Educație pentru Societate: Ghidul de implementare a curriculumului disciplinar [Cl. 5-9], 2018a, p. 23; Curriculumul disciplinar Educație pentru Societate: Ghidul de implementare a curriculumului disciplinar [Cl. 10-12], 2018b, p. 20). The *Guides to Implementing the Education for the Society Curriculum* in both levels of secondary education (middle and high school) contain the section, 'Diversity and Pluralism,' that states:

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In any society there are different values and ways to live. Some societies discourage diversity—they make everyone follow the "official" line. However, one's freedom to live his life as he chooses is a fundamental issue of human rights. Diversity includes differences based on gender, ethnicity, class, age, student type, region, religion, and values. A society that respects human rights must be a pluralist one—one that respects all the ways of living. This can be difficult if different values and lifestyles are in conflict. In school, young people reflect on diversity within their school community. They learn how respect is built, through discussion, mutual understanding, and openness to compromise. (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, 2018a, p. 21; Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, 2018b, p. 24)

Both teacher guides include the section, 'Conflict and Communication,' which asserts:

Disputes over competing priorities, needs, and interests are a part of life in any society. Some societies are trying to hide conflicts, believing that they undermine social harmony. However, in democratic societies, people are encouraged to formulate and openly discuss different perceptions and views. This makes decision-making more efficient and fairer, and disputes tend to resolve rather than be left to power. In school, young people reflect on the current patterns of conflict in their community. They learn ways to resolve conflicts through non-violent means, such as mediating between peers. (Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, 2018a, p. 21; Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova, 2018b, p. 24)

Also, under the aegis of Moldova's Ministry of Education and other NGOs, supplementary didactic materials were published that promote multiculturalism. Among them we can mention: *European integration for you: Methodological guide for teachers* (Eşanu, Goraş-Postică, Sclifos & Solovei, 2009); *Intercultural Education* (Podolşa, Petrovschi, Samoilenco, & Uzicov, 2012); *The Integration of Ethnic Groups and the consolidation of the civic nation in the RM* (Nantoi et al., 2012); *The lived history—the story told: Curriculum for secondary/high school education* (Băbălău, 2015*)*; *Intercultural Competence: Didactic Assistance* (Bogdea, 2015); *Education for human rights: Curriculum for secondary education* (2015); etc. For this purpose, Stradling's book *Multiperspectivity in history teaching: A guide to teachers* (2003/2014) was published in Romanian and disseminated in each school library.

The above statements show that the Moldovan social studies curriculum supports MAPE concepts, such as interculturalism, dialogue, integration, multi-perspectivity, and diversity. However, the multicultural approach to peace education pedagogy in Moldova is still very much a work in progress, as teachers incorporate local positive experiences with those from around the world. This means that the current educational reform agenda in RM that ultimately aims to achieve societal harmony is still in development and teachers experience it that way. The curriculum promotes indirectly peace education and multiculturalism, but the interviewed teachers do not always approach those topics as designed in the curriculum, following instead their personal pacing and views. Also, due to the existing internal economic crisis, the national education system has not been successful in its efforts to train and retain talented teacher's corps in schools.

In this dissertation, my study of peace education and its interweaving with multicultural education focuses on Moldovan secondary education level social studies teachers' experiences. However, it will inevitably touch on the topics of curriculum and educational policies. My interest is in how teachers conceptualize the practice of peace education and multiculturalism as articulated in the state curriculum.

Problem statement

The problem for this research is the extent to which the current Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers conceptualize multiculturalism as a form of peace(building) education in their classroom practices.

The Study

This dissertation was designed to address the gap in research around peace education and the way in which peace education and multicultural education intersect and to identify Moldovan history and social studies teachers' perspectives and conceptualizations of peace education and multiculturalism. The research engaged social studies and history teachers from the Republic of Moldova in professional dialogue about their perceptions of practicing multicultural education that was inclusive of peace education. I identified a group of Moldovan secondary level social studies teachers who were, as a group, diverse in ethnic background, geographic location,

gender, and age. Bringing together their narratives provided new insights on the pursuit for cultural diversity, social justice, and cohesion in Moldovan classrooms.

I recognize the crucial role of teaching multicultural education in contributing to building a genuine culture of peace. I hope that this research will reveal the instances in which education can further inclusion and tolerance, fairness, and justice—key aims of education in a democratic society. Drawing on my years of experience as a social studies teacher in Moldova, I came to this project with an assumption that the current practice of social studies and history teaching in Moldova has mainly a nationalistic focus with little multicultural and peace education. Even though principles are MAPE are incorporated into the national curriculum, I do not believe that teachers enact those practices effectively because of a variety of cultural and personal forces. I believe that gaining a better understanding of how social studies teachers conceptualize the importance and necessity of multicultural education and how they transfer this into practice in the educational environment can give a clear picture of the possibilities of improved educational reforms in Moldova. I argue that teachers' narratives of their practice can introduce new insights into the field of peace and multicultural education pedagogies.

Research questions

Reviewing the key points of the existing literature, the research set out to answer the following research questions:

a. *To what extent do history and social studies teachers think that they teach a multicultural approach to peace education?*

b. *If they do not, why do they think they do not and what do they think are the barriers and obstacles to this?*

c. *If they do, why do they think they do it, what does it look like, and how do they navigate it?*

Answering these questions helped illuminate the extent to which Moldovan history and social studies teachers conceptualize, theorize, and practice peace education and multiculturalism in the social studies curriculum in their daily classrooms.

I used my personal professional network, as well as my contacts in local Departments of Education and the National Ministry of Education to identify potential participants in the project. I interviewed 30 Moldovan high school social studies teachers working in public schools across

the nation. The goal was to have a diverse representative sample of population. The participants were from varied geographical regions: countryside, urban areas, agricultural, and industrial zones. Assuring the presence of geographical, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, gender aspects of diversity helped to bring diverse teachers' voices into the field together. The interviews were conducted in two languages: Romanian and Russian (for ethnic minority teachers—Russian, Gagauz, Bulgarian, Jewish, Ukrainian) and aimed to uncover the extent to which Moldovan educators understand their own use of multiculturalism and understandings of peace education.

Theoretical framework of the study

The study was based upon two post-modern critical social theories—Theory of Recognition and Critical Multicultural Education Pedagogy. Each of these theories provides a lens through which study-participants might understand their multicultural teaching practices while teaching history, civic education, and education for society in Moldova at the secondary education level. Both theories help to explore the affinities and tensions between teachers' stories of becoming multicultural educators and their perspectives on multicultural approaches to peace education.

The Theory of Recognition was coined by Axel Honneth (1992) in his main work *The Struggle for Recognition: Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* and Charles Tyler's (1994) *The Politics of Recognition*. It focuses on the relations of power, recognition, and respect as a part of social-political and moral philosophy. Honneth's focal point is on social-political and moral philosophy, attempting to explain how social phenomena work in relation to power, recognition, and respect. He argues that, for a proper understanding of social relations, we must prioritize intersubjective relationships of recognition. The bedrock of his thought is a concern for contemporary society's logic of recognition in contrast with the logic of *mis*recognition (exclusion and domination) of the other. Starting with the premise that recognition (including respect, love, friendship, and solidarity) of/with the other is primary to cognition (Honneth, 2005), I assume that Moldovan social studies teachers might use this postulate as a teaching approach in their classrooms. According to Honneth, recognition presupposes the presence of two key-factors: a subject of recognition (the recognizer) and an object (the recognized). Honneth (1992) argues that everyone must pass through a few distinct stages while gaining elementary recognition (self-confidence), (self-)respect, (self-)esteem, love, and friendship. In

this vein, people (i.e., titular/majoritarian ethnicities) come to recognize other or "subaltern" groups as persons very early on. Misrecognition, to the contrary, might lead to an internalized depreciatory image of self that serves as an impediment to advancement. In his book *The I in the We: Studies in the theory of recognition* (2014), Honneth develops his theory of recognition, showing how it empowers us to rethink the concept of justice and individual identity formation.

Charles Taylor's (1994) essay on "The Politics of Recognition" also supports the notion of recognition. Taylor's contribution to recognition theory is linked to identity concept. He adds the concepts of honor and dignity as inherent parts of mutual recognition in modern societies, demanding equal status of cultures and genders (Taylor, 1994, p. 27). Taylor connects his theory to issues of morality, adding such terms as inner voice, amour proper, pride, and moral ideals as essential characteristics needed for the human to recuperate "authentic moral contact" with oneself (ibid, p. 29). Taylor's discourse of recognition is tied to the concept of identity, viewed as one's dialogical relation with the other, mutual dependence, and exchange that ultimately brings recognition (ibid, p. 34) and non-discrimination (ibid, p. 39). He speaks about two modes of modern politics in multicultural countries: the politics of difference (-blind) and the politics of equal dignity, which come into conflict and reproach each other. Taylor critiques blind liberalism, seeing the politics of blind-difference as unhuman and discriminatory, suppressing, and homogenizing identities (ibid, p. 43).

Thus, my study builds on Recognition theory, with an aim to offer insight into the Moldovan educators' perspectives on MAPE on the periphery of EU. It provides opportunities for constant transformation and freedom of choosing the right pedagogical approach for diverse 21st century educational settings.

The study also draws on critical multiculturalist theory which itself builds on Banks' (1989, 1995) liberal Multicultural Education Theory. Banks' Multicultural Education Theory provides foundational principles of multicultural education in social studies classrooms and presents multicultural pedagogy as learner-centered instruction, taught throughout five main approaches: the contribution approach, the ethnic additive approach, the transformative approach, the decision-making and social action approach, and the mixed/blending approach. Multicultural education theorists believe that schools must positively respond to racially, ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and socially diverse demographics, making space for, equally treating, and appreciating the strengths and weaknesses of all cultures. Based on the

dimensions of content integration, knowledge construction processes, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture (Banks, 1995), this theory helps to explore how teachers choose among and apply different approaches as vehicles for teaching history in multiethnic classrooms, while moving away from traditional narrow nationalistic—patriotic—mainstream-centric curriculum toward more progressive diversity-friendly multicultural approaches to peace education, or what I refer to here as MAPE.

Critical multiculturalist theory (May & Sleeter, 2010) expands on liberal Multicultural Theory by providing a lens to analyze and revise traditional social studies curricula and practices. Critical multiculturalist theory provides the means to integrate various threads of critical theory. Giving priority to the structural analysis of unequal power relationships, critical multicultural theory, or revolutionary multicultural pedagogy (McLaren, 1997), goes beyond the traditional liberal, pluralist version of multiculturalism and its political correctness. Thus, it rises above the "superficial celebration of cultural differences and inclusion of diverse cultures" (Georgiou, 2011, p. 52) pointing to socio-economic issues of inequality, inequity, and injustice. Linking critical pedagogy with multicultural education makes them partners (McLaren, 2003), attractive educational innovations (Gay, 1995), thus, putting them into the center of educational discourse on social justice that aims to address wider societal issues of the poor and marginalized, projecting the social transformation (Giroux, 1997; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Critical multicultural theory studies the interaction among dominant and subordinate/disadvantaged groups, confronting all types of injustices by naming them and exploring discrimination in all areas, including curriculum, didactic materials, textbooks, educational policies, and teachers' interactions (Nieto, 1994; 2004).

Since the 1990s, multicultural education has become a common practice for many pedagogues around the world. Major multicultural principles have challenged standardized curriculum and paid proper tribute to issues of classroom diversity, including linguistic, ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, class, cultural, and religious differences (May & Sleeter, 2010). However, many structural and social inequalities still exist in schools. As a radical pedagogy, critical multicultural theory helps teachers to reduce patterns of ethnicism, racism, sexism, classism, exclusion, and discrimination that are still present in educational settings. Critical multicultural theory also helps educators grapple with questions of identity, agency, and diversity, encouraging self-reflection and the reconceptualizing of multiple identities. This theoretical

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framework of critical multicultural theory provides educators with an architecture that builds classrooms as sites of dialogues where all voices are heard, hope is kept alive, the complexity of identity is valued, history education is depoliticized, and differences are celebrated. Liberal multiculturalism has its positive and negative aspects; the positive facet is that it provides a framework for understanding the unity and diversity of the human race, while the negative one is its surface-level inclusion of superficial/exoticized aspects of a culture, without questioning structural systems of injustice and power (Attias, Koh, Bryant Nordstrom, Reeves, and Owens Uelk, n.d.). Thus, the liberal approach focuses on its commitment to "the moral primacy of the individual, individual liberty, autonomy, and equality" (Vitikainen, 2013 p. 47), leaving open the prospect to employ "culturally differentiated rights in practice" (p. 57), perpetuating cultural hegemony of the dominant group. This is the difference between the critical multicultural framework and the liberal multicultural education: the critical multicultural theory emphasizes deep structural inequities in the distribution of power and resources in society, confronting race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, (dis)ability, sexuality, and other normative biases, seeking to acknowledge, question, and disrupt these structures, in order to improve economic, educational, and social outcomes for all and sundry. I see how critical multicultural theory includes elements of peace education through peacebuilding dialogue among particularly ethnoculturally diverse teachers and students (Parker, 2013). I interpret critical multicultural educational theory as inclusive of peace education by applying these pedagogies in relation to people's own perspectives, histories, and identities; the inclusion of multiperspectivity in a democratic, multicultural, multiethnic, and multilinguistic learning environment of Moldova; and its opportunities for democratic peacebuilding inclusion of all citizens in civic nation building process. Thus, the interaction between multicultural education and peace education permeates the schools' curricula and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, families, and communities.

These complementary integrative theoretical frameworks helped me as a researcher, scholar, teacher-educator, and former high school social studies teacher and school administrator, as well as my study-participants, to scrutinize our memories and educational practices. They also assisted me in revealing the ways that study-participants navigated their own understandings of difference and diversity construction, while revising and adapting their multicultural teaching in the light of new tendencies in education. Embarking on new pedagogy is not an easy job.

However, when educators reflect on their experiences and strive to adapt their teaching in order to understand, accept, respect, and reconcile with the other, they ultimately learn to live together in peace and harmony and teach others about this. These theories helped me to make sense of teachers' ponderings and to make sense of my research question: To what extent do history and social studies teachers think that they teach a multicultural approach to peace education?

The Structure of the Study

This section provides a roadmap of my research that intends to guide the reader through the reading and understanding of the study. The first part of this study provides the abstract, acknowledgments, dedication, and the table of contents.

Chapter I – Introduction – offers an overview of central research questions and purpose of the study. It also elaborates on the complexities of Moldova's historical background, providing a detailed description of the context of the Republic of Moldova system of education and the setting of social studies curriculum. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework of the study, based upon two post-modern critical social theories—Theory of Recognition and Critical Multicultural Education Pedagogy. It concludes with my personal reflection on the significance of intertwining these theories and pedagogies.

Chapter II provides a Literature Review on the topics of multicultural education and peace education. Also, it elaborates on the international organizations on peace and multicultural education, as well as on international experiences of social studies teachers' perceptions of peace education and multiculturalism. A special section is devoted to examining how research on peace education and multiculturalism intersect. The last section sets the scene by describing the complicated context of citizenship education, social cohesion, nationalism, language, and identity in Moldova. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the implications from the literature for the design of the study.

Chapter III – Methodology – offers the rationale for the phenomenological approach and interpretive discourse of the study. Also, it describes the research design and procedures, data analysis, synthesis, and interpretation, credibility, trustworthiness, and dependability of study, as well as the ethical considerations. It concludes by pointing out the possible limitations of the phenomenological-interpretive methodology.

Chapters IV and V present the empirical findings of the study. Thus, Chapter IV describes the challenges that social studies teachers from Moldova face while struggling to teach Multicultural Approach to Peace Education (called MAPE in this research). Reporting data from the interviews of study-participants, the chapter illuminates the reflections and encounters that Moldovan educators face while trying to incorporate MAPE into their daily classrooms, summarized in five essential themes: Between Legacy and Choice: The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers; Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority; Balancing between Civic Education and Global Education; Conflict of National/Ethnic Identities; and Language Issue: Still an apple of discord. Chapter IV ends with conclusions.

Chapter V presents teachers' barriers and obstacles in teaching MAPE, such as personal values and fate, the discomfort vis-a-vis including some topics (LGBTQ and sexuality), lack of materials and preparation in teaching about other ethnicities and cultures, and political bias of history education curriculum, which ultimately leads to the exclusion of minorities and weakens the impact of MAPE instruction.

Chapter VI brings together the major findings of the study, critically analyzing the themes and their implications for education and further research. It also provides recommendations for improving teaching social studies by making more room for the holistic implementation of MAPE across the educational levels and school disciplines. By analyzing teachers' understanding of diversity, pluralism, inclusion and tolerance, and their conceptualization of MAPE, the study expands previous research on educators' reflections and practices on peacebuilding. The study concludes with recommendations for teachers to promote peace and harmony in a society that is liberated from a totalitarian yoke, but still experiences internal conflict. The study makes several contributions to peace education research in conflict-ridden settings by examining the lived-experiences of secondary level educators who shape the aims and outcomes of education.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been written about the topic of peace and multicultural education and social studies teachers' perceptions of it. However, less has been published about the experiences of social studies teachers from Eastern European countries regarding their use of peace and multicultural education in classrooms. This literature review examines peace and multicultural education from a larger global perspective (Gross, 2017), as an education that seeks to create a critical citizenry, informed not only by western hegemonic values but by universal human values.

The core body of literature from which I am drawing are the works of educators on peace and multicultural education philosophy, theory, pedagogy, and psychology. The literature focuses on conceptualization of the field, education handbooks and teachers' guides for practitioners, and teachers' narratives of how official and unofficial curricula are used to promote peace and multiculturalism throughout social studies classes. However, there is still a gap in the literature when it comes to practitioners' voices and visions of their daily practices of peace and multicultural education and personal reports of the results and effects on this pedagogy on their students' behavior and attitudes.

My questions overlap different fields of study or different subfields that run under the umbrella of peace and multicultural education, such as the role of education in building a culture of peace and multiculturalism (UNICEF, 2011), multicultural education for children and adolescents (Manning & Baruth, 2009), peacebuilding citizenship/global citizenship (Bickmore, Awad, & Radjenovic, 2017), the teacher's role in helping students learn to navigate socio-emotional development, social conflicts and ethnic tensions, democratic citizenry, and the role of education policy in multi-ethnic societies in promoting coexistence and social inclusion (Berns, Clark, Jean, Nagy, & Williams, 2005).

Although the two dominant terms of this research — peace education and multicultural education — are different, I see numerous intersections between them, which I explore below.

Peace education

Peace education is a broad category and a generic umbrella for different disciplines and approaches. In practice, peace education has different forms due to the wide varieties of teaching approaches, based on different education contexts. The choice of language used to define peace

education and the choice of the specific peace education program are determined by educational goals and objectives, as well as by local, cultural, political, and geo-political sensitivities. Thus, a range of peace education initiatives exist and include terms such as: 'peace-building in schools,' 'education for peace,' 'global education,' 'education for conflict resolution,' 'values for life,' 'civic education,' 'peace and conflict resolution,' 'peer-mediation' and 'conflict transformation,' (Fountain, 1999, p.12), and 'integrative theory of peace education' (Danesh, 2006; 2008).

Western peace education traces its roots from the 18th century when humanist philosophers like Immanuel Kant and Jean-Jacques Rousseau helped usher in a new era of enlightened democratic government. These philosophers did not directly refer to their work as peace education, although they emphasized similar humanist themes, like equal rights, liberty, equality, and social justice that were later adopted by peace educators. In the U.S. peace education has deep historical roots, tracing from the foundation of the American Peace Society in Boston in 1828 and utopian colonies' experiments (Brook Farm and Fruitlands) in the 1840s, where threads of idealism and pragmatism were underlying peace education themes (Stomfay-Stitz, 2008, p.1). Later, in contrast with the study of war, conflicts, and military strategies, the formal academic study of peace began. At the dawn of the 20th century, educators like Maria Montessori and John Dewey offered a first conceptualization and practical implementation for peace education, although they also did not identify their work as peace education. Later, other remarkable historical figures—M. Gandhi, M. L. King Jr., and Mother Teresa—practiced peace education as a means of challenging the status quo in a nonviolent way for achieving the goal of social justice and harmony. The anti-war and civil rights movements of the 1960s paved the way for the development of formal peace education curriculum. The convergence of a wide range of international humanitarian movements urged the development of formal theories and practices of peace education. United Nations (UN) agencies (UNESCO and UNICEF) promoted peace education by recommending that it be taught in schools through programs such as: disarmament education (UNESCO, 1980), human rights education (UNESCO, 1993), principles on tolerance (UNESCO, 1995), education for a culture of peace (UNESCO mainstreaming the culture of peace, 1999), education for conflict prevention and peacebuilding (UNICEF, 2010), and a variety of programs designed to improve children's sense of self, emotional health, and community development. This included programs such as academic and social-emotional learning (Elias, 2003), education for social and emotional learning (UNICEF, 2011), learning to live together

(UNESCO, 2008/2014), Child Rights Education (UNICEF, 2014), inclusive education (UNICEF, 2017), social and emotional learning (Asah & Singh, 2019), and education for the 21st century (Singh, 1991).

Important scholarly studies of peace education include: the transformative role of peace and disarmament education as an ethical imperative (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2008); the meaning and implications of peace education for teachers and educators (Zamir, 2004); the qualities of teachers, especially of prospective teachers, who instruct peace education (Polat, Arslan, & Günçavdı, 2016); the role of peace education in conflict transformation and reconciliation processes and in laying the foundation for lasting peace (Jäger, 2014; Lopes Cardozo & May, 2008); the current status of peace education, its application and values in East and Central Africa (Shaw, 2009); and the use of peace education curricula as tools for social, economic, and political change at the local and regional levels in Peru (Global Campaign for Peace Education, 2015). The comparison of peace education through social studies curricula in U.S. school settings with those around the world is also widely studied (Bajaj & Hantzopoulos, 2016; Chubinidze, 2004; Cook, 2008; Harris & Morrison, 2013). The central role of teachers in promoting and practicing peace education (Davis, 2015) and the role of school disciplines in the implementation of peace education are also central to recent studies (Ezeoba, 2012; Odejobi & Adesina, 2009; Tchombe, 2006). Peace education programs at all levels around the globe have been found to be positively related to "school performance, cross-racial friendships, acceptance of cultural differences, and declines in racial fears and prejudices" (Bajaj & Hantzopulos, 2016, p. 56). Such practices have also been shown to reduce most forms of violence, educational inequality, and injustice (Smith & Carson, 1998; Rodriguez, 2011).

I agree with Pantazis (2010) who claims that peace education is so complex that it can hardly be defined under one single definition without leaving space for different interpretations and for the accommodation of different viewpoints. Pantazis (2010) highlights the example of the U.S. peace-education curricula, which can contain nine topic areas such as cooperation, conflict resolution, non-violence, human rights, social justice, world resources, global environment, and multicultural understanding (p. 143).

Numerous authors from all around the world have contributed to peace education through their labor. The most prominent are: Jane Adams—the first American female awarded the Nobel *Peace* Prize (1931), Maria Montessori, Betty Reardon (1988; 1999; 2012), John Dewey,

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Paulo Freire, Colman McCarthy, Herbert Read, Daniel Bar-Tal, Ian Harris (1988; 2003; 2004), Gavriel Salomon (2004; 2010), Johan Galtung, and many others. Their voices in peace education theory and critical pedagogy have as goals the recognition of power, inequality, and oppression in society by adding an element of radical love, the awareness of reality, and the transformation of this reality toward positive peace through lifelong peace education (Standish, 2015).

The peace education concept was developed mainly in the Western countries, being projected onto the rest of the world (Burns and Aspeslagh, 1983, p.314). Thus, drawing on a western tendency to prioritize individuality, peace education perspectives tend to center on individualism over collectivism (Ardizzone, 2001), thus emphasizing the negative peace—the absence of open conflict and dissension—instead of moving toward positive peace—learning and adjustment to live in peace and harmony (Galtung, 1969; Rummel, 1981).

Because the modern world is rife with conflicts between diverse ethnic groups and cultures, peace education gains more global support, being approached differently in various countries, according to the local issues, problems, and contexts that determine its scope and nature. For example, in Kenya, peace education was introduced to strengthen peace initiatives implemented through the system of education (Ministry of Education Science and Technology of Kenya, 2014). The Kenyan experience of peace and conflict resolution curriculum shows evident advantages of embracing the Quaker core values and cultural experiences, which can have a great impact on the students' lives and future generations of the country (Hockett, 2012; Lauritzen, 2013). In Canada, during the 1980s and 1990s, peace education curricula became increasingly marginalized. However, in 2000, a shift occurred. Following international trends, the Canadian government renewed its support and continues to pay increasing attention to the global citizenship education approach to peace education (Ast & Bickmore, 2014; Bickmore, 2014; Mundy & Manion, 2008). Armenia has implemented peace and conflict resolution education in elementary and secondary education (Markosyan, 2013). Thus, it became the first post-Soviet country to successfully incorporate peace education curricula in grades K-12 (Markosyan, 2013).

Some researchers suggest that peace education must understand the complexity of the local phenomenon in order to be effective (Bar-Tal, Rosen, & Nets-Zehngut, 2010). Various nations see and approach peace education differently. The most popular approaches are education for conflict resolution, international understanding, human rights, global or

international education, life skills education, social justice education, multicultural education, and environmental education (Iwok, 2011). Three concrete categories of practicing peace education prevail in addressing a range of different issues: peace education in intractable regions (Israel-Palestine, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Rwanda), peace education in regions of interethnic tension (Belgium, USA, Germany), and peace education in regions of expanded tranquility and post-conflict context (Rwanda and Northern Uganda). I believe Moldova falls somewhere in between the second and the third categories, being a region of hidden interethnic tensions, expanded tranquility (peacefulness, absence of open armed conflict), and an unresolved frozen protracted conflict (Fischer, 2016).

Kester, Archer, and Bryant's (2019) recent research is focused on diverse "diffractive" possibilities of transnational peace education—an approach that offers pluralistic views and transformative possibilities for education for a culture of peace in varied contexts, mostly incorporating peace education from early childhood through the arts and humanities curricula. The authors built upon foundational concepts and approaches of peace education while integrating affective and aesthetic perspectives into peace education theory and praxis of the 21st century. Novelli and Sayed (2015; 2016) explore world teachers' experiences in holding a special role in building successful and sustainable peace in post-conflict situations. The authors focus on teachers as agents for peacebuilding in the initial stages of rebuilding national education systems and for ensuring equity, peace, and social cohesion (2015, p. 16).

There is some criticism that traditional peace education lacks a scientific foundation (Chandra, Semashko, & Kumar, 2016). Acknowledging peace education's positive value, the authors claim that it is often "ineffective and helpless in preventing new wars and growing radical violence," advocating for global peace science to deeply scrutinize, study, and resolve the global peace problems (n.p.).

Multicultural education

The essence of multicultural education is to develop detailed knowledge of other cultures and to be aware of and be appreciative of differences, which can lead to personal empowerment. Initial steps towards multicultural education conceptualization can be traced in the U.S. back to 1896, when the controversial case *Plessy vs. Ferguson* was discussed in the Supreme Court, culminating with the decision confirming the constitutionality of racial segregation in state

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institutions within the framework of a "separate but equal" policy (Wikipedia). Over the last six decades, multicultural education has been conceived as a significant vehicle for promoting peace and justice all around the world. James A. Banks and Cherry McGee Banks were the pioneer American researchers who studied the nature of multicultural education. The term was hastily coined in 1974 to help educators to deal with militant demands, harsh realities, and scarce resources (Banks, 1974, p.5). Later, J.A. Banks, a lifetime leader in multicultural education, provided five dimensions for multicultural curriculum: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 1997). He advocated for ongoing curriculum reform and transformation in multicultural education, which would incorporate novel and multiple perspectives, assumptions, and views (Banks, 1990, p. 15).

Many educators define multicultural education not merely as a set of curriculum strategies to assist teachers. Rather, they see it as a perspective reflected in all decisions about every phase and aspect of teaching (Lie, 2003; Ramsey, 1987); as "a lens through which teachers can scrutinize their choices in order to clarify what social information they are conveying overtly and covertly to their students" (Ramsey, 1987, as cited by Lie, 2003, p. 83); as a frame (Rios & Markus, 2011), a mirror (Oikonomidoy, 2015), or an educational paradigm (Gorski, 2010) used by educators to reflect on societal values such as peace and tolerance, being aware of them, while setting the goals for the curriculum they share with their students.

Nakaya's research (2018) is focused on the effectiveness of multicultural education on overcoming ethnic conflict in Indonesia. The author has found it as a pedagogy of transformative citizenship education, an efficacious tool that helps students understand the past, deal with trauma and anxiety, and appreciate the complex multicultural situation of the present. Cho's study (2017) illuminates a high degree of coherence among social justice and multicultural education, stating that the social justice component is an inherent feature and goal of multicultural pedagogy. The researcher outlines the importance of both overlapping pedagogical elements and the potential of teachers' personal literacy to enrich their practice of multicultural education.

Intertwining Peace Education and Multicultural Education

Even though multicultural education and peace education are distinct fields, research indicates that many educators see a correlation between them, which can offer common curricular goals of cultural diversity and peace (Hicks, 1996, p. 171). Some scholars have explicitly linked multicultural education and peace education. Hinitz and Stomfay-Stitz (1996) argue that peace education should "be integrated with multicultural education as a way for students to learn these skills and elaborate[s] on a multidisciplinary approach to the integration of peace education" to encourage an appreciation and celebration of the richness of cultures in classrooms (p. 1). The authors argue that "peace education, conflict resolution, and violence prevention, essentially, have meshed with the need for multicultural or anti-bias perspectives" (p. 5). Advocating for integration of multicultural education and peace education, the authors suggested the following action plan:

> (1) integration of human rights education into the social studies curriculum; (2) enhancement of classroom management/discipline systems that blend cultural diversity with peace education and conflict resolution; (3) increased use of technology to prepare children and youth to live in harmony with a national and global diversity. (p. 9)

Bey and Turner (1996, as quoted in Stomfay-Stitz & Hinitz, 1996) coined the term "multicultural peace," which includes "a sense of urgency to renew curriculum content or replace it with multicultural content" (p. 12). The authors urge educators to envision and build schools that promote diversity and "nurture multicultural peace among students," where ethnic diversity would be valued and where all community members care about each other (Bey & Turner, 1996, as quoted in Stomfay-Stitz & Hinitz, 1996, p.12).

Quezada and Romo (2004) have studied the role of multicultural education in support of peace education and the role of teacher education programs in promoting multicultural education, peace education, and social justice in curriculum. The authors support providing teachers with professional trainings on these topics that will help them develop a vision that endorses "multiculturalism, peace, justice, and social equality in the classroom" (Quezada & Romo (2004, p. 1). They track the history of multicultural education in the U.S. from the Civil Rights Movement (1950-1960s) and how it "sparked various educational responses for K-12 teachers and students as well as the academic field of multicultural education" (p.4). The next event that provoked societal and educational consciousness to move toward rethinking schools

and their roles in terms of multicultural education was the 9/11 attack. Analyzing various themes related to multicultural education, the authors synthesized four genres:

> Curriculum Reform (historical inquiry, detecting bias in texts, media, and educational materials, curriculum theory), Multicultural Competence (ethnic group culture, prejudice reduction, and ethnic identity development), Equity Pedagogy (school and classroom climates, student achievement, cultural styles in teaching and learning) and Societal Equity (social action, demographics, culture, and race in popular culture). (Quezada & Romo, 2004, p.3)

Many international scholars, writers, and peace activists claim that a multicultural peace culture is the key to building a harmonious bridge among people, cultures, ethnicities, and nations, and promoting the new identity of the global citizen (Aharoni, 2001a, 2001b, 2004). Ada Aharoni, a renowned Jewish educator and peace activist, emphasizes the role of women in endorsing peace education as well as the power of advancing harmonious peace and paving peace culture, awareness of the oneness of humanity and the consciousness of common values and norms in various cultures through literary works (Aharoni, 2004). Friesen and Wieler (1988) examined the development of multiculturalism and peace education movements in Canada. They explain that multicultural education offers "the individual self-worth and identity in a world which becomes increasingly impersonal and standardized" (Friesen & Wieler, 1988, p. 55). The authors argue that by encouraging students to mutually respect the customs and traditions of each other, we help them in "acknowledging the validity and integrity inherent in different culturally-based systems of belief" (p.53).

Anita Lie's (2000) study on the Indonesian multicultural curriculum shows how multiculturalism has been intertwined into peace and development education. She claims that, after the country's independence, the need to integrate and unite the nation increased, providing the necessary setting for teaching multiculturalism. The author's main preoccupation was how gender and multiculturalism determined teachers' choice of topics for English curricula.

Pantazis (2010) argues for the importance of peace educators making a deliberative effort to become familiar with the moral, universal, and traditional values of their students that come from different subcultures. The author provides five principles of multicultural, peaceful schools for teaching the contents of diversity in the contexts of multi-ethnic diversity: theory of cultural pluralism; ideals of social justice; rejection of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and

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discrimination; affirmations of culture in teaching and learning processes; and visions of educational equity and excellence leading to high levels of academic learning for all children and youth (Pantazis, 2010, p. 145 citing Bennett, 2002).

Hasan Aydin (2013) argues that multicultural education can lead to cohesion of multicultural society through engaging all parties in proactive co-operation. Aydin's three key themes—love, tolerance, and peace—are mentioned among the researcher's findings as vehicles to reach consensus in Nigeria in times when the nation is "deeply divided along religious, ethnic and class lines" (Aydin, 2013, p. 15). Tonbuloglu, Aslan, & Aydin (2016) found it important to incorporate multicultural education principles in school programs with a view to "ensuring an education that will include all students" and assure "they are raised in a way that embraces peace" (p. 1).

Some authors focus on multicultural and peace education/ theory limitations and criticism, such as being "inadequate, naive, fallacious and counterproductive" that does nothing to "redress inequities between minorities and the majority" (Kehoe & Mansfield, 1993, p. 6), but subverts minority resistance (Troyna & Williams, 1986, p. 222). Notwithstanding this, these pedagogies are still the best choices for educational policymakers while working to ensure the process and the mechanisms of integration-assimilation of diverse cultural groups into pluralistic society. They do it by assuring people's fluid cultural-citizenship membership and freedom from discrimination and equal rights, by appreciating and identically valuing all cultures and histories, as well as by offering equality of opportunities in education and equivalent access to educational resources. I agree with Talukder (2019) who states that there are many majorities that want minorities to integrate/ assimilate into the dominant culture by learning the state language, thus preserving and cherishing the national cultural inheritance; and that many minorities want to smoothly integrate into the mainstream culture, while enjoying preserving their own cultural heritage and language. To resolve the possible emerging tensions, policymakers must employ uncoerced integration, considering people's multiple and fluid identities, and avoid forceful or illegitimate actions. Talukder (2019) calls this "a social contract between the majority and minorities," a "rational choice for worthwhile living" (p. 178). Thus, multicultural education must also take into consideration 'geo-cultural identity' as the framework by which each person can connect oneself to his/her geographical and cultural roots, where culture is intertwined in social contract (p. 177).

As with any dialogue or debate on education, people tend to waive concepts to fit their personal educational philosophies, contexts, and disciplines (Gorski, 2010). An important rationale for intertwining peace education with multiculturalism, in research, and praxis and advocacy, has existed for decades. A good amount of literature shows how peace education and multicultural education are connected and molded together (Quezada & Romo, 2004), making it an inter-disciplinary field. In general, the literature claims that the best way to cope with the pressure to integrate and unite a nation after a country's declaration of independence is the implementation of multicultural education (Lie, 2000). In Canada, the concept of multiculturalism arose in the 1970s in the context of "cultural, ethnic, social, and political demands of the national minorities and immigrants," based on principles and concepts of the nation-state that "emphasize regional, linguistic, and cultural union" (Yilmaz & Boylan, 2016, p. 1-2). Canadian multiculturalist discourse has aimed at distancing itself from the American trope of the 'melting pot,' embracing its more positively valued metaphor of the 'mosaic' (Sielke, 2014, p. 49-50). Abdi Elmi's research (2009) focuses on Canadian teachers' perceptions of peace education curricula, called "Cultivating Peace," in a country considered "a microcosm of the world," revealing that educators believe that this program harmoniously fits in a social science and humanities curriculum, being useful in cultivating conflict resolution, communication, and problem-solving skills (p. 41).

As an educational movement, both peace education and multicultural education emerged in 1960s-1970s as reformist movements and processes, with a foundational principle of equal educational opportunities for all, regardless racial, ethnicity, social class, or gender affiliation (Yilmaz & Boylan, 2016), and with an emphasis on nonviolence, human rights, and conflict resolution. Thus, multicultural and peace education advocate for the reformative transformation of schools to provide each student equal educational chances and needed life skills. Many scholars argue that multicultural education and comprehensive peace education standards can help in building renewed trust between people and nations after or during the conflict (Aharoni, 2001a; 2005). By highlighting the benefits of the multicultural peace literature and the arts sources in the pursuit of peace, and overt public condemnation of violence and war, teachers encourage students to find wise words of peace in all cultures and religions.

Georgieva's study (2017) focuses on "theoretical and practical dilemmas related to the concept of peace governance" in a multicultural society and how this context uses the

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"transformative role of peace education [in] facilitation contact between communities in conflict" (p. 153), thus contributing to multicultural dialogue and mutual respect between former enemies. Singer's research (1999) discusses the serious challenge that U.S. social studies educators committed to multicultural education face—ensuring "multicultural inclusion when multiculturalism is no longer the primary issue under discussion" (n.p.). The author suggests using different approaches in teaching multiculturalism and peace education, such as: cultural diversity, multicultural education as social activism, human relations, and multicultural education as social reconstruction, recommending a critical examination of multicultural education curricula in terms of how diverse societal groups are viewed and depicted at large.

The interrelation of peace and multicultural education in multicultural, multiethnic societies raises issues about culture, ethnicity, identity, and unity, issues that many educators keep in mind when developing social studies curriculum and employing peace education philosophy. In such work, the main principle that should guide social studies educators in their endeavor is 'unity in diversity,' when everyone is heard, valued, and viewed as a winner and no one is left behind, marginalized, or is seen as a loser.

The following section is structured in the following way: first, it reviews the publications of the international organizations on the topic of teaching peace education and multiculturalism; second, it analyzes scholarship on teachers' perceptions of teaching peace education and multiculturalism; and third, it explores the body of literature dedicated to issues of citizenship education social cohesion, nationalism, language, and identity in Moldova.

International Organizations on Peace and Multicultural Education

Since its establishment, the United Nations (UN) and its agencies (UNICEF and UNESCO) have continuously called to strengthen educational research on peace education and multicultural diversity and to find ways to initiate an intercultural dialogue on the ways in which education can promote inclusion, cooperation, equity, equality, and accessibility, as well as improving the quality and development of democratic governance in developing countries (UNICEF, 1991, 2011). The UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, clearly states that education must "promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 26).

The international educational establishment of the United Nation pays tremendous attention to peace and to different aspects of peace education, including its evolution and importance in different parts of the world. The UN suggests that peace education is more effective if it is propagated simultaneously in all countries, based on mutual trust and common objectives. It considers that peace education must be integrated in countries' school curricula, thus contributing to the development of a culture of peace. Also, the UN adopted resolutions that have declared September 21st as the World Peace Day and the 2001-2010 as the international decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for children. The UNICEF's position on peace education goes hand in hand with the UN's; it must be sought and developed in all societies—not only in the countries with ongoing armed conflict or emergencies, that effective peace education is long-term process, not a short-term intervention, and that peace education must involve the entire community (Fountain, 1999). UNESCO (2019) encourages peace education through the Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet), founded in 1953, which currently involves a network of 11,500 educational institutions in 182 countries around the globe (https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/About_the_network.aspx). Thus, ASPnet became a leading network for innovation and quality in education, an effective tool for teaching Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development.

In the last decades, a new sub-field called Education in Emergencies has emerged under the UNICEF aegis, with an emphasis to examine major global organizations' tendencies to promote peace education in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (Lerch & Buckner, 2018). The field suggests that education for peace remains constant. However, in recent years, there is a shift in discourse from individual rights and interstate relationships to the educational needs of young people.

Teachers' Perceptions on Peace Education and Multiculturalism

Many scholars argue that the responsibility for establishing an enlightened society that cherishes peacebuilding and multiculturalism rests predominantly on educators as agents of transformative change (Harris, 1988; Horner et al., 2015; Munter, McKinley & Sabaria, 2012; Rubagiza, Umutoni & Kaleeba, 2016). Although teachers are the key-factor in "mediating the curriculum," peace education does not have always the "positive impact hoped for" due to insufficient teacher preparation (Kuppens & Langer, 2016, p. 329-330). Teachers' agency in

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peacebuilding is crucial in relation to their capacity to influence their conflict-driven surroundings; without teacher agency, there would not be any social structures to facilitate social system change. It is their ability to think, feel, and act that fosters "values and attitudes that offer a basis for transforming conflict itself" (Novelli & Smith, 2011).

The literature on teachers' understandings of peace education explores how peace education, peacebuilding, and multiculturalism concepts have made their way into K-12 history and civic education teaching and learning and how teachers conceptualize peace and multicultural education. Much of current scholarship in Western academia about ongoing educational reform addresses the topic of how peace education has emerged in K-12 settings and its benefits and limitations. Failing to reform the education systems around the world might invite resumed violence, thus educators call for long-term educational reforms: "no peace agreement without education" (Anger, 2017, n.p.). Incorporating peace education into the K12 school curriculum contributes to building empathy and self-worth among young generations, while taking ownership over peace (Lockwood, 2014). Thus, peace education is an obvious choice for all K12 educators because it helps to teach students to "approach conflict with peaceful resolve in mind," which serves both interests global and school communities (Simpson, 2004, p.7).

Some research offers a critical analysis of existing peace education programs in the US, focusing on high school (Nelson, Van Slyck & Cardella,1999) and middle school peace education, conflict resolution, and peer-mediation curricula (Van Slyck, Nelson, Foster & Cardella, 2019). The authors concluded that these programs "failed to address intergroup and international conflict," due to unsatisfactory treatment of diversity issues and "the influence of the underlying social and economic inequalities affiliated with race, gender, age, and sexual orientation" (p.193). However, they still advocate for continuing implementation of peace pedagogy at all grade levels as a comprehensive approach to peace education. Although some research has been done in regard to understanding teachers' perspectives, in general, there is a lack of qualitative research in peace education and its effectiveness (Ashton, 2007; Duckworth, Allen & Williams, 2012; Harris, 2003; Harris, 2004; Kuppens & Langer, 2016; Salomon, 2004).

Many studies have been conducted in different countries on teachers' perceptions of the influence of peace education on students. For example, a study on the Nigerian experience showed that peace education has a positive impact on students' human relations in school,

family, community, and other societal settings (Omirin, 2015). Recent research findings from Israel demonstrate the teachers' challenges of attaining durable and worthwhile effects of multicultural education through educational activities. Kupermintz and Salomon (2005) look critically to Israel's emphasis on short-term benefits of multicultural curriculum, arguing that this approach may erode the pedagogy's efforts over time. The authors point out to how ongoing violence and hostility among co-living ethnicities might block fragile attempts to listen to and understand the opponent's perspective. The research indicates how power, privilege, status asymmetries, and incompatible agendas can prohibit a common ground for constructive dialogue and interaction among co-habituating cultures (Kupermintz & Salomon, 2005, p. 293).

In Europe, a mix group of young educators from Europe and the Middle East have worked together under the aegis of the International Falcon Movement—Socialist Educational International (IFM-SEI) and with the support of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe to promote peace education. This group constructed a Peace Education Handbook for Educators in which they discussed teachers' reflections and understandings of peace education and peacebuilding tools that can be used to educate for peace, addressing different aspects of peace education, such as:

> Constructive analyzing of conflict and war, their dynamic and underlying causes;
> Developing educational activities for peace education with children; and Focusing on the
> role of communication and mediation to peacefully transformation of interpersonal
> conflicts. (Sudbrock & Marsh, 2015, p. 5)

Many American researchers explore K-12 teachers' perceptions on the status of multicultural education and cultural competence in the post-No Child Left Behind accountability era (Bolotin Joseph & Smith Duss, 2009; Haavelsrud & Stenberg, 2012; Morley, 2006; Redfering, 2014). This body of literature points out the existing gap in American schools between multicultural education theory, practice, and policy as a flaw in the entire education system, focusing on educators' views on the factors and educational inconsistences that affect this gap (Morley, 2006). Also, research indicates the ways American public schools' peace educators can cultivate a culture of peace through peer mediation and conflict resolution programs, focusing on recognition and rejection of violence, understanding of differences through dialogue, critical awareness of injustice and social justice, and imaginative understanding of peace (Bolotin Joseph & Smith Duss, 2009). Based on personal experience in

learning and teaching multicultural education in the US, Lawyer's study (2018) highlights the practical dangers of disengaging social justice from multicultural education, advocating for using both lenses. The author suggests praxis-level considerations for educators, such as avoiding simply imparting knowledge to students, employing instead more "discussion of how to address inequities and injustices," as well as providing "directions for how to learn from marginalized and minoritized groups without intruding on their safe spaces" (Lawyer, 2018, p.95).

Other studies of American peace education identify teachers' experience of producing peaceful content and creating "pockets of peace" in social studies curricula, without waiting for permission from a legitimized educational reform (Haavelsrud & Stenberg, 2012). Driven by Dewey's reconstructionism and Freire's critical pedagogy, Redfering (2014) argues that schools can be centers and tools for resistance, as well as "the cause of revolution" and "social change" (p. 10-11). Joseph and Mikel (2014) attempt to deepen understanding of the ethical nature of teachers' work to confront a pervading culture of violence, exploring the concept of transformative moral education as an approach to peace education and its effect on the change of consciousness and development of teachers' agency (p.317). The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) also appreciates the teacher's crucial role in peacebuilding. This organization believes that "a world without violent conflict is possible, practical and essential for all people and countries" (USIP, 2015, p.15). The publication called *Why I Teach Peace(building)?* incorporates conversations with four American teachers in which they share their stories on how their work contributes to peace education on local and global scales. Castro, Field, Bauml, & Morowski's (2012) work focuses on teachers' views of the importance of multicultural citizenship education in terms of culture in today's diverse classrooms. The authors found that educators highly value citizenship education in promoting cultural learning and sharing in schools' settings.

The recent work of Darragh and Petrie (2019) focuses on American teachers' experiences in a context of political trauma and the shifts in their emotional ecology (the art of transforming emotions positively, channeling the energy avoiding contamination of one's emotions) in reaction to the U.S. president's executive orders 13.767[1] and 13.769 from January 2017 (White House, 2017a, 2017b). This research points out teachers' understanding of justice and the

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[1] Presidential Executive Order 13.767 titled, *Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements*, and Order 13.769 titled, *Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*.

positionality of their vulnerable students, and their increasing awareness and attempts to reduce students' negative emotions, turning their classrooms into sanctuaries of safety, caring, and welcoming, while teaching in multicultural settings populated by diverse immigrant students (p. 183).

There are several studies of international teachers' experiences of peace education (Begum, 2012; Omirin, 2015; Shamsuddin, 2016; Muljibhai Parmar, 2014). Shamsuddin (2016) evaluated the strengths of a Pakistani peace education program that brings attitudinal change through imparting knowledge, skills, and values regarding mutual coexistence, nonviolence, and promotion of a culture of peace. The author argues that this program: 1. Helps teachers build their pedagogy on a peace principle; 2. provides teachers with varied peace education strategies; 3. helps to perceive peace contextually and differently; 4. promotes peaceful school environments without stereotyped content that helps in meeting peace education goals and objectives (Shamsuddin, 2016). This study affirmed that teachers' conceptualizations of peace education is related to the inculcation and development of positive thinking and attitude among students and is viewed as an instrumental key for the holistic development of the children and ultimately, for the cultivation of a peaceful society (Begum, 2012). Omirin (2015) investigated the perception of Nigerian teachers on the influence of peace education on students, unveiling a difference among male and female students' perceptions. The author argues that peace education has a greater influence on female students than male students (Omirin, 2015, p. 35), but both male and female teachers have the same perception of the influence of peace education in Nigerian secondary schools (p. 36), thus making the teaching of peace education effective and, consequently, the country a peaceful nation. The Indian researcher Muljibhai Parmar (2014) outlines a framework for developing a peace education agenda, suggesting the need of peacebuilding as a substantive comprehensive pedagogy included in high schools' syllabus and beyond, emphasizing teachers' roles in maintaining the society's peace. Muljibhai Parmar stresses that the educators must understand complex multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious societal issues, and not deal with them in isolation, but address them collectively and in interconnectedness. The author builds on E.W. Eisner scholarship (1985; 1991) on schools' missions, asking critical questions such as: To what extent does the existing curriculum promote peace? Do schools encourage co-operation or competition? (Muljibhai Parmar, 2014, p. 3). Muljibhai Parmar stresses the key elements—'peace through love,' 'peace as value,

compassion, and service to others'—as main stimuli that help both teachers and children to reduce prejudices and consider peace as priority in life (2014, pp. 5-7).

Several studies are dedicated to studying peace education in Canada (Ast & Bickmore, 2014; Bickmore, 2014; Parker & Bickmore, 2012). By exploring critical global citizenship education, as one peace education trend in Canadian schools, Ast and Bickmore (2014) focused on educators' rhetoric, voices, and challenges to promote democracy and peacebuilding. The authors identified the importance of teachers' critical reflection on critical global citizenship, stating that when teachers intentionally work with students to problematize "notions of power, voice, and difference" regarding global issues, they are engaging in a critical, as opposed to a "soft," form of global citizenship education (Ast & Bickmore, 2014, p. 2). Doing so, educators employ progressive pedagogies into daily practices as a means of challenging the status quo. The research also revealed a few areas that still needed improvement in peace education, including the addition of more elements of diversity, inter-group equity, citizenship exclusion, and critiques of gender-based, homophobic, and anti-Muslim violence, as well as study of the economic, cultural, and democratic marginalization of many Aboriginal communities (Bickmore, 2014, p. 273). By investigating the Canadian novice teachers' approaches to conflict while "educatively" addressing ethnocultural diversity as learning opportunities in their classrooms (Parker & Bickmore, 2012, p. 47), the authors suggest that proper training in conflict communication processes and anti-discriminatory social foundations equips teachers to address conflict and controversial subjects and clashes of values equitably and create inclusive learning spaces for their students (p. 59).

Much research is focused on European teachers' experiences of peace education. An examination of English head-teachers' and learning mentors' perspectives on the impact of peace education on children claims that there is a significant difference between teachers' recognition of the usefulness of the peace education approach and becoming more aware of diversity issues and showing more respect for others (Sakade, 2010, p. 261-262). A Harber & Sakade (2009) study revealed a contrast in the compatibility level between alternative peace education extracurricular projects and 'normal' schooling. Thus, the authors revealed two different educational roles: as peace education project workers and as school teachers, as well as two different approaches to teaching and learning, stating that project workers focus mainly on facilitation of non-punitive teaching approaches (Harber & Sakade, 2009, p. 16-17) in order to

help students to come up with their own understanding of their experiences, while teachers are governed mostly by educational and disciplinary targets (p. 18). Another body of research explores the preparedness of Macedonian teachers to face the challenges they meet in their multicultural environments (Atanasoska, Cvetkova Dimov, & Andonovska-Trajkovska, 2015), suggesting that in the work of developing multicultural skills for students, the teachers need two main elements: significant experience practicing in the multicultural classroom and living in and being a part of a multicultural area. The research also supports revising curricula to include multicultural philosophy and conflict resolution, which might help students understand the pluralistic nature of modern society. Exploring the challenges and perspectives of music teachers in Spain in teaching peace education, Cabedo-Mas (2015) appreciates teachers' core roles in using their power to positively transform the society by using music beyond education alone, arguing that music can foster community "belonging, social inclusion, identity," and "peaceful coexistence in and beyond the classroom" (p. 85).

A body of research is focused on the obstacles and barriers in practicing peace education (Baltes, 1998; Lombardo & Polonko, 2015; Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008). This research suggests that teachers are reluctant to teach about peace education because they feel it involves participating in political actions/ negotiations that might lead to personal conflict as a part of the teacher-student relationship. Lombardo and Polonko (2015) studied another issue—adults' violence against children and the reproduction of conflict and violence across generations. The authors' recommendation to teachers is to use peace education to liberate students from the colonizing adult hegemony and promote children's human dignity. Baltes (1998) explored teachers' lack of resilience toward multicultural education, identifying intimidating causes that teachers face during professional development trainings on multicultural education that they were advised or obliged to attend (p. 90). This research indicates that training can be improved by making it attractive and effective to change participants' attitudes and, thus, increase its impact. In the same vein, Thomas and Vanderhaar (2008) revealed opportunities to enhance multicultural teacher education by negotiating future teachers' resistance. They suggest that to become an essential tool, the ongoing multicultural focus on teachers' preparation must be systematic, transparent, visible, intentional, and infused across diverse school programs (Thomas & Vanderhaar, 2008, p. 193-194). Focusing on multicultural preparation of pre-service teachers and its influence on teachers' approaches to multicultural pedagogy, Alismail (2016) suggests

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that asking teachers about practical teaching strategies, techniques, learning environments, and views on curriculum before and after trainings can provide a better picture of the effects and quality of such trainings on educators' preparedness (p. 145). Such work can also provide teachers with real models to think about and discuss, which will empower and enhance their intentionality of planning and teaching multicultural pedagogy. Harris and Clark's (2011) study focuses on teachers' challenges related to teaching history and diversity. Among the listed challenges are appropriate training, pedagogy, curriculum content, and teachers' personal concerns. Teachers' stances towards cultural and ethnic diversity were evaluated based upon a confident-uncertain-uncomfortable continuum. The Page (2000) study's title—*Can History Teach Us Peace?*—speaks for itself. The author concluded that the teaching of peace is needed, realizable, and a possible objective for the future. However, doing so, teachers must be careful of the limitations to such a project (do not be utopian) and have a deliberately open view of the past of human history, the future, and their own experiences.

Citizenship Education, Social Cohesion, Nationalism, Language, and Identity in Moldova

In the context of postmodern society, by exploring of the existing trends in modern pedagogy, Moldovan educational leadership pays great attention to the latest developments in quality education, seeking to solve existing issues in the educational system and employ new ideas to current social-cultural problems. Thus, in 2017, a course called New Educations was introduced at the Department of Psychology of Moldova State University. Its significance is in introducing a novelty—new topics, never studied before in Moldova, such as education for peace and cooperation, education for democratic citizenship and human rights, intercultural education, tolerance education, education for change and development, ecological education, family education, etc. (Butnari, 2017).

Kosienkowski and Schreiber's study (2014) focused on Moldova's non-titular/ non-dominant ethnic groups; it points out that ethnic minorities are often ignored and not fully integrated into society. Analyzing different factors of Moldova's divided society, and the debate between the two competing identities of (Romanianism versus Moldovanism) and language issues, among others, the authors suggest that the government has a complicated task: social integration of ethnic minorities (Kosienkowski & Schreiber, 2014, p. 18). Many people (including ethnic minorities) in Moldova still have feelings of nostalgia for their Soviet roots and

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tend to hold a leftist ideology; these are among the main factors that shape their pro-Russian orientation and negative attitudes toward Moldova's European path. In this complicated situation, in order to win the hearts and minds of national minorities, according to Kosienkowski and Schreiber (2014), actions that Moldovan authorities can do are foster "Moldovan patriotism among non-Moldovan ethnic groups" and focus on "building a civic nation" (p. 19). In terms of solving the Transnistrian issue, Moldovan authorities have created the official institution called the Moldovan Bureau for Politics of Reintegration. Its goal is the promotion and implementation of the Government policy aimed at the territorial, political, economic, and social reintegration of the Republic of Moldova. However, the Bureau is a weak structure; it faces a problem in identifying a coherent message to spread, and Moldova does not have a comprehensive reintegration strategy with an action plan (Kosienkowski, Schreiber & Hahn, 2015, p. 121).

Some research studied the polarization and fractures in Moldova's society, including the debate over identity, the linguistic divide, the East-West dichotomy, the marginalization and lack of empowerment of minorities, the state of cultural diversity, the ethnic policy, and the geo-political determinants (Kosienkowski, 2015; Prina, 2014; Zdaniuk, 2014; Caşu, 2006). Igor Caşu (2006) states that, for Moldova, a typical post-Soviet country which faces many issues, the debate over national identity often relates to the country's possible development trajectories— West or East? Caşu's study also sheds light on Moldova's people's mentality and driving factors while opting for one or another developmental trajectory. Thus, the author points out two competing attitudes: one group comprises Pan-Romanian (Pro-Romanian) and Pro-Western attitudes, which is mostly embraced by intellectuals and the younger generation, less affected by "the totalitarian education of the recent past" (Caşu, 2006, p. 250-251). On the contrary, the opposed one gathers the Pan-Moldavian (Pro-Moldovan), pro-Soviet and pro-Russian attitudes, embraced mostly by the Russified Moldavians and 'Russianized foreigners' (Vasileiadis, 2012), the representatives of ethnic minorities, which identify themselves as 'internationalists,' often having "lower degrees of education and lacking experience and knowledge of anything other than Soviet and post-Soviet realities" (Caşu, 2006, p. 250-251). The researchers concentrate on diverse factors of internal political cleavages in Moldovan national unity. Among splitting factors are Unionism (unification of Moldova with Romania), Soviet Moldovanism (aiming to strengthen Moldovan statehood), European Moldovanism (seeking to integrate RM into the EU), and the linguistic and Orthodoxy issues (the existence of two Metropolis: The Metropolis of

Chişinău and all Moldova[2], under the Russian Patriarchy and the Metropolis of Bessarabia[3], under the Romanian Patriarchy). Kosienkowski (2015) argues that "specific Moldovan pluralism and the use of identity, language and ethnic division for political purposes" are visible obstacles to integration of ethnic minorities (p. 300).

Extensive research is dedicated to the study of language capital, contested and complicated identity issues, and policies in the educational sector in Moldova (Solonari, 2002; Anderson Worden, 2014; Baar & Jakubek, 2017; Bodean-Vozian & Soltan, 2014; L. Cojocaru, 2015; N. Cojocaru, 2006; Dungaciu, 2014; Groza et al., 2017; Heintz, 2005; Roper, 2007; Şoltan, 2014; van Meurs, 2015; White, 2010). Some researchers, in their attempt to understand Moldovan people's views on identity and language issues, concentrated on studying the history of the creation of Moldovan identity and linguistics during the Cold War. Thus, they revealed the Soviet propaganda's efforts to construct 'Moldovan language' and demonstrate the uniqueness and historical continuity of the Moldovan identity, by limiting every possibility of communication between the citizens of Socialist Moldova and Romanians from neighboring Romania, prohibiting the importation of Romanian newspapers, films, and works of literature, which have served the Soviets' goals to fight Romanian nationalism, viewed as an impediment to the construction of new Soviet nation/people (Vasileiadis, 2012; O'Regan, 2017).

Solonari's study (2002) contributes by connecting the complex identity issue with history teaching goals in modern Moldova. Thus, after the independence, Moldova's educational authorities aimed to erase the "false consciousness" instilled by Soviet authorities, replacing it by teaching the "true" nationalistic history (p. 414). According to Solonari, in their zeal to review and rewrite the falsified Stalinist history of Moldova and demonstrate that Moldovans are actually a part and parcel of the single Romanian nation, some history textbook authors, sponsored by the government, just replaced one mythology with another. Valentine (2013) argues that the Moldovan education system, controlled by the pro-Romanian identity groups, plays the main role in the creation of [Romanian] national identity, instead of Moldovan civic identity, in the Republic of Moldova. Other research stressed the danger of "the nesting of reactive [top-down] nationalism" in history textbooks (van Meurs, 2015, p. 189) and having a

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[2] the Moldovan Orthodox Church is a self-governing metropolitanate under the Russian Orthodox
[3] The Moldovan autonomous Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan bishopric of the Romanian Orthodox Church

single view on identity in our noble attempts to "reach[ing] social and political consensus" (Baar & Jakubek, 2017, p. 90).

A body of literature (Ceban, 2011; Gorban, 2011; Putină, 2011) is dedicated to how interethnic and cultural tensions influence the formation of state-building, national integration of ethnic minorities, and the political measures taken for harmonization of interethnic relationships in Moldova. Gorban's study (2011) focused on the nature of ethnic consciousness and its role in building socio-cultural identity and shaping the political culture in Moldova. The researcher points to the complex character of identity conflict in Moldovan society and its trifold image: national (dividing titular ethnic group into "Romanians" and "Moldovans"), linguistic (naming the language "Romanian" or "Moldovan"), and historical (debating the name and curricula of the history textbooks around "History of Romanians" and "History of Moldova") (Gorban, 2011, p. 137). What makes Moldova a unique European case, according to Boțan (2008), is the fact that identity crisis (Moldovan/Romanian) is not only a determining factor in people's attitudes and political divisiveness/ polarization, but that it is deliberatively and constantly used during political campaigns to gain votes (p. 38).

A body of literature studied interethnic relations and minority rights in four neighboring countries: Ukraine, Moldova (including Transdniestria), Romania, and Hungary (Belitser & Gerasymchuk, 2008). Analyzing Moldova's educational and minority policies, the authors found a developed democratic legislative basis in accordance with the European standards. However, the authors recommended that

> additional concrete measures on the consolidation of the education of national minorities
> in the field of native languages, history, and culture study, on the creation of conditions
> for the education in the native language, on the securing of the continuity in education, on
> the application of a scientifically grounded approach to the study of languages in schools
> for national minorities are absolutely essential. (Belitser & Gerasymchuk, 2008, p. 88)

Charles King was one of the first foreign researchers interested in Moldova. He put great effort (1993, 1994, 2000) in examining ethnic relationships, identity formation, and political elites and their actions. King points out on how top-down nationality and citizenship policies often disregard ethnic minorities, thus making their shared legacies taboo. Elisabeth Anderson (Worden)'s study (2005, 2006) is focused on Moldovan social studies teachers' challenges while teaching multicultural education and integrating diversity into the history curriculum, in their

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struggle to help unify the nation and promote democratic citizenship and national/ civic identity. Anderson (Worden) (2007) argued that in Moldova the Soviet academic culture still perpetuates educational institutions, and history discipline is viewed mostly as 'a [ultimate true] science' not subjected to "a multiplicity of interpretations" (abstract). Anderson Worden's (2006; 2011) research on controversiality of history textbook reform in post-Soviet Moldova also highlighted how this debate affects people's identity agendas. Likewise, Valentina Haheu's study (2001) focuses on the extent to which the Moldovan system of education promotes tolerance throughout history teaching. She argues that schools' main responsibility is educating and developing each pupil as a civic personality—"the person who knows all his/her rights and responsibilities, is tolerant towards everything that is different from his/her own convictions, observes and promotes all general human values" (p. 168). However, after a scrupulous study of the content of history and civic education textbooks, Haheu arrived at the conclusion that all topics are treated in a non-biased manner and the language used is non-discriminative or stereotyping. Haheu confirms that Moldova's history curricula for elementary and secondary education levels uses the concepts of human rights, peace (non-violence), and democracy. This helps students to acquire the needed life-skills, competences, and abilities, inciting them "to step out of their own system of values, overcoming it in order to try to understand other systems," as well as encouraging critical thinking while reading the textbooks, looking for the weaknesses and strengths of each provided historical resource (Haheu, 2001, p. 283).

A large body of research is focused on the experience of three neighboring countries: Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine and how they present each other in their history curricula and textbooks (Musteață, 2014, 2018). Sergiu Musteață also analyzed how these three countries' textbooks depict the relationships among their minorities and majority ethnicity. The author's conclusions referring to Moldova are relevant to this study: He affirms that the longer the Moldovan society remains in a state of ideological crisis, the longer history education will continue to offer a selected, fragmented and, thus, not encompassing understanding of the past (Musteață, 2018, p. 179). Later Musteață (2014) argues that history textbooks [and history teachers] play important roles in collective identity formation by building a relationship toward the past and creating an image of the other and are excellent tools for reconciliation of divided societies and regions affected by conflict (p. 183). The author suggests that a "long process of partnership linked with principles of democracy and tolerance" and dialogue is needed among

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governments and [researchers and educators] of neighboring countries to improve the situation of history teaching from a multicultural point of view (Musteață, 2014, p.177). The same author contributed to research by emphasizing the importance of intergenerational and intercultural dialogue in Moldova. Musteață argues that bringing together experienced people who witnessed and participated in crucial events of the past and engaging them in storytelling, supports reconciliation among diverse cultural community groups, culminating with strengthening national conscience and active citizenship (Musteață, 2016, p.96).

A body of literature is focused on comparative study on citizenship education in Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, pointing out to the importance of this pedagogy for fostering sustainable development (Cebotarenco, Mokrushina, Skliar, Olaru-Cemirtan, & Leontieva, 2018). Olaru-Cemirtan's study (2017) discusses the positive experiences of formal and informal (through NGOs) civic education in Moldova, emphasizing its role in enforcing citizen participation in public and political life, ensuring democratic values and cultivating social cohesion in the period of growing social and cultural diversity (p.1). Olaru-Cemirtan also revealed the challenges of citizenship education and social entrepreneurship, such as the social integration of people and pupils with special needs (2017, p.3). Likewise, Dungaciu (2014) stresses the importance of public education institutions in promoting multiculturalism and diversity, thus contributing to the consolidation of multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual states, and supporting concerted efforts to build a civil society (Dungaciu, 2014, p. 99). Focusing on the understanding of identity and tolerance among Moldovan/Romanians and ethnic minorities, Paslaru's (2001) research compared the stories about teaching multicultural and tolerance education during Soviet occupation with those in post-Soviet time. The author argues that today Moldova does not have possibilities to provide a "solid and efficient multicultural education" because this involves a burden of mandatory studying of "two or more national cultures at the school age in the languages of the given cultures" (Paslaru, 2001, p. 91-92). After studying the educational policies towards tolerance, acceptance, and mutual trust among ethnicities in Central and Eastern Europe, Leprêtre (2001) suggests that careful planning and promotion of linguistic diversity and tolerance management is the key for "solving and preventing interethnic conflicts" (p. 155) as well as for "fostering peaceful cohabitation, a harmonious multiculturalism and a sustainable development" (p. 166).

Another research body is dedicated to comparative analysis of the representation of the inter-war period in history textbooks of the RM and Romania. Ihrig's study (2007) focuses on collective remembrance and historiographic depiction in school history textbooks, presenting how narratives of democracy and societal experiences are remembered or forgotten and why (p.27). The study describes two conflicting paradigms in presenting history in the RM: the Moldovanist discourse (presented in integrated history manuals) versus the Romanianist discourse (presented in History of Romanian people textbooks). Ihrig found that Moldovanist historians portray the country's interwar epoch preponderantly in a negative light, as a dark time, highlighting the act of Bassarabian union with Romania as 'unjust,' accompanied by Romania's aggression and manipulation (2007, p.37). Conversely, the author finds the Romanianist framework as one that represents the same historic events in a glorifying manner, as a golden age (p.39). Also, Ihrig indicates another flaw of Moldovan history textbook—the way of (non)presenting minorities as a part of the civic nation, thus, portraying a disconnected image of democracy (p. 38-39). The author advances the argument about the founding myth of indigenous Moldovan democracy that rests upon vulnerable footing in Romanianist narratives (p. 40). In the same vein, Wim van Meurs's study (2003) sheds light on the debate of the reform of the history curriculum and textbooks in Moldova as an inherent part of public discourse on identity (p. 7), pointing out the conflict among three competing interpretive frameworks and historical narratives that dominate the local historiographic tradition: The Moldovan paradigm, The Romanian paradigm, and The Transdniestrian paradigm (p. 8-9). van Meurs (2003) argued that some Moldovan textbooks ignore the issues of ethnic minorities, treating them as "guests" or "wandering people" and using "incendiary and disparaging statements" (p. 3). As an example, van Meurs (2003) highlights the chapters on culture, arts and sciences, which do not mention any non-Romanian personalities, thus giving the readers "the impression that no minority scholar or artist contributed substantially to cultural life" (p.22). Gregor Engelmann (2013) found different influencing factors of historical formation and the struggles over control in Moldova (such as Russification, Romanization, and Sovietization), which [can] undermine identity formation, culture, and ethnic mobilization in the Eastern part of Moldova-Transnistria. The author argues that there are three major influences that cause ethnic tensions in that region of Moldova: the fear of pan-Romanization; the pan-Romanian nationalistic sentiments; and the threats to ethnic, linguistic, and nationalist identity through reshaping the borders and de-nationalization policies

(Engelmann, 2013, p. 36-37). Cash's study (2012) is unique by examining the contribution of all ethnicities' folklore and ethnography to the construction of Moldovan national identity.

Danero Iglesias (2013) argues that often Moldova's political parties use history as a tool in their political discourse to advocate for a Soviet-based version of the Moldovan nation, explaining how an explicitly "civic" discourse can be implicitly and, sometimes even explicitly, "ethnic" and "exclusive" (abstract). Zabarah's (2011) study focused on how political elites play 'the national card' to define and structure the relationship among the multiethnic population in the newly emerged Moldova after the breakup of the USSR. In the same vein, Kamil Calus (2014) pointed to the eminent danger of Russian open and hidden political activity in the region that aims to maintain high pro-Russia attitudes of especially the non-Moldovan ethnic population. Referring to ethnic minorities in the RM, Nicolae Cojocaru (2002) claimed that the adaptation of non-natives to the existing ethnic environment after the migration to a given territory is an obligatory condition (p. 178). The authors believe that the adaptation process presupposes a "high degree of integration," including acquiring the "knowledge of the state language," familiarization with local history, and respect for local values, traditions, and customs, which leads not only to enrichment among all cultures and an increase in solidarity and mutual esteem, but also might "save the society from many problems and conflicts" (p. 175). Cojocaru argues that the non-natives' lack of adaptation is a "discriminatory attitude" and "great social injustice" towards the natives. He suggests that the process of adaptation is reciprocal and advantageous for all, which offers the possibility of "understanding the culture of peace and non-violence" (p. 191-192). The author insists that the non-natives must try to replace "the relations of force" (unmasked discrimination) by "relations of dialogue" and "understanding the point of view of the other" (p. 191/195).

Another body of research is dedicated to studying the Transnistrian case (the facto state—a post-Soviet separatist region on the left bank of the Nistru river), in treating and managing ethnic and linguistic diversity, plural identity, and patterns of policy implementation (Alexianu, 2015; Çamözü, 2016; Comai & Venturi, 2015; Dembinska & Danero Iglesias, 2013; Negură, 2013; Osipov & Vasilevich, 2017; Sotiriou, 2014; Musteață, 2019). Musteață's study (2019) focuses on the Transnistria region and its history curricula and textbooks. The author points out how the separatist state-like entity's history education reflects its own discourse and interests, ignoring Moldova's official curricula and policies, dominated by Soviet historiography,

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aggressive and hateful rhetoric, and treating Western neighbors as enemies, thus violating existing national and international educational standards. The author concludes that Transnistria yet remains deeply Russified and Sovietized.

Finally, the last group of research relevant to this study is focused on ethnic politics and Moldovan/Romanian nationalisms in the Republic of Moldova (Beridze, 2017; Crowther, 1998; Dressler, 2006; Ekstrom, 2019; Juska, 2001; Solov'ev, 2009). The authors argue that the elite competition (Romanianist vs Moldovanist) defined the Romanian unification movement in Moldova by advocating for the restoration of a Greater Romanian cultural identity and nation-state. Paul Brass's (1991) theory of nationalism helps to view ethnicity and nationality as social constructions, induced by current cultural changes in society, when influential ethnic elites and counter-elite groups select particular aspects of their "group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other groups" (p. 75) to attract support from the masses (p. 99-100). Peter Thyselius (2001) differentiated two types of nationalisms: 'necessary nationalism' and 'fatal nationalism' (chauvinism). The former one is a desirable one for ethnic minorities and is related to natural rights, such as the right to study their own language and history at school, to speak their language in daily life, and to practice their own religion and culture (p. 61). Everything above these features tends to be a dangerous phenomenon of chauvinism. Ekstrom's study (2019) is dedicated to the rise and fall of the Romanian unification movement in Moldova (1988-1992), analyzing the three key national symbols: territorial boundaries, language, and ethnicity, and how their manipulation reflects the geographic and linguistic division in Moldova. The author argued that the way political elites switch between multiple identities, such as ethnic, linguistic, or civic, influences different Moldovan citizens to group and identify themselves around those political elites.

Harold Schiffman's study (2001) focuses on different measures/domains of tolerance in Soviet and post-Soviet space: "acquiescent tolerance" (wide-spread, broad scope), "expedient tolerance" ("when the dominant society tolerates use of other languages in non-serious domains") (n.p.), "religious tolerance," "racial tolerance," "linguistic tolerance," and "(non)portable tolerance" (n.p.). The author describes the status of Russian language during USSR time as "primus inter pares" and its reversal role as a minority language after the breakup of the Soviet Union, which led to the emergence of resentful and revengeful sentiments, lack of

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adaptation, and even hopes that mother-Russia would "intervene and set things straight" (n.p.). Schiffman poses great questions to ponder: "Can the usefulness of Russian as a *lingua franca* be recognized" by Moldovans?, "Will it work to put all languages on an equal basis?", and "What constitutes the highest (linguistic) social capital in Moldova?" (n.p.).

Conclusion

Although there has been much scholarship on multicultural education, peace education, and teachers' experiences with both, and there are studies of cultural divisions within Moldovan society, no scholars have yet to explore how Moldovan social studies teachers' make sense of multiculturalism and peace education. This literature review shows that despite all of these studies, there is little research on Eastern European high school social studies teachers' understandings of, commitment to, and experiences with teaching multiculturalism and peace education. Thus, it makes the topic of Moldovan secondary level social studies teachers' perceptions of the multicultural approach to peace education an attractive area of research that has yet to be fully investigated.

This literature review of peace education and multiculturalism both revealed to me the gap in the literature pertaining to my research about Moldovan education and helped me to create a foundational knowledge base about my approach to studying my topic. In particular, the theories of Recognition and Critical Multicultural Education furthered my understanding of recent research on methodological and theoretical approaches to studying peace education and multiculturalism.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

The Rationale for the Phenomenological Approach and Interpretive Discourse

This chapter describes the methodology of a phenomenological inquiry into the practice of the multicultural approach to peace education in Moldovan secondary education by secondary education social studies teachers.

Historically, most areas of academic study in both natural sciences and social sciences have utilized quantitative or empirical research methods. I decided to employ qualitative research methodology, phenomenology in particular, because of the limits of logical-empirical research methodologies. A phenomenological study describes the meaning that individuals have about their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon; its focus is "describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76).

Given the contextual and theoretical aspects of the topic, this approach is the best way to understand the lived-experiences of social studies teachers engaged in secondary education in the Republic of Moldova. The term lived-experiences (*lifeworld* or *lebenswelt)* was coined by the founder of phenomenology, Edward Husserl (1970) in 1936. Husserl also viewed phenomenology's task as preserving the freedom of the mind. This study explores teachers' freedom of mind and their experiences with multiculturalism in middle and high school settings in Moldova. Specifically, this research focuses on the lived experiences of a group of ethnically diverse social studies teachers in order to understand their reflections on the multicultural approach to peace education.

In this section, I discuss my methodological approach to the study. I also address my positionality as a researcher, the challenges that I encountered, and methods of overcoming them during the processes of participant recruitment, data gathering, and data interpretation.

As a former social studies teacher with a twenty-five years of experience teaching history and social studies in a high school with Romanian as the language of instruction, a Bessarabian Romanian ethnic group member with a degree in history education, a woman, a heterosexual, a person not committed to a particular church creed but with respect for all authentic spiritual and religious beliefs, who is fluent in both the official Romanian language and Russian as the official language of interethnic communication, I have my views about the multicultural approach to peace education. My experience as a Moldovan social studies educator positioned me as an insider and helped me to establish a good rapport with the study-participants who were all

current Moldovan social studies educators. In my own work as a teacher, I experienced the challenging roles and responsibilities that social studies teachers face as they try to teach about diverse conflict situations and diverse cultures and contributions of different ethnic and cultural groups. As a teacher, I often used a variety of teaching techniques that were culturally responsive to different learning styles. For this dissertation project, I wanted to understand more about how other Moldovan secondary level social studies teachers of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds perceive and teach multiculturalism and peace education, how they name and define it, how their understandings of multiculturalism and peace education might have changed over time, and how it might have changed them. Considering this, I conducted a research study using the following research questions:

a. *To what extent do history and social studies teachers think that they teach a multicultural approach to peace education?*

b. *If they do not, why do they think they don't and what do they think are the barriers and obstacles to this?*

c. *If they do, why do they think they do it, what does it look like, and how do they navigate it?*

To illuminate Moldovan secondary school social studies teachers' reflections on their lived-experiences and specifically to address the extent to which they think they teach a multicultural approach to peace education in history and civic education classrooms, this study employed an interpretive discourse of research (Benton & Craib, 2010). Interpretive researchers seek understanding of personal lived-experiences of study-participants actively involved in the phenomenon under investigation. Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) provides a framework for "exploring, describing, interpreting and situating the means by which" participants make sense of their experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 40).

In this study, I rely on interpretative phenomenological analysis (Maxwell, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Smith et al., 2009; van Manen, 1990). Some scholars explain phenomenology as a detailed examination of how people as "cognitive subjects" (Kant, cited in Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015, p. 2) engage with their own reflections on their major life experiences, their significance, and how they try to make sense of them. The phenomenological research methodology was used from the beginning of the 18th century by luminary philosophers and educators such as R. Descartes, E. Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, E. Husserl (1970), and M. Heidegger

(1962), which focused on first person lived-experience to ascertain and define the phenomenon under study (Smith, 2003) .

Qualitative phenomenology research is appropriate for studying lived-experiences, personal philosophical assumptions, and beliefs (Behnke, 1989; Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 1982; Moran, 2013). Phenomenology is a particularly appropriate tool for researchers to use to delve into people's reflections on diverse pedagogies and educational philosophies dealing with peaceful conflict (re)solutions because this approach allows subjects to articulate the ways in which they experience strong emotions about conflict. In addition, the phenomenological philosophical model accommodates subjects' pluralistic vantage points and different opinions, ideas, and perceptions about their life and work (Ndubuisi, 2004, p. 294).

Phenomenology strongly rejects the positivist assumptions of the existence of knowledgeable reality separated from human construction. The interpretive discourse provides a space for both participants and researcher to closely interact and better understand their lived experience. Phenomenological thought also holds that human beings do not perceive an objective world, but rather that everyone creates his/her own different cultural stories about that world. For phenomenologists, reality is a social construction, mainly achieved through humans' ongoing action and interaction. To access the reflections of the study-participants, I tried to understand the way in which participants experienced their reality as classroom teachers.

According to Given (2008), "critical research is a loosely defined genre of social inquiry whose central theme involves the problematization of knowledge. ... This includes knowledge produced by social researchers; therefore, critical research must profoundly include a self-reflexive or reflective component" (p. 170). It is also *critical* because it assumes that there is no reality independent of political actors. The research is not value-neutral. That is why it requires thinking that is critical and reflective. The strong critical emphasis comes from teachers' motivations: the inner struggle about whether to teach or not to teach peace education and concentrate on the societal wrongs (structural and institutional violence and oppression) rather than what is right. In addition, the critical accent comes from teachers' focus on the issues such as asymmetries in power relations, decision-making, and lack of autonomy. It also stems from teachers' valued knowledge as well as the capacity to critically evaluate and transform reality by challenging restrictive conditions of the status quo. The interpretive research approach to this study is also present-oriented, relying upon social studies teachers who currently teach social

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sciences in secondary level education, interpreting their experiences and narratives of the multicultural approach to peace education through their moral-ethical-values lens.

According to Elliot & Timulak (2005) a qualitative interpretive approach to research "encourages constructive critique and openness to reassessment of the chosen focus" (p. 151) and researchers must employ constructive "careful internal auditing throughout the analysis" (p. 156). This study is also *constructive* because it is future-oriented, focusing on designing and lobbying for justice-oriented social studies curriculum and educational policies. Furthermore, interpretive discourse is constructive because it is a process of human meaning-making through which meaning is socially constructed, seeking to gain insights into a given phenomenon by interpreting what motivates people to act in a specific way. Thus, social acts of teaching MAPE are evaluated by the Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers' reflections and interpretations of their lived-experiences as a part of their objective world and as a network of intertwining ideal constructs (Elwood & Martin, 2000).

The tradition of descriptive, qualitative, interpretative research is also hermeneutical (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). According to Kakkori (2009), qualitative hermeneutic research is oriented to historical and relative meanings, studying the processes of interpretation (p. 19). It applies methods based on personal interpretation of thoughts and talks as texts to understand the participants' universe of meanings. It is not deductive, but inductive—from information, we might come to theories. It does not start from hypotheses but just explores the varied interpretations of reality to provide the most accurate forms of understanding of the phenomenon (Laverty, 2003).

The understanding of phenomenological studies' structure also requires examination of the key concepts of phenomenological philosophy: *lived experience, intentionality,* and *co-researchers* (Sanders, 1982). For this study, the first three concepts are important because they are crucial to an understanding of human science and knowledge. The *lived experience* is a representation and understanding of a researcher or research subject's human experiences, choices, and options and how those factors influence one's perception of knowledge (Given, 2008). *Intentionality* is the way in which consciousness grasps its objects, a grasping that is constitutive of the objects as such (Applebaum, 2014). The *co-researcher* term refers to a participatory method of research that situates participants as joint contributors and investigators to the findings of a research project (Given, 2008). Other important criteria for the application of

the phenomenological method are *authenticity, plausibility,* and *criticality* (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993), where *authenticity* means the ability to show that the researcher genuinely has "been there" in the field, *plausibility* focuses on the ability to connect to the reader's personal and professional experience, and *criticality* concerns the way in which the text probes readers to consider their taken-for-granted ideas and beliefs (Pozzebon, Rodriguez, & Petrini, 2014; Walsham, 2006). Given this philosophical belief, phenomenology is a suitable interpretive lens for the investigation of how Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers perceive and use a multicultural approach to peace education in their classrooms.

Epistemology

My epistemology is phenomenological and constructivist. It means that I view knowledge as socially constructed. I embrace postmodernists' skepticism of claims of absolute knowledge and in this study, I work to uncover participants' knowledge by reflecting on their interpretations of the phenomena of teaching. To justify my claims as legitimate, I asked my participants to reflect on their own life histories, narratives, and experiences by stepping outside of their culture. The self-reflection helped both my participants and me in making meaning of our experiences and sharing them (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 79).

Ontology

To interpret teachers' perceptions of their own lived-experiences, the ontologies of *pragmatism* (unification of thought and materiality through the praxis of the researcher) and *homo ethicus* (Quantz, 2015) helped me to reject the objective/subjective dichotomy in my research. Through this ontological perspective, I view knowledge as dynamic and ever-changing. Dewey's concept of pragmatism helped me to understand human beings as social problem solvers, where both humans and societies must learn how to adjust to the dynamics of new conditions of the world in order to survive. In achieving this, humans must be actively engaged and contribute to a democratic society to fully realize their human selves (Quantz, 2015, p. 63). The concept of homo ethicus is inspired by Quantz (2015) who defines humans as "moral beings" and states that "to be fully human requires us to act in a manner that is ethically justified. The goal of all persons must be to live a 'good life' or to become a 'virtuous person' or to 'act

rightly'" (p. 61). These ontologies are the philosophical positions that underpin this interpretive research.

Ethics

The ethics of social justice guided this research. I believe that the voices of social studies teachers, especially those from Eastern Europe, recently liberated from totalitarianism, are often omitted from educational research. Eastern Europeans are often presented as oppressed and marginalized beings, and I wanted to challenge this perspective and to hear Moldovan social studies educators' voices. I consider my study-subjects to be co-participants, knowledge-creators, and, thus, co-authors of the research. The voices from the field have a right to be heard, and their duties as educators and citizens in a participatory democracy must be acknowledged. This is the main justification for my methodology.

Why Phenomenology?

I asked myself how research on the Moldovan social studies teachers' *lifeworlds* might look in order to establish the purpose of my research. To develop this research, I considered the extent to which teachers were interested in and held understandings of peace, peace education, and multiculturalism. Usually the phenomenological study inquires "What is this experience like?" as an attempt to unfold meanings of everyday lived existences by focusing on analyses of those experiences. However, I have chosen the phenomenological study as my methodology because it is an optimal way to elucidate the reflections of diverse social studies teachers in Moldova as "collective inter-subjective pool of perceiving" subjects "capable of arriving at 'objective' truth" (Husserl, 1970, p. 133). The concept of 'reflection' is key to phenomenological research, neatly addressing the idea of making meaning of experience. The purpose of this research is finding out how teachers perceive and reconcile their experiences as they negotiate the existing tensions and emerging challenges to provide new opportunities for practicing a multicultural approach to peace education in their classrooms. This methodology might help to identify cross-cutting themes related to educating the art of peaceful coexistence through multicultural education. Phenomenology can also provide a profound, rich, and detailed view of participants' experiences of the phenomenon under study—the participants' lifeworlds— "the grand theatre of objects variously arranged in space and time relative to perceiving subjects"

(Husserl, 1970, p. 142). The phenomenon of this study is the teachers' conscious introspections into their direct experiences of teaching a multicultural approach to peace education in history and civic education classes. Thus, the purpose of the study is to grasp the absolute spirit and meaning behind this phenomenon.

Research Design & Procedures

I selected semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection for this research. I conducted face-to-face interviews with 30 participants using open, exploratory questions designed to help understand Moldova's social studies teachers' perspectives and conceptualizations of their multicultural approach to peace education. These interviews offered me insights into the social studies teachers' lived experiences of teaching peace education and multiculturalism.

van Manen (2016) views the interview's purpose as a conversational tool that helps to explore and develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon, especially around the meaning of experience. Semi-structured interview questions, as well as follow-up questions on the issue of multicultural and peace education, helped me to gather in-depth insights on teachers' thoughts, attitudes, and actions, providing rich data for the study. Patton (2002) affirms that the purpose of interviewing is to find out "what is in on someone else's mind," and also that interviews can serve as "interventions" that affect people, both the interviewer and the interviewee (p. 277). Weaved together as a sequence of narratives, the teachers' interviews helped me to form a cohesive picture of their experiences. A follow-up email interview was employed to provide clarified responses.

Study sample participants

Criteria for selections of 30 study participants included: different cultural and ethnic groups; teachers currently teaching in secondary schools in the Republic of Moldova for at least two years; a balance of men and women teachers, of age, of geographical region, as well as rural or urban areas; willing to share their experience. Ethnic diversity was one of the main criteria, thus, the Moldovan/Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Gagauz, and Bulgarian teachers were supposed to be interviewed. Criteria for selections did not include political attitudes or affiliations.

To identify and select the participants, I used my personal professional network, as well as my contacts in the Moldova Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (social studies department) and the local Department of Education in my town/district. The other strategy I used in the selection of participants was snowball sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I asked one participant to recommend other colleagues from the guild to participate in the study. As a result, a diverse group of participants was selected, as was intended.

The minimum qualifications for a participant was that they have a Bachelor's degree and teaching certification, college degree in education and social science (usually from history departments), and at least two years' experience teaching in secondary school. The idea of a good teacher's rigor for excellence in education was also used as a criterion for selecting participants, confirmed by the representatives from regional departments of education and the ministry of education. In line with the criteria mentioned above, most teachers have students occupying leading positions and were mentioned at the National Olympiads in History and various school competitions. Many of the participants also had been nominated and were bestowed the prestigious title of *Teachers of the Year* at the school, local, district, or national level for enhancing the prestige of the teaching profession through their creative work. The last criterion for participants' selection was the site and the region where one worked, and this was based on the balanced number or rural-urban sites ensuring that areas covering North, South, and Central parts of Moldova were included. Balanced representation of dominant/titular ethnic teachers versus ethnic minority group teachers was also carefully accounted for.

Participants' profiles (see Appendix 3)

Ten male and twenty female teachers representing 33% and 67% of the sample, respectively, were interviewed. The average teaching experience of participants was 25 years. All teachers have postbaccalaureate degrees in teaching history and social studies. Only two young teachers had not yet earned a didactic degree, whereas the rest of the teachers had different didactic degrees as follows: nine teachers held The Second Didactic Degree, seven teachers held The First Didactic Degree, and twelve educators had attained The Superior Didactic Degree (the highest academic qualification)[4]. Three of the study-participants were PhD

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[4] These degrees do not have equivalents in U.S. education. The attestation of the teachers in the RM occurs every five years by conferring or confirming the second, first, and/or superior degree. The objective of the attestation

students or candidates, and four of them already held a PhD degree in education or history science. In terms of age and experience, most of the teachers were born when Moldova was a part of USSR (1944-1991). Only four study-participants were part of the post-Soviet and post-conflict (Transnistria, 1992) generation.

All participants combined teaching with other functions and responsibilities in the institutions in which they worked and in other communities. Thus, sixteen of the participants were homeroom teachers; six were also chairs of various departments such as the Department of Socio-Humanistic Sciences, the Homeroom-Teachers Department, or the Methodologic Department; eleven teachers were part of school administration (six principals and five deputy-principals); one educator was also the chair of one local District Department of Education; and one was a part-time worker in the Moldova Ministry of Education. Three teachers concurrently worked in two schools located in different communities.

The demographics table (see Appendix 3) displays the language of instruction: twenty-two teachers taught in institutions that used Romanian as the language of instruction; two Moldovan teachers, three Russians, two Bulgarians, and three Gagauz teachers taught in schools with Russian language as the language of instruction; one Moldovan teacher worked in a mixed Moldo-Ukrainian school.

The geographical locations from which teachers came shows the following situation: six teachers were from the northern part of the country, six from the central, and seven from southern part of Moldova. Eleven teachers (three Russian and eight Romanian teachers) worked in educational institutions located in the country's capital, Chișinău. Twenty-five participants worked in urban schools (83.3%) and five in rural institutions (16.7%).

The ethnic identities of the teachers were as follows: three teachers identified themselves as Moldovans (13.6%), nineteen as Romanian (86.4%), three as Russians (10%), two as Bulgarian (6.7%), and three as Gagauz (10%). Unfortunately, I could not find any Ukrainian, Jewish, or Roma(ni) (Gipsy) social studies teachers. Also, I was not able to interview any teachers from Transnistria (the left bank of Nistru river, *the jure* territory of Moldova, *the facto* a

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procedure is ongoing, life-long learning, connecting teachers' levels of qualification to the modern methodological, technological, and curricular novelties in education. Young specialists can participate in the certification process after a minimum of two years of educational practice, and holders of master's degrees in education sciences or taught disciplines can participate in the certification process after a minimum of one year of activity. Teachers are not required to obtain another teaching degree, but those who want to evolve in their teaching careers are subjected to more tests in order to demonstrate their teaching skills (Stimpovschii, 2017).

self-declared independent Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, on which the Chişinău authorities do not have any control).

The school population for each of the schools in which the teachers worked was described as multi-ethnic by all participants regardless of the region or area in which the institution was located. The greatest ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity was in schools located in urban areas.

Protection of participants

Once I identified the participants, I reviewed with them the purpose of the study, procedures, risks, benefits, and confidentiality as outlined in the initial letter I sent to them. I verbally went over the informed consent form with each participant, making sure each understood what he/she was agreeing to. Following this explanation, each participant who agreed to participate in the study signed the consent form, acknowledging he or she fully understood the purpose and procedure of the study (see Appendix 4). The consent form was translated into the language of the participants. The confidentiality of the participants' data was protected by storing recorded interviews on a password protected computer.

Data collection

The primary research tool was a phenomenological interview. To facilitate the full exploration of participants' lived experiences, the interviews were done in person, one individual at a time. The interview protocol contained two parts: Personal Information (Demographics) (see Appendix 1) and the Questionnaire (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire contained semi-structured, open-ended, and follow-up questions. The interview guide included eight interview questions and sub-questions. I used this during the interviews, and it afforded me the flexibility to choose which, how, and when questions were asked. This enabled me to probe different ideas "in order to get to the interviewee's understanding of the topic under discussion" (Ngorosha, 2015, p. 42). The interviews covered the same topics related to the study and provided a basis for comparison across participants' narratives.

The interview questions were used as a guide to help participants respond to the main research questions and to help me gain an understanding of the extent to which social studies teachers think that they teach the multicultural approach to peace education and, if they do not

teach it, why they think they don't and what they think are the barriers and obstacles to this work or, if they do, why they think they do, what it looks like, and how they navigate it. After each recorded interview with participants, I wrote memos capturing my experience (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008).

Data recording

To begin the data gathering process for this study, I sought and was granted an oral approval to begin my study from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the RM. The Ministry representative also gave me a short introduction to the actions that the Ministry had taken in recent decades regarding multicultural education in the secondary education system. The officials also gave me some suggestions about how I may find research participants.

The data were collected for two summers (2018 and 2019) and included a long-term (three months) analysis of teachers' reflections and recollections on their practices, which provided a sense of teachers' pedagogy, as well as helped to understand teachers' behavior, actions, and choices. The interviews allowed me to explore a wide range of the teachers' personal experiences including what it is like for the diverse group of social studies teachers to understand and conceptualize a multicultural approach to peace education. Following the principles of phenomenological research, I concerned myself with what teachers said and how they interpreted and made meaning of their own lived-experiences, rather than in the actual experiences per se, from some "objective" or outsider lens (Amatullah, 2018, p. 44).

To gather quality data, I took into consideration some contextual and process factors. Thus, I made sure that there would be a safe environment and pleasant ambiance to build trust and encourage the informants in the field to share their stories and offer detailed answers. Convenient, quiet, private, comfortable, safe locations were used, including public libraries, workplaces, parks, cafes, and personal residences. I attempted to maintain good timekeeping during an interview. However, I never stopped the participants while they were sharing their stories. I met each participant at the agreed upon time and location for the initially planned 45-60 minutes long open-ended interview. The length of the interviews varied from 35 to 90 minutes. The average was about 55-60 minutes.

Another practical matter in terms of field research in a multiethnic and multilingual country is that of language. The interviews were conducted in two languages: 22 in Romanian

and 8 in Russian. It was clearly better to be able to speak the local languages fluently in order to carry out field research. However, this was not possible in all cases because I only speak Romanian and Russian, not the Bulgarian and Gagauz languages. Also, only a small proportion of Russian, Bulgarian, and Gagauz teachers speak Romanian fluently. In these situations, Russian as the common language with ethnic minority teachers was used.

All interviews were digitally audio-recorded in order to have an accurate record of the conversation, capturing all the voice inflections. The taped interviews were saved on a password-protected personal laptop and in a secured folder. The audio recording procedure made it possible to return to the transcript later for interview transcription, data analysis, and selecting direct quotes when writing up the findings of the study. It also gave me the freedom to concentrate on engaging with the interviewee's story during the interview time.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and then translated into English by me. The translated version was paired with the transcribed interview and the audio file and archived in a particular computer folder.

Data Analysis, Synthesis, and Interpretation

Analysis in a qualitative study means making sense of research data (Denzin, 1989). In this regard, Esterberg (2002) suggests not only locating and uncovering raw data in an interview, but also using a creative approach while interacting with data and creating meaning. The data analysis, synthesis, and interpretation began simultaneously with the data collection process during the field trip to Moldova in the summer of 2018. During this process, I began analyzing, interpreting, and describing teachers' personal narratives/experiences that are essential in the phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013), meaning withholding or suspending of "all commonsensical beliefs so that pure phenomenological description can proceed" (Kakkori, 2009, p. 21).

Phenomenological analysis requires the use of a coding scheme applied to the whole data set. In my case, this process resulted in the generation of basic categories on the margins of transcripts and translations. I later expanded these categories into five broad analytic themes:

1. *The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers: Between Legacy and Choice*

2. *Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority*

3. *Balancing Between Civic and Global Approaches*

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Transcription and Translation

I personally transcribed all the interviews verbatim in Romanian and Russian languages. I then sent the transcribed form of the interview as well as the recorded file to each participant for confirmation and validation of the authenticity of the conversation. The process gave me the opportunity to intimately know the data, its facts, details, and particularities. I also translated all interviews into English.

Additionally, I applied a sorting process for easier retrieval in the final stage of analysis, in which the interview transcriptions were coded, and participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity. The pseudonyms were linked to the original interviews' scripts kept in password-protected files on my computer.

Out of my analysis, I identified five core themes mentioned above, related to roles teachers play in a multicultural approach to peace education in social studies, the importance placed upon multiculturalism and diversity in social studies curricula, the motivation to teach multiculturalism, the strategies employed in teaching multiculturalism, and the range of obstacles to teaching multicultural education.

Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Dependability of Study

First, I acknowledged the bias I brought to my research by engaging in reflexivity and this brought transparency to the narrative I created (Creswell, 2003; 2007). Second, I triangulated interview data by interviewing thirty middle school and high school social studies teachers, from all regions of Moldova. Third, I used peer debriefing (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), a technique in which I asked three Ph.D. candidates from Miami University to assess my interview transcription for the rigor of the themes. Fourth, I focused on discrepant information—any information that ran contrary to the common themes whenever it arose during the study (Creswell, 2003). Fifth, I used member-checking techniques throughout the process of data transcription and analysis to get the participants' views on the correctness of the representation of their stories.

Ethical Considerations

Taking into consideration Christians and Carey's (1989) suggestion that the researcher's positionality, bias, philosophy, ethics, values, cultural traditions, and ideologies might influence research methods, I was cautious about appropriating them. The Moldovan government regulations and academic professional codes for social sciences research were respected regarding protecting study-participants from any harm and ensuring their right to privacy and informed consent (Merriam, 1998). Phenomenological study has its particular views considering ethical issues, such as causing the participants embarrassment by misusing their words from the interview (Seidman, 2013).

Summary

This chapter presents a detailed description of the study's methodology, the description of the study-participants, the method guiding the study, and introduces the five main themes that emerged from my analysis. Other topics reviewed in this chapter are the selection of participants, data analysis, synthesis and interpretation, the credibility of study, and ethical considerations. A qualitative, interpretive, phenomenological approach was chosen from among other qualitative research approaches to guide the investigation of how Moldovan secondary school social studies teachers understand and teach the multicultural approach to peace education and how they make meaning of this phenomenon in their lived experiences. The semi-structured interview was the data gathering method selected for the study because it allows in-depth conversations on the phenomenon of interest. Thirty selected social studies teachers from middle and high schools of Moldova were interviewed. Credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability as aspects of trustworthiness were discussed and justified.

The next two chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) explore the study's empirical findings. Thus, Chapter 4 introduces the five main themes: 1. Between Legacy and Choice: The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers; 2. Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority; 3. Balancing Between Civic and Global Approaches; 4. Conflict of National/Ethnic Identities and Asymmetries in Language; and 5. Language Issues: Still an Apple of Discord. Chapter 5 presents general observations on those MAPE aspects that are left behind by the teachers due to several reasons. It contains teachers' responses to the questionnaire's query about teachers' thoughts on

MAPE aspects that educators do not want to or are reluctant to take on, and explores what teachers see as the barriers and obstacles to such practices.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS
FACING THE COMPLEXITIES AND DILEMMAS OF A MULTICULTURAL
APPROACH TO PEACE EDUCATION

This research project asks study-participants to share their perceptions of teaching multiculturalism and peace education. In this chapter, I present the findings that describe how the Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers understand the Multicultural Approach to Peace Education (MAPE). It explores teachers' perceptions of their experience of teaching, pedagogical practices and interpretations, motives, and the strategies they use to develop teaching practices that relate multicultural education to peace education inside of Moldova's secondary education level. The chapter is organized by the identification of themes that participants raised in response to questions about the relationship between peace education and multicultural education. The chapter also looks at how peace education concepts make their way into secondary education history and civic education teaching and learning. The chapter presents the stories and experiences of Eastern-European social studies teachers' voices that too often remain unheard, offering a venue for further implications and academic discussion.

The interview questions can be seen in Appendix X. The overall goal of the interviews was to understand:

1. How Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers perceive multicultural approaches to peace education (MAPE)—how they grew into it,

2. The extent to which Moldovan social studies teachers believe that they teach a multicultural approach to peace education,

3. If teachers think they teach a MAPE, what their motivations were in doing so—What aspects of multicultural education they pay more attention to and what less—Why they think they do it, what it looks like, and how they teach it, and

4. If teachers do not think they teach MAPE, why they think they do not and what they think are the barriers and obstacles to such practice.

Out of the data analysis, 74 codes were drawn and clustered into five initial themes. The themes developed in this way: as I read and listened to the transcripts of the study-participants, I identified some tensions in all their narratives and I organized those tensions into themes. These tensions were ones that the teachers may not have specifically identified, but rather that they

inferred. As an experienced Moldovan teacher, those tensions also rang true to me. The five themes that emerged from the findings are:

1. Between Legacy and Choice: The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers
2. Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority
3. Balancing Between Civic and Global Approaches
4. Conflict of National/ Ethnic Identities
5. Language issue: Still an Apple of Discord

Theme #1 – Between Legacy and Choice: The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers:

The first theme that emerged from the interviews was the variant ways in which teachers grew into their multicultural practice. It contains three subthemes: a. *Soviet legacy as a factor in Becoming a Multicultural Teacher, b. Becoming a Multicultural Teacher: Western Influence, and c. Teaching MAPE as a deliberate choice.* The data show that Moldovan teachers' perceptions of MAPE do not follow a classical path from theory to practice, rather vice versa. All the interviewed teachers claim that they did not have any sound theoretic preparation in multicultural or peace pedagogy.

This wide array of personal life experiences and factors through which the study-participants honed their multicultural skills, helped them to understand a wide spectrum of difference around them. For example, Zlata, an urban teacher with 25 years of teaching experience, used the phrase "I discovered" 18 times and the words "my stereotype" 9 times in her interview, pointing to the importance of curiosity and willingness to discover *the other* in understanding of human diversity. She described how she worked hard to grow comfortable in her feeling of being open to diversity and recognition of the other. This experience helped her erase common stereotypes about other human groups that she had been socialized into. Zlata's experience is also an example of how cultural competence and intercultural communication can help to develop and internalize self-awareness.

Many study-participants pointed to the importance of the socialization that they received within their families (the first agent of socialization), which had lasting effects on their ability to communicate and interact with the other. Ariadna, an experienced urban teacher working in a Russian school from Moldova's capital, reflected:

My family raised me this way: the absolute [equal] perception of all people, regardless of what language they speak, what color their skin is, and so on. The saying *Seven years of home education* is real; it is something that I tested on myself. I had a freedom-loving family, which from an early age laid the foundation of multiculturalism for me and my siblings. We constantly talked at home about many things. Thus, my family conveyed the idea that, through free, open, and civilized conversations, you can solve any issue. If people do not understand each other, it means they did not talk.

She advocated for the learning the art of dialogue as a key for effective communication.

Dragoş, a young urban teacher from the central part of Moldova, shared the story of his first encounter with multiculturalism in college, when meeting colleagues from other ethnic groups:

In my studenthood, I began to understand and live multiculturalism directly, by socializing with my fellow colleagues of Roma, Bulgarian, and Russian ethnicity. I realized then that diversity is something natural and normal. It is all around me—just be attentive and open-minded. We cannot merely discuss multiculturalism—we must live it. Not in theory, but in practice! We are often led by stereotypes. But, when we make a direct connection with diversity, with the speckled reality, when we come to school as a teacher, we come with a truth, a lived experience in front of the students. This is not a theoretical knowledge, but a practical one. (Dragoş)

In this case, the teacher made a direct connection between the importance of having personal multicultural experiences and a multicultural educational philosophy. This teacher also believed that "teachers find it difficult to teach topics related to multiculturalism if they have not experienced them personally; and in this case, it is very easy to slip into stereotypes and prejudices" (Dragoş).

a. Soviet legacy as a factor in Becoming a Multicultural Teacher

Most study-participants were born in the former USSR, thus, for them, that environment was the ground for testing their comprehension of diversity and identity; the socio-political dynamics of Soviet rules influenced their early understanding of multiculturalism Many of these teachers believed that the relationships among ethnic groups that populated Soviet Moldova were conflict-free and that Soviet education cultivated a sense of ethnic, racial/color, linguistic, and

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cultural diversity. Thus, many study-participants, when referring to the roots of multiculturalism in today's Moldova, emphasized its Soviet origins. Other teachers of this age group argued the opposite: that multicultural education was a more modern Western influence, introduced in the last three decades—this will be discussed in the next sub-section.

The main way Moldova's social studies educators learned about the topic was personal discovery and learning-by-doing during their experience as teacher. This experience can be grouped in six categories of influence. The first was early childhood and family experiences from Soviet times. Study-participants recall that one way that they learned about multicultural difference was in their interaction with multiethnic relatives and with other children "different than us." The second category is the role of mass-media, cartoons, and movies through which teachers learned about multicultural difference earlier in their life. The third category through which teachers learned about multicultural difference was through travel. The fourth category through which teachers learned about multicultural difference was their college years and academic influence received in their university history department, from which all study-participants graduated. The male study-participants also mentioned their military service in the Soviet Army as a distinct influence on their multicultural formation. The last category through which teachers learned about multicultural difference was through the secondary level social studies curriculum in Moldova. Ultimately, navigating through these influences, the study-participants came to understand how these multiple factors contributed to creating attitudes of multiculturalism and self-improvement as an educator.

The concept 'multicultural education' was not mentioned in any standard textbooks of the USSR (Taylor, 1992, p.81). The rationale of the first group was that the Soviet system of education taught a sort of multiculturalism, called [proletarian] internationalism, a common term used in those times. This term is one of the central tenets of Communist ideology emphasizing international solidarity of working masses and democratic parties, united and engaged in a single global class struggle against the existing social and political order of things, tracing its roots in K. Marx and F. Engels's work *Communist Manifesto* (1848). Since Lenin, the Soviet education viewed the role of formal educational institutions in the cultural revolution as a means of changing the social order. Thus, its main goal was to educate "the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and

exploited people in organizing their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie" (Lenin, 1969, p.18).

In the years when Moldova was a part of the USSR (June 1940-June 1941 and August 1944-August 1991), the internationalist education—the Soviet version of multicultural education—an important part of communist ideology, intended to abolish the traditional [bourgeoise] social discrimination, providing access for youth of proletarian and peasant origins to higher educational institutions and cultivate revolutionary zeal and humanist socialism through the course of Soviet education (Lilge, 1968). The Soviet leadership promoted a philosophy of 'brotherhood and unity' purposefully instilled throughout all educational levels and all stages of societal development. Thus, Moldovan public education was notably shaped by Soviet political ideology. Many teachers, especially those who belong to ethnic minorities and Moldovan ethnic teachers with leftist political beliefs, who grew up and were educated in the Soviet system, believe that the current Moldovan education system remains influenced by a Soviet definition of internationalism. An example is Vladimir, a Gagauz teacher with 30 years of teaching experience, who stated: "There is a [direct] continuity from Soviet times [internationalist education]—to cultivate trusting good-neighborly relations with each other." Marilena, a rural Moldovan teacher with 36 years of teaching experience, continued in the same vein:

> In Soviet time this principle was not called 'the principle of multiculturalism' or 'the principle of diversity,' but the principle of 'proletarian internationalism' (cross-national interest of class), aiming to cultivate comradely relationships and solidarity among people. If we exclude the word 'proletarian,' then let us admit that we were doing multicultural education at that time. We learned internationalism by traveling all around the USSR, organizing, and participating in festivals, contests, and competitions. I have been on many excursions all around the USSR by myself and with my students.

Many study-participants believed that their upbringing under Soviet rule taught them about multicultural education and some aspects of peace education. For example, Marilena claimed:

> What I learned well back then, and I still use today, is to apply a pedagogy that does not promote violence and conflict. Also, back then, I learned not to impose my point of view on others, to accept and respect people as they are.

Igor, a rural Moldovan veteran teacher from the Southern part of Moldova, supported the idea multiculturalism as a Soviet legacy:

> We inherited multiculturalism from the Soviet education professional training. I do not want to say whether it was good or bad. It was different. However, back then we were not taught to hate *the others*. We did not promote hatred toward other people, ethnicity, nation, country. Yes, we were told that there is one [ideological] enemy worthy to put next to the wall—the world bourgeoisie, the imperialism. But we were not taught that American or German people were bad, and they are our enemies. Definitely not.

Teachers' thoughts about the influence of Soviet education on their understandings of multicultural education were often shaped by their current political views. Thus, the members and supporters of the Party of Socialists and the Party of Communists dovetail their multicultural roots very nicely with Soviet education and see themselves as heirs of Soviet proletarian-internationalist schooling and ardent adepts at using multiculturalism as a tool to remake society. Thus, teachers' personal political views contribute to shaping their perceptions and teaching MAPE.

Florin, an urban (capital) teacher, with 25 years of teaching experience and with a Ph.D. in pedagogy, who works in a prestigious public high school in Moldova's capital, pointed out that Soviet education set the stage for later embracement and acceptance of the modern Western views on multicultural education. He shared how that practice can be used today:

> Indeed, the USSR multicultural education experience in its internationalist format was very ideologized. However, we must acknowledge that when diverse cultural activities and festivals were organized in those times, each ethnicity was invited to show its national culture: songs and dances, costumes and cuisine, folk elements and craftsmanship. It was interesting, educational, and beautiful. I think that today one of the flaws of our education is not organizing such activities more often. Thus, we do not have the opportunity to learn about and from each other. I do not criticize anyone. But I believe we need more of that.

These teachers expand their understanding of multiculturalism on their Soviet past intersected with a large range of diversity. However, they also acknowledge the other aspect of that legacy that had a negative impact on teachers and students, such as indoctrination, formalism, ostentatious activities, where small ethnicities' interests and feelings were ignored or poorly

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considered. This might be the explanation of why the second group of study-participants saw Soviet legacy as not worthy to be mentioned.

Other teachers did not see Soviet education as a preparation for understanding multiculturalism, arguing that many aspects of diversity were purposefully omitted from Soviet education. Among them was disability. "There are no invalids in the USSR!"—was a common slogan in the country. The Soviets did not have special education programs. Thus, disabled people were hidden from the eyes of society at large by being placed in special institutions "at the very edge of the town" or "behind high thick fences" (Cristina). This apparent denial of the very existence of citizens with disabilities is acknowledged by study-participants. "We never or very rarely saw families walking around with disabled kids (with Down syndrome or in a wheelchair). That is why my first encounter of them was a shock for me," admitted Zlata, an urban teacher. These encounters with the disabled other did not turn the study-participants toward the internalization of messages of superiority/ inferiority. Rather, these happenstances made teachers suspend their judgments and recognize the significance of this group. These encounters awakened teachers' "feelings of deep empathy, solidarity," to these groups (Mihaela); bringing to the surface the quality of humility by acknowledging their own misconceptions and "such a limited view of *the other*" (Dragoş). Therefore, it made the teachers more aware of their own or others' multiple identities and of the importance of multicultural competences.

Some teachers from this period did not believe that Soviet education included multicultural approaches. Eliza, a veteran teacher from the South, who teaches in an a predominantly ethnic-minority segregated community, looked critically on Soviet schooling:

> In college, in the history department, in the USSR time, we rarely talked about the diversity as a subject/topic. Even though we were officially socialized with the idea that "we are all brothers and sisters," through the ideology of proletarian internationalism, everything was presented in pink, imposing the idea that there were no ethnic or national problems in our society.

Eliza also pointed to the direct topics they were prohibited to learn under the Soviets and that still affect people's mentality today.

> The fact that during the Soviet period hundreds and thousands of people, including Russians, Romanians, and Gagauz families, were arrested, killed, deported, deprived of assets, subjected to the forced collectivization and nationalization—these things are not

remembered, but forgotten. This is the minus of deep-rooted Soviet education, of selective memory due to ideologization and indoctrination. (Eliza)

Another teacher highlighted the limits of Soviet education in unveiling and telling the truth. Ariadna talked of how she learned to search for alternative sources in telling/presenting the truth:

I had a freedom-loving family that also laid the foundations of freedom, liberty, and truth for me. My dad listened to not only Soviet TV and radio, but also *Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe*, and *Voice of America*. The Soviet Union jammed them, but my dad bought a portable WEF radio and twisted the antenna in different directions to catch the wave. After that we used to have interesting conversations… actually, in our kitchen only.

The above vignettes show how teachers' perceptions of multicultural education were not only influenced by the Soviet education and affiliation to a minority ethnic group, but also by the critical role of Western Broadcasts in presenting a different portrait of the Soviets and a different perspective on world events.

Teachers reported that Soviet education also ignored the topics of religion and class difference. Cristina, an urban teacher from Northern part of Moldova, asserted that:

On behalf of atheism, a war was declared on religion. I did not see any open churches or monasteries. However, my grandparents secretly taught me some Christian beliefs, customs, and traditions, such as prayers and Christmas carols. I learned love and respect for the neighbor, peace, grace, and forgiveness from my grandmas. I believe these notions are an important part of my pedagogical style.

This teacher uses the major concepts such as recognition, love, peace, grace, and respect, as common determinants for her teaching philosophy. Many study-participants pointed to the fact that the scarcity of religion and spirituality in Soviet time negatively impacted education and diverse aspects of social living. "I saw how the church in my village was transformed into storage, then into a gym. I had a feeling that this was not right. But no adult explained to me why this happened. The discussions around the religion/ spirituality/ church topics were taboo," sadly stated Cristina.

The study-participants recalled how the social homogeneity of society was achieved by elimination of class differences, even if I saw that this did not entirely correspond to the reality around me. From an early age, students were socialized that class inequality is a capitalist feature, so it did not exist in the USSR where people's income shares were similar/equal. Thus,

the public were taught that there was no disparity of incomes between the working class (proletariat and peasants) and the intelligentsia. This explains how socio-political education integrated into teachers' understandings of multiculturalism. Zlata explained:

> We were made to believe that we all live in the same fair equal social conditions. The prerequisite idea of societal equality and equity being the main characteristic that distinguished the Soviet society from capitalist society was injected in us from early age.

This finding shows that study-participants acknowledged both the limits and the benefits of the multicultural education they gained during Soviet times. Igor, a rural teacher with 30 years of teaching experience from the Southern part of Moldova, claimed:

> There are bad and good stories/sides in every country, including the USSR. But what the Soviet regime did in Moldova only 47 years [1044-1991], merits our praise and admiration. It transformed one of the most illiterate nations on earth (including Moldovan ethnic group) into an almost totally literate one. The general effort was spearheaded to encourage every [poor] child regardless his/her ethnicity or cultural group, to climb as high on the educational ladder as he/she was capable of. (Igor)

In this vignette, the teacher points out the equity, access, and social justice components of Soviet multicultural education.

Concluding this section, study participants' narratives show that the past Soviet legacy and memories about those times, for all the challenges, are some of the stimuli that motivate Moldovan teachers to embrace MAPE in their teaching of history and civic education.

b. Becoming a Multicultural Teacher: Western Influence

A prominent number of study-participants believe that the Soviet education did not contribute to multicultural education in any ways, or very little, and that in general, the Soviet education ignored and suppressed ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities. This group deemed that 'true multicultural' trends in Moldova's system of education are recent, developed under the influences and recommendations of Western organizations (EU, Council of Europe, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, foreign embassies, etc.). The main characteristic of this group of teachers is that they look at their Soviet past as at an extinct world, despite their profound experiences. They believe that the multicultural and intercultural trends began to be implemented from top-

down mostly in the late 1990s and early 2000s, after Moldovan authorities pronounced their intentions to join the EU.

As a result, some of these teachers see multicultural education as a concerted campaign launched by Moldovan Educational authorities under Western influence. Thus, it is perceived by some educators as a foreign 'forced medicine,' an 'all-curing antidote' imposed from above and outside. Radmila, a young urban teacher working in a bilingual school with two different languages of instruction other than her own, and a Ph.D. student, said with a note of sarcasm:

> [Multicultural education] is a suggestion, a request, a condition of the European Union. If Moldova wants to be a part of the EU as soon as possible, if it wants to obtain more funds, it must conform to European standards and implement these trends. So, it's very 'needed.'

This young teacher is a critical minded educator, shifting our gaze from the official portrayal of multicultural curriculum implemented in Moldova as authentic one. Rodica is not against it. Rather, she labels Moldovan multicultural curriculum a plagiarized version, which mimics EU countries' curricula, used by Moldovan educational authorities as "a façade to show that the reforms implemented," but are merely "declarative, on paper" (Radmila) and not efficient in practice. Pushed by the feeling of revolt and powerlessness in the face of the current situation in education and larger society, Radmila lost her passion for teaching and ultimately left the field of education and the country, migrating to the West (England), seeking for a safe harbor overseas and more freedom of expression. Thus, willingly-unwillingly, she contributed to the exodus of brains, of intellectual and social capital that weakened the social studies teachers' guild and the field of education in general.

Even though multiculturalism has been brought to Moldova after external suggestions, most teachers see it as a sounding board for implementing new pedagogical ideas. Teachers see the modernization period of social studies as something that "brings a transformational process that we longed for and needed for a long time" (Mariana), which was "introduced almost too late by piecemeal, not as a revolutionary change" (Cornelia). Later Cornelia, a teacher from the state capital, underscores the emergence of the process of adopting multicultural education:

> Moldova follows the EU and Council of Europe (CE) recommendation. However, these organizations gave each national education system the latitude for decisions on elaborating their own history or civic education programs. Nevertheless, their [EU and

CE] official suggestion is eloquent: encourage schools to improve teachers and students' openness to the world around them and to cultivate in students the attitudes needed for living in democracy and citizenship, such as intercultural dialogue and personal development.

It seems that these teachers are not bothered by the borderless multiculturalism and traveling concepts and are ready to embrace them in their teaching.

c. Teaching MAPE as a deliberate choice

Another important aspect of the story of becoming a multicultural teacher is understanding to the roots of intolerance, however deep down in the past these roots go. The following narratives shed light on the ways the study-participants were socialized and learned about diversity and (in)tolerance from early childhood., which led them to make a conscious choice.

Eliza told the story of her first encounter with the kids of a different ethnicity and how this shaped her perception of *the other*. Her narrative describes a traumatic childhood experience that deeply imprinted in her mind and psyche:

> I will never forget how we, the Gagauz, and the Moldovan children, living on different sides of the local creek, were standing on opposite banks of the creek, yelling bad words toward each other. Or, how we met with "them" in the neighboring forest meadow for picnics that usually ended up with fights. Those hassles began as innocent kids' frays and ended up unveiling the ugliness in all of us: adults' verbal and physical fights.

The teacher's *prima facie* depicts the relationships between two neighboring ethnicities as unfriendly, both holding anti-other ethnic rhetoric, prejudice, hostile views, and inescapable lasting conflict. In her story the teacher uses the words 'creek' and 'forest meadow' not only indicating the concrete locations but also as compelling metaphors. The 'creek' and 'forest meadow' are analogies of the space and border where interaction between "us" and "them" occurred. These concepts feature the 'creek' and 'forest meadow' forever intertwined with her past, present, and future, reflecting the broad spectrum of the human experience; thus the *creek* became a symbol of separatism and mistrust, resistance and restrain, and later a proof of people's biases and prejudices, and the *forest glade* is a place where the hatred was born, developed, and practiced, that no one adult (parent or teacher) dared to put an end to.

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Later in her life, after becoming a college student and a teacher, Eliza (a Moldovan ethnic) used her childhood experiences as a premise to push away her fears and overcome her biases. However, it was only after beginning her teacher's job in a Gagauz ethnic community that she profoundly acknowledged this, daring to walk through the water of the metaphorical creek and crossing the borders of meadow that impeded her before. This helped the teacher to commence exploring the essence of diversity and gradually appreciate multiculturalism, allowing her to see the beauty of difference as opportunity for understanding, respect, acceptance, and inclusion, rather than obstacles. Finally, the teacher overcame her segregated childhood biases, turning into a multicultural educator and a powerful, respectful, local activist and political voice in her community.

Eliza's narrative is not unique. As a country, we have many sins and evils that we prefer to keep hidden in our history closets. It takes courage to acknowledge them. What makes Eliza's story powerful is her open-mindedness and recognition of own imperfection, not ignorance. She does not blame one side—the other—but points out to both parties' flaws for what has been happening in the past, as well as for what continues to happen today. "Either we're going to change ourselves... or we're going to repeat this again and again. This is the question," Eliza states. Then, she concludes:

> It is on all of us. The hatred of others is born of our frustrations and inability to change. These frustrations are like that creek, or "another brick in the wall" [citing Pink Floyd's famous song], a border that isolates people from each other. They feel lonely and alienated. We must reckon with the continued presence of chauvinism and racism in our country.

There is a lot of sadness in Eliza's story, but also a lot of hope—that those creek-borders will disappear one day. By reflecting on and acknowledging these issues, the teacher made suitable adjustments in her teaching philosophy and proper choices in her classrooms that recognize and emphasize the role of MAPE. Starting with the same premise, most study-participants acknowledged the fruitfulness of multicultural education pedagogy as being "perfect for the Moldovan context" (Liliana). Applying this pedagogy daily in and out of classes, it not only cured the adults' prejudices but students' preconceptions too, helping to overcome the stereotype threat and healing the old schooling scars. By spearheading this pedagogy daily,

teachers witnessed a real change in their students' behavior—how pupils across age, class, ethnicities, religions, and cultures began to get along with each other.

> I have seen its [multicultural education's] results, and it is worth it. It was impressive how young students are on good terms with their older/younger, rural/urban, other ethnicity school mates, how they greet, help and play with each other, how friendly they interact during extracurricular activities and recesses, on the school yard and after school, how they treat each other, with empathy and respect. (Eliza)

Thus, the teacher acknowledges the significance of multiculturalism in terms of its pedagogical purposes and how it has reached its professional and social validation throughout an array of curricular and extracurricular activities and projects. Most study-participants see MAPE as an upward extension, a viable instrument for breaking the societal stereotypes and unfair cultural chains and democratizing teaching and learning. They believe that the egalitarian nature of multiculturalism can gradually outmaneuver seemingly unbeatable obstacles, which may help us escape from the divided world we live in today.

Subsequently, the past multicultural experiences as mediums through which the teachers got socialized into multiculturalism helped them better understand and teach about the complex past. Due to its history, Moldova became a multicultural geographical location from prehistoric times, where a diversity of ethnicities, cultural groups, and languages intermingled, offering a wide field for accumulation of multiple experiences. Study-participants' narratives offer an understanding of the impact of the past on the present situation of multiculturalism in Moldova. Ariadna asserted:

> Since ancient times, this territory was at the intersection of trade and migration routes; thus, people had to adapt, conform, learn to accept each other, to fit into society. The ability to perceive different cultures is clearly seen in many primary sources related to the populations of medieval Moldova and even during the period of the Tsarist Russia. This is a big step towards establishing multiculturalism in this region. People realized that without some joint action it is impossible to survive and strive. The tight collaboration helped them turn this territory into a mosaic of diverse peoples and faiths, by letting everyone to settle here, not forcing some to leave, by respecting general rules and creating good self-sufficient living conditions. Thus, each ethnicity has brought something to the development and prosperity of this land. Not acknowledging that, is a

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flaw and a shame for a historian or a history teacher. Doing so, we become complicit in wrongdoings.

The teacher indicates the importance of acknowledging multiple historical knowledges and perspectives and no single truth. She sees the contribution of all tribes, migrant waves, ethnicities, and cultures, to the beautiful multicolored tapestry that is Moldova today.

Another facet in the story of becoming is teachers' critical self-refection on and acknowledgement of their own implicit biases, as well as their strivings to fight against them. Some teachers are competent enough to see the reality behind the appearance of normality and naturality of social relationships in Moldovan society and the social fabric flaws. These educators made efforts to unmask their own nationalistic and chauvinistic views, as well as those that circulate in society. However, teachers' personal unconscious biases directly impact students' minds. Thus, they serve as gatekeepers for which nuances and markers of diversity are accepted and which are not. To openly recognize one's own flaws requires some courage. Carmen was one of those teachers. She shared:

> What can I say, I am a *chauvinist* myself, and… I cannot tell you how to prevent such a thing. Perhaps, firstly, I must admit it. Then, I talk about this to my children [students]. For example, by explaining how the percentage of Romanians has drastically dropped from 83% to 47% during the 19th century (1812-1917), when Bessarabia was under the Tsarist [Russian] regime. This is the essence of colonialism. I cannot not teach about this.

However, even acknowledging her chauvinistic stance, this teacher manages to include the multicultural approach while teaching other hot history topics. Thus, when explaining the arrival of the Russian colonists in the 19th century. Carmen wants for her students to know the distinction between the different Russian colonists' groups:

> The colonist population was diverse: there were Russian peasants (mostly serfs) and the Lipovan migrants (Old style Christian Believers/'False Ivan'), who were forced to flee from Russia here, to Romanian land, in order to escape persecution and serfdom (for which I have a great respect.).… I told you I am a *chauvinist.* Then, I do not know how to respect those 'others' [Russians and other ethnic groups that came to Moldova after WWII]... However, I tell my students not to conflate the politics with culture. For this, I bring as examples the names of great Russian writers, musicians, great Russian culture, great directors, movies, books, opera, ballet, and many other things. I teach students the

skill of comparison and noting about the difference between things; to not confuse the politics of Russification with the colonization policy. (Carmen)

Reflecting on her chauvinism, the teacher links it to historical events—the territorial separation of Bessarabia from Romania, the influences Bessarabia has experienced in the time between 1812 and 1917, which deeply shaped Moldovan people's identity. In addition, Carmen connects the past and the present with her students' lives and identities. She shares:

I cannot talk about the 19th century, or any past events, and remain stuck there during my lesson. My lesson always ends today, in the 21st century. We are the sum of our own and our ancestors' experiences. What I want to tell my students is that people must have verticality, a backbone, a strength of character, be proud of their faith, language, ethnicity, traditions, cherishing them. It is very important.

Moldovan multicultural educators are formed by propelling from one heritage to another, through a life-long process of cultural learning, re-learning, and un-learning, constantly negotiating their identities. Even though a preordained Westernized model of multicultural approach to social studies education has been adopted by local educational leadership, alongside the gradual descent of Soviet-style education, some teachers' preferences (due to their educational background, symbolic power, and nostalgia) incline toward the older style (the legacy), having some reservations regarding the newer one (the choice). Nevertheless, in their journey from communism to democracy, both groups of teachers have come to value the power of the multicultural paradigm as one of the most important additions to history curricula and pedagogy, which can beneficially transform society through the socialization process.

d. Other factors that influence the journey of becoming a multicultural educator

Another part of the story of becoming a multicultural educator is teachers' struggle to overcome *the patriarchal mindset* and *hidden homophobia.* The data shows that patriarchal mentality and homophobia persists on in Moldova. Not only do children come from a "conservative environment with patriarchal principles" (Zlata), but also teachers were raised and grew up "in a conservative, patriarchal society" (Florin). Liliana's story is more complete in this regard:

The [conservative] mentality formed over the years, especially in the older generation, deeply influences the next generation. Thus, it is a major obstacle in teaching diversity,

acceptance, and inclusion. I refer to parents in this case, not to teachers. I think that the teachers are mostly a tolerant group. Nevertheless, in the family, these "issues of diversity" and its subtleties or aspects (like LGBTQ) are widely discussed, [not necessarily through the multicultural lens]. There, in the family, at home, parents allow themselves openly to say what they think of different nationalities, cultures, or subcultures. Thus, children come to high school already with a preconceived opinion, with grafted labels about *the other*. Teachers try to change/fix this when necessary. But this is a hard job.

In the same vein Aliona, a veteran urban Russian teacher from Moldovan capital, shared the following:

What motivates me to teach multiculturalism is that I rejected the imposition of the point of view of one ethnos on others. It was in Soviet time, and it continues today in a reversed form of ethnicism - a reverse oppression. It really hurts me that we have such a torn society in Moldova, rejection of some, praising of the others. To me, in the 21st century, we should live differently, enjoying life, appreciating the richness of cultures, respecting other people, being able to understand the pain of another person, not allowing the destruction of something good, even if it comes from the USSR time, Tsarist Russia, or from Romanian ruling. I adhere to the principle that multiculturalism helps us to revise our view on and better understand the past, recognizing mutual crimes that led to mistrust and misunderstanding. I believe that a person should live by the principle of not harming the other. This is the most important thing, not to destroy what other people created for the public good. Life should be calm and not a clinched state where people are afraid of everything. We do not have to live in constant tension or fear that someone will condemn, substitute, humiliate, destroy you and material goods that you created. And it is the right way.

The teacher indicates that we, as human beings, are producers of thoughts, ideas, artifacts, and multiple useful products. Summarizing teachers' insights, "we do not have to neglect the past" (Marilena), rather "we must appreciate what we have gained and inherited, and assure that this legacy will be here after us to be shared with others" (Aliona). Focusing on education and developing multicultural intellectual beings, society will evolve, so the aggressiveness and anger will go away, making it easier to enter into cooperation and build bridges over the existing gaps.

Teachers' stories and perceptions are different, and this comes from their educational and cultural backgrounds and political views/ agendas, which brings some ideological bend to their teaching. A significant number of teachers graduated from college in Soviet time. Just a few of them are a part of the generation that graduated college after 1991, when Moldova got its independence. The Soviet legacy and the hard and long-lasting transition from a totalitarian regime toward democracy both had an impact on teachers' views. Reflecting on their rich experiences, teachers' narratives unveiled how they developed their own trajectories and styles towards building cultural competencies that resulted in their abilities to understand, empathize, effectively communicate, and interact with people across cultures. These stories demonstrate how teachers realized that what they once knew to be true about themselves and others changed over time. This denotes the fact of discovering and practicing MAPE on the way. All these factors equally contributed to shaping teachers' "multicultural mindset."

The process of discovering *the other* throughout direct cultural interactions and cross-cultural exchanges that shape the course of becoming a multicultural educator seems to be crucial. This practice continues today, reaching new forms with respect to the era of globalization, interregional and international migration, trade, tourism, and an increasingly borderless world. Teachers' understanding of a plurality of cultures naturally became an integral and recognizable part of their educational philosophy. Due to that, the study-participants' perceptions of multiculturalism still evolve, requiring a deeper reflection of their own biases, fears, suspicion, and lack of trust, which ultimately might lead to greater acceptance of plurality. Thus, only through practical activities/actions can diversity be taught and negative preconceptions erased. As Eliza claims: "The theory remains theory—you can tell the student 100 times '*You must be tolerant!',* but without applying practical actions, the change will not occur as fast as you want." The teacher switches her gaze toward the lack of care and the indifference towards other people's histories, cultures, and conditions that are so obvious today. Teachers understand how poor education may add to the fragility of social relationships and civilization. However, by the virtue of their profession as educators with a historical vision, they know that, during different historical epochs, there have been moments when everything seemed to approach the final point, but then, suddenly, new people appeared and something [reforms] happened. This is what they dream, hope, and work for—sharing the lessons from people's positive mutual rapport with the world.

This section on theme #1, Between Legacy and Choice, presents teachers' narratives of their professional journeys, portraying the relevant experiences that they identified about becoming a multicultural teacher. Most prominent among those experiences were the tensions that teachers' felt between their "legacy" from Soviet times and Western influences and their own personal and deliberate choices. For Moldovan educators, the stories of becoming are the result of specific "legacy and choice" issue of Soviet, Western, and other influences. In also means that becoming multiculturalists and peacebuilders is a hard path. It may look like a natural trial and error process. During this process teachers experience reluctance, internal battle, growth, while at the same time searching for clarity, hope, trust, and strength. Teachers' self-reflection is a part of self-transformation and self-modeling, as well as a way of identifying the factors that reshaped the way they see the world. This finding also offers an important backdrop for teachers' acknowledgement of the barriers to social inclusion and full citizenship rights that diverse minority groups living in the former socialist state confronted and continue to face.

Theme #2 – Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority

This theme dominated the discussion during the interviews. It especially came up during the first two questionnaire questions (To what extent do you help your students to deal with conflict, violence, prejudices, stereotypes, to be tolerant, respect diversity, promote a culture of peace and social coexistence? Explain how you teach about cultural diversity in your classrooms. How do you include aspects such as: race/ethnicity/nationality, gender, age, disabled people, people of various sexual orientations, different cultural and educational backgrounds?) Teachers tended to see multiculturalism and patriotism as two opposing options.

The supporters of the patriotism paradigm of history education are accustomed to telling stirring stories about the brave Romanian ancestors and their glory and deeds and how it builds a new patriotic generation of youth. Conversely, the proponents of the multicultural education model, customarily share success-stories about the need for interconnection and the benefits of acceptance, inclusion, and tolerance among the community and society members.

The new Moldovan Code of Education, issued in 2014, states that "promoting intercultural dialogue, tolerance, non-discrimination and social inclusion" is the main mission of Moldovan education. Article 6 of the Code of Education asserts that the *'Educational ideal'* of the school is the formation of a personality with certain qualities, among which "being open for

intercultural dialogue in the context of assumed national and universal values" (Code of Education, 2014, n.p.) Article 135 lists the obligations of the teaching staff, one of which is "the promotion of the moral values of justice, equity, humanism, patriotism, and other values" (Code of Education, 2014, n.p.). Amongst other *basic principles of education* in the Republic of Moldova are stipulated the following:

> g) the principle of social inclusion; h) the principle of ensuring equality; i) the principle of recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including the right to preserve, develop, and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity. (Code of Education, 2014, n.p.)

The second theme that emerged from the findings is teachers' struggle for prioritizing multiculturalism. Teachers' tended to see their efforts for teaching multiculturalism and peace education as an opposing choice to an emerging national pressure to teach extreme patriotism and nationalism. Most study-participants realized that living in the 21st century, it is time to change the narrative: moving away from tempting but dangerous toxic nationalism and extreme patriotism. Moldovan socials studies educators understand that the ultra-nationalist-patriotic tendencies are sometimes unhealthy, because they might make one "look cool and popular among a particular ethnic group, but at large they poison and impede the professional relationships, the interactions with students and parents, and the society at large" (Dimitrie), because thy lead to "the imposition of a single view as a value, making it appear superior, thus all the others automatically appear to be inferior, unimportant and unappreciated" (Rita).

The Moldovan high school and middle Romanian and World History curricula have the following objectives:

> - development of critical thinking; development of working with historical sources (information and application in different contexts); training for analyzing and evaluating the motivations of human action, for establishing the relationship between human action and the values of a democratic society; formation of intellectual mechanisms to combat and prevent discrimination and xenophobia; stimulation of multiculturalism and multi-perspectivity; offering fact-based support to the other school disciplines in the curricular area of socio-humanistic education and other curricular areas; ensuring the educational interests and requirements of the students, in order to develop their personalities and to

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ensure social integration in a constantly changing society. (Curriculum la Istoria Românilor şi Universală, 2019, p. 5)

The curriculum competency matrix includes developing such specific competences as:

Critical analysis of information from different sources, expressing the position of the active and responsible citizen (10th-11th grades); Demonstration of respect for the country and of the nation, valorizing the historical past and cultural heritage (10th-12th grades); Formation of relevant opinions on the impact of historical events/processes/phenomena in society through the perspective of cultural multi-perspective and diversity (10th-11th grades); Conducting an investigation of historical facts/processes, from multiple perspectives selected on chronological and spatial criteria (12th grade). (Curriculum la Istoria Românilor şi Universală, 2019, p. 10-13)

This paragraph shows that currently, the notion of teaching history from multiple perspectives is on the agenda in the educational curricula of the RM. Thus, according to the Moldovan high and middle school history curricula, teaching history assumes the formation of intellectual mechanisms that prevent any form of nationalism, stereotype formation, and xenophobia. For that purpose, the concepts of *multiculturalism* and *multi-perspectivity* are applied. These concepts are the central elements of MAPE in Moldova's social studies classrooms, fully integrated into the official redefinition of modern history education. Thus, the state curriculum clearly directs teachers to teach such MAPE tenets as critical literacy, critical thinking, multiple approaches to historical sources and cultural narratives, and respect to diversity.

In the last three decades, the concept of multiperspectivity has gained importance in history education around the world (Meier, 1993; Nordgren & Johansson, 2015; Stradling, 2003). According to scholars, multiperspectivity refers to "the epistemological idea that history is interpretational and subjective, with multiple coexisting narratives about particular historical events, rather than history being objectively represented by one 'closed' narrative" (Wansink, Akkerman, Zuiker & Wubbels, 2018, p. 496).

Most history teachers accept the principle of *multi-perspectivity* as an integral part of the process of teaching history and civic education. They adopt this tenet while teaching historical events and phenomena from multiple points of view, using different sources and perspectives, because it helps to clarify the complexity of an event or phenomena, incorporating the

perspectives of previously ignored social groups, such as ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, immigrants, cultural groups, etc…" (Sorin).

Marilena sees multi-perspectivity as a pathway to "help students to think critically and draw conclusions on their own, based on information from multiple sources, as well as helping them understand the mosaic of cultures and develop new multicultural skills." Aiona, an urban teacher of Russian ethnicity who teaches in a Russian-Jewish high school, told how she applies multi-perspectivity in her history class:

> When I teach about the WWII, I provide different, even controversial, primary sources. I consider that students must look at it from the point of view of the Russian people and the German people, as well as from the point of view of small nations like Moldavia, Estonian, etc. I want students to see the Second World War from all points of view and develop an understanding that this was a crime against humanity.

On the other hand, many teachers (mostly Moldovans) still have reservations about accepting *bilingual* or *multilingual observation points* on these topics. Thus, to fix this issue "an urgent change in mentality of the teaching staff is needed" (Ștefan). The findings reveal that the study-participants sustained, in unison, that more specialized training in both languages (Romanian and Russian) for history teachers is needed. This subject will be discussed more fully below (Theme #4).

Cătălina, a Moldovan urban teacher from country's capital, explained how teachers understand their motivation to teach multiculturalism/MAPE:

> Of course, I promote multiculturalism and diversity. Why? Because for me is interesting to discover different cultures and new things about different nations. Obviously, I like to share this experience with my students. However, I consider that today, *the patriotic stance* and *national identity* must be crucial in teaching history. But, because we live in a globalized world and in a multiethnic state, we need to know a bit about the culture, tradition, and customs of other people. We need to know and look at the cultural and religious aspects of the ethnic groups and the people with whom we live and who share this country's land. And, of course, we must continue to live with them in peace and friendship.

This vignette shows how the teacher values multicultural pedagogy's ability to promote skills, knowledge, and positive dispositions and generate the culture of peaceful coexistence among

people. In the era of globalization, but also of overt discrimination, MAPE remains a key in shifting pedagogy in the Moldovan social studies curriculum.

Nevertheless, the next vignette illustrates how the same teacher is turning back toward a patriotic stance.

We must learn to respect ourselves [majoritarian ethnicity] first and foremost, because if we do not respect ourselves—others will not respect <u>us</u> either. That is why I emphasize the role of <u>our</u> great Thraco-Gets, Dacian, and Moldovan rulers from ancient, medieval, and modern eras. (Cătălina)

Even though the teacher acknowledges the importance of multiculturalism, she deliberately inclines toward patriotism, condoning the narrow nationalistic approach to history education, because she believes that this is a right way to look for positive things about Moldova and its historical figures/heroes.

Patriotic education has many faces, and the study-participants understood teaching patriotism in different ways. Some saw it as educating students in full loyalty to the country and its government and in alliance with other citizens. The study-participants who belong to ethnic minorities stick to this definition. Here is how Ariadna, a Russian teacher, explained it: "Educating how to be a good individual, law-abiding, respectful of the constitution and human rights, living an honest life, engaged in good causes and fulfilling their civic duties, and loving the mother-country." Other participants (especially among Moldovan ethnic teachers), did not necessarily perceive patriotism as a form of loyalty to the Moldovan government, due to their disappointment in the governments that ruled the country for the last three decades. Rather, they see patriotism as a feeling of love and devotion for their hometown, motherland, people, and history. A third group promoted a type of patriotism related to Romanian nation, culture, and identity. This group supported a nationalistic (Romanianist) approach to history education, which is viewed by ethnic minorities as an extremist stance. No group argued that anyone should "be ready to bring sacrifice and heroism in the name of the interests of the motherland" (Ariadna).

There was no consensus among the teachers on what was the best type of patriotism/pedagogy to build a modern, inclusive, harmonious society. However, the three opposed types of patriotic approach in teaching social sciences and citizenship in Moldova outlined above deepen the gap between Moldovan citizens. For example, as Victory Day (May 8/9) approaches, Moldova's population falls into the gap. Different groups have different

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feelings and perceptions: Liberation Day, Occupation Day, Victory Day, or Commemoration of All Victims (both sides) Day. This day is heavily loaded with a heated debate, roughly along the axis of patriotism and multiculturalism, that coincides with conservatism and progressivism, or Pro-Moldova, Pro-Russia and Pro-EU, views, and vectors of future development.

The last interview-question I asked my respondents was *What did I forget to ask you?* I gave them freedom to tell me about what bothers teachers about multicultural education, what concerns teachers have. Ecaterina, a teacher from the northern part of Moldova who teaches in two schools with two different languages of instruction, comprised in her story the silenced concerns of many social studies teachers. Her question was: Is there a certain pattern of behavior, a certain amount of information required for all people to know about each other equally? Ecaterina elaborated:

> I will explain myself. During last decade, we attended lots of trainings on the topic of the Holocaust. However, I refuse teaching the narrow version of the Holocaust, solely emphasizing the Jews' tragedy. I do not want to teach history of the Holocaust ignoring the Roma, the Slavs, religious groups, disability people and other victims of it. Also, I do not want to teach it in Moldova without *insisting*, yes, I emphasize, *insisting* that the people from Israel also must know the history (and the tragedy) of my people, or without acknowledging the tragedy of the Palestinian people—their co-citizens and neighbors. This is not fair.

Thus, the teacher calls for accuracy in teaching history in all its aspects. She also saw mutual acknowledgement of all war crimes and their victims, such as victims of deportations, Holocaust (of all groups), organized famine in Soviet Moldavia (1946-1947), Holodomor in Soviet Ukraine (1932-1933), etc., as crucial parts of MAPE. The teacher also preferred the use of the term "interculturalism" instead of "multiculturalism." She explained:

> I see *interculturality* as reciprocity, not as a one-way process. I believe that *intercultural education* is one that must work in both directions. I would like for each person with whom I have an intellectual conversation to know my people's history and culture (at least the basics), [as well as I know theirs]. When we talk about the history of Europe or of world history, I studied it, I know it, and through me, my students learn and know it very well. We teach a great deal about the U.S., Germany, or Italy's history. However, I wonder: how much do Americans, Germans, or Italians know about Moldova? Can they

easily find Moldova on the map? I do not think so. And that concerns me. This topic should be discussed internationally. What can we do to overcome the current situation? What can be done to see multiculturalism not as a football game in which only one team can score? How can we make it a joint game, a fair play? That bothers me a lot. (Ecaterina)

Ecaterina sees the danger in directed intentional learning about only one ethnicity/people, one aspect of history, while ignoring, hiding, or impeding the learning of other people and culture's history. She sees the absence of a reciprocal effort from the so-called 'big culture' or 'big brother' to pay respect to small cultures by learning something about them, as unfair and unjust.

> We are very receptive and open to all here in Moldova. I want you to understand me correctly: I do not invalidate or minimize the importance of the history topics related to big countries or great nations or the importance of teaching about Holocaust. I admit: there have been enormous tragedies for a people (like the Holocaust) or events of major importance for another people (Civil War in the U.S.) or events of world resonance (such as the French Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Human and Citizen Rights). Nevertheless, I believe that my people is important too. We have a big history too, our challenges and achievements, our contributions to world civilization, and I would like these to be well-known, as well as I know other people's/nations' histories. I mean, I would like to see some interest, curiosity, acceptance, inclusion, and tolerance from the others as well, towards my culture. This is real interculturalism. (Ecaterina)

The teacher sees this form of non-reciprocal multiculturalism as a lopsided, misleading model that might perpetuate ignorance and create rhetorical backlash, which hurts the feelings of those left with the impression of being abandoned at the periphery of multiculturalism.

Ecaterina's insight coincides with Kymlicka's view (2012), who describes this as a "caricature of multiculturalism" that points to the danger of unidirectional multicultural education, which might lead to its failure. A solution that Ecaterina suggests is that all countries must adopt a "more inclusive, cross-cultural and cross-national curricula," teaching multicultural education in global, regional, national, and local contexts.

However, teachers have a critical view of recent happenings in Moldova. Thus, Mihaela summarized:

We live in purported historical times. It all started in Perestroika, when groups of people loudly shouted: *Romanian Language, Latin Alphabet, Independence, Sovereignty, Identity, National [Romanian] History*. Since then, Moldovan citizens have expected some big historical changes to happen. We expect someone (an intellectual, a man of culture, or a providential politician) to come and tell us that he knows exactly where we should go, that he has a visionary development plan. Unfortunately, during all the elections that we have had in the last three decades, we did not vote the right "dreamer." Instead, we have voted for "ours" and for "our party men." Thus, we reached what we have now, finding ourselves nearly at the margin of history, almost removed from it. Moldova remains a desert. Although there is talk of being patriots of our country and nation, preservation of our culture and national heritage, little or nothing is done for this.

Mihaela reveals a bitter reality. The vignette above characterizes the difficult situation in which Moldova is today—the political, economic, and demographic crises that became a norm. The teacher clearly identified who is responsible: the political class as well as the mass of the people. The teacher clearly showed that the Moldova's post-Perestroika political class did not have a clairvoyant national project, but only one thought: to become rich, acting according to the rules of nepotism, capitalism, and political clientelism. Patriotism and national pride are used by the political class. These concepts are too politicized, often linked to a particular political ideology. As for the people, most of them just used to complain about the difficult situation they are were in, without any big changes in their habits of voting or engagement in societal transformation. However, people still hope to get rid of the corruption, thievery, wickedness, and mischief of today—they hope to revitalize and renew themselves and the country they live in.

Patriotism and patriotic education in Moldova today are mostly a univocal term—the manifestation of feeling that implies an exclusive choice: either you are, or you are not a patriot/ a unionist. There is no compromise or middle ground; no negotiation of the term comes into question. Igor, a Romanian ethnic teacher from South, bitterly shared a story about how other history teachers from his town, do not greet when meeting him on the street because of his 'other' [too leftist] political orientation: "Why do you greet him, his is <u>not</u> an Unionist!" This anecdotal vignette is a personal testimony that points out how divided and intolerant is Moldovan contemporary society, including educated people—high school teachers whose job is to cultivate a culture of acceptance and peace. The societal relationship and the dynamics of society is much

more complex. It also shows how the power of the past [education and ideology] and unthinking rootedness of constructed myths as forms of history education abuse influence, lead, and empower the present. It is about how the past can turn out to be extraordinarily dangerous for the present and future.

The findings reveal how the 21st century patriotism and patriotic education manifests in the opinion of social studies teachers. It includes different perceptions, ranging between transnational, remote, global to national, regional, local forms of patriotism, expresses as "love for you homeland," "be proud of your motherland," "caring about what is happening to it," "accepting motherland as it is," "conforming to its' traditions," but also "trying to change something for the better," "continue believe in a brighter future," and "to name the country you live now as your new home." There is no one recipe for patriotic education. As teachers completed each other, "the patriotism is not something that comes with the birth certificate; rather it is built by personal involvement, seeking the common good" (Marilena); it means "supporting individual and collective potential, respecting local, national and global resources" (Stefan), "gaining trust among and recognition of all citizens regardless of their ethnicity, cultural background, gender, age, ability, religion, social class, etc." (Aliona). Here is the locus where multicultural education and patriotic education intersect. The 21st century "Moldova should be reborn by uniting and respecting values—general human values and individual and collective values" (Natalia). This joint definition is a bouquet of civic patriotism and multiculturalism, a legacy that Moldovan teachers can leave to future generations.

The results indicate that teaching MAPE in social studies classes, Moldovan teachers make a deliberate choice, lesson by lesson, class by class, lesson-plan by lesson-plan, and long-term plan by long-term plan. Teachers choose *what* approach to include to teach about history and civics: patriotic or multiculturalist, or a combination of them, *how* they want to teach it, and *why* they want to do this. Also, they reflect on their teaching, checking out their biases and assumptions, negotiating their identities, while using MAPE as an instrument for shaping future Moldovan citizens and helping to build a civic state. This is a mix of spontaneous trial and error for the better and conscious shifting of the paradigm, followed by the changes and control over teaching pedagogy. This daily practice helps teachers to find an alternative counter-pedagogy that could determine the whole future direction of the profession and curriculum. However, teachers need help by being offered examples of lessons of how multiperspectivity is addressed

(locally and globally), as not all teachers have time or training, expertise, and resources to develop such lessons.

Theme #3 –Balancing between Civic Education and Global Education Approaches

The third theme that emerged from the interviews is about whether teachers see multicultural education as a national or a global initiative. This theme dominated the conversation during exploration of the third questionnaire question (Explain how you avoid escalation of and/or prevention of nationalism, mistrust, fear, and exclusion of *the other* in your classroom. What strategies do you employ to promote social cohesion, reconciliation, coexistence, the solidarity of all ethnic and social groups?). The occupants of the civic education/education for society paradigm are accustomed to telling stories about the role of engagement in community life through volunteering and community projects, involving all strata and cultural groups, that ultimately lead to social cohesion. Conversely, the tenets of the global education model customarily share success-stories about the need for integration and the benefits of cosmopolitism in the global village.

According to literature, global education is an approach to teaching history that incorporates learning about cultures, geographies, and histories from all around the globe. Its goal is developing the "knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are the basis for decision making and participation in a world characterized by cultural pluralism, interconnectedness, and international economic competition" (Merryfield, 1995, p. 2). Teaching history with a global perspective differs from traditional approaches. In this regard, educators focus equally on common cultural aspects as on cultural differences. Thus, cross-cultural understanding, open-mindedness, appreciation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, derision of cultural difference, recognition of other people's knowledge and perspectives, appreciation of other peoples' points of view—are essential in the development of a global perspective (Merryfield, 1995).

According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia*, civic education approach, I see an intentional or deliberate means in teaching history that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members of community or society, transmitting values and norms with an explicit mission to educate students for citizenship (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civic-education/).

Moldovan social studies curriculum pays equal attention to both citizenship education and global education. In today's multicultural society, being able to live and participate in a

community and deal with different issues and conflicts (at the personal, communal, societal, national, and global levels) means being armed with special skills, such as cultural awareness, problem solving, and critical thinking. Moldova is no exception. Educational authorities are aware of these trends and do their best to keep up to date. Thus, teachers are tasked with preparing students to live and peacefully coexist with their co-citizens of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as those around the globe. The new history curriculum, approved by the Moldovan Ministry of Education in 2019, states that:

> Historical education is one of the most important and current aspects [of education] that contribute to the formation/development of the qualities of the democratic, patriotic and active citizen, being focused on the idea of constructivist theory, in which learning/knowledge is a construction and not an appropriation of passively received information. (Curriculum la Istoria Românilor și Universală, 2019, p. 3)

The civic education curriculum provides a whole module called "Man—the social being" for each class, beginning with 5th grade until the 12th grade, focused on studying citizenship, civic behavior, and civil society. The curriculum of the new discipline, education for society, that began to gradually replace civic education beginning in fall of 2018, states as one element of novelty "focusing on the issue of citizens' active involvement in public life, participating in the decision-making process of community interest" (Curriculum disciplinar Educație pentru Societate, 2018a, p. 4). Also, it emphasizes "the respect for democracy and the possibilities of acting as a democratic citizen, supporting/opting for the impartial application of the law for all" (ibid, p. 2). Thus, among competencies that must be developed, the curriculum suggests: "Demonstrating the qualities of a democratic citizen by not accepting intolerant, racist, and xenophobic behaviors in school, in the community, in the world" (ibid, p. 19); "establishing the values, principles, and norms of the students' ethical conduct and of the citizens' integrity" (ibid, p. 21). As final outcomes for 9th graders, the curriculum aims that each student:

> - creates a glossary of terms learned within the modules, such as: nation, patriotism, multiculturalism, self-management, employment contract; recognizes and values the qualities of a good citizen, patriot, humanist by not accepting intolerant, racist and xenophobic behavior in school, in community and in the world; and appreciates the importance of respect and empathy, showing a correct and responsible behavior towards oneself and colleagues. (ibid, p. 21)

The official educational document called *Methodological References for Organizing the Educational Process in the School Disciplines Civic Education and Social Education* (Lungu, & Moldovanu, 2018) recommended by the Ministry of Education for the 2018-2019 school year, refers to the recommendations of the Council of Europe. They provide a summary list of competencies that empower a person to participate effectively and appropriately in a culture of democracy. These competencies are grouped into Values, Attitudes, Abilities, Knowledge, and Critical Understanding (see Appendix 6). Thus, *civic spirit* is defined as "an attitude towards a community or a social group of which the person belongs, which is wider than his immediate circle of family and friends," implying a sense of belonging to the community, awareness of other community members and the effects of one's own actions on them, solidarity with other community members, and the sentiment of civic duty towards the community (Lungu, & Moldovanu, 2018, p. 9).

In addition to national citizenship, the curriculum also suggests studying the global problems of the 20th and 21st centuries (Curriculum la Istoria Românilor şi Universală, p. 24). For example, the curriculum proposes that students must develop competence in dealing with globalization, internationalization, Europeanization, technologization, etc. (ibid, p. 2).

How do Moldovan social studies teachers develop these skills of teaching both national civic education and globalization in in their classrooms? How do they prepare students for citizenship in both a multicultural democracy and in a globalized world? How do teachers balance between civic education and global education?

On May 31, 2019, the graduation speech of one 12th grade-student from Moldova's capital - Chişinău - pointed to the drama of separation from his colleagues through the prism of out-migration, calling his classmates "tomorrow [Moldovan] diaspora" (Pro-TV Chişinău). More than half of Moldova's graduates (both high school and higher education) go to study or work abroad. According to a 2016 The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) report, in Moldova over the decade 2004-2014, the number of young people aged 15-29 decreased by 12% (UNFPA, 2016, p.11).

How do teachers address this national problem in the context of civic education, global education, and multicultural and peace education? In general, study-participants see Moldovan population at large, including the youth, as apolitical and apathetic. They perceive the youth's

migration tendencies as a survival strategy and as a direct consequence of multiple factors such as:

> harsh economic situation and long-lasting political crisis because of entrenched corruption, bank fraud, embezzlement, inconclusive political decisions, controversial oligarchs, nepotism, patronage, poverty, inequality, clientelism, money-laundering schemes, weakened judiciary system, to name a few. (Mihaela)

The exodus affected all strata of the population across all geographical regions and areas and "prevented the continuation of deep-seated reforms and democratization, because the best active people left" (Dimitrie).

Many of the interviewed Moldovan social studies teachers see multiculturalism as a platform to create possibilities for students to learn global citizenship rather than national civic education. These teachers argue that teaching global multiculturalism will better prepare students for their work in the world. As Radmila stated:

> We live in a globalized world. People have never migrated at this scale more than today. The world has never been more ethnically and culturally mixed as it is in these days. Thus, teaching multiculturalism is really a pressing necessity. Half of our students go abroad or study or emigrate with the whole family. They must be prepared to adapt over there.

Here a teacher is saying that by teaching multiculturalism we can address these problems (migration, globalization). These teachers acknowledge educators' lack of power in changing the pressures on students and believe it is more important to prepare students to work abroad than to stay in Moldova. As Dragalina, a veteran urban teacher from the central part of Moldova, explained:

> Yes, I do recommend [my students] leave Moldova, for several reasons: 1. If nothing changes in our country and we stay on the corruption track, obviously, we cannot expect to have a quality education nor a better life. 2. Also, let's face it, Moldova is not a country with a developed economy, which would provide good jobs for our graduates. That is why they are looking to do at least an MA degree abroad, even if they take their BA here. Then they look for a well-paid job in Europe. We, our generation, we're the ones who were pleased with the salary we received. We compose ourselves with the idea that even if now the wage is low and little, with time it will increase. This is how we were

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taught: to be patient, obedient, over-tolerant. Today's generation is different. They want from the very beginning, directly after graduation, to have decent living and working conditions, which, again, Moldova is not able to offer to them.

Thus, Moldovan social studies teachers assume that individual strategies, such as migration, studying, working, and finally settling abroad, are survival decisions. Doing so, teachers somehow justify their decisions and inclinations to teach more global education instead of civic/citizenship education.

Dimitrie agrees, stating that: "After decades of disappointment with the political elite's [fake] commitment to the well-being of the country, people do not believe in any political party anymore, and that it [elections] can bring the desired change." Thus, "full of disbelief, confusion, skepticism, but with hopes, Moldovans embark on the long roads to West or East," concluded Mihaela.

Disillusioned and embittered about the national condition, teachers are more committed to preparing students for globalization than for Moldova Citizenship. Thus, Dragalina claimed:

> If things do not change in the Republic of Moldova in the next five years, we will have even fewer young people who will remain in the country. I tried hard to keep my only child at home, but when he received a salary that did not allow him to cover his current expenses for a single man (services, food, clothing, entertainment, etc.) he made the difficult decision to take the exile and, thus, become a part of the diaspora. In this regard, I must admit—we consciously prepare our children to dream about "a piece of sweeter bread abroad" and integrate into foreign societies. It is tough, it hurts, but that is the reality.

Ecaterina's story is in the same vein with the previous one:

> Yes, I am proud of my students who went to other countries to study or work. This proves my professionalism as a teacher, my degree of competence, and my ability to prepare them to handle different situations of life, in whichever country they would be. I cannot say anything else as long as the political reality of our country does not allow the assertion of the person/personality, especially of the young people, in a legal framework here. Yes, I have quite few good students who made the conscious choice to stay in the Republic of Moldova after high school graduation. They went to the local universities of

medicine, law, economics, engineering, etc. But the efforts that these students make are enormously greater than the efforts made by those who left.

By "great efforts" the teacher means the challenges faced by the young population in Moldova (and elsewhere). These stories unveil a deadlock situation in the implementation and utilization of civic/citizenship education as part of MAPE. However, some teachers see this preparation for globalization as a good approach to multiculturalism. The Moldovan education system prepares students mostly for other societies and diversities and less to adapt to local multiculturalism.

The interviewed teachers from minority-ethnic backgrounds differed slightly in their thinking about the tension between teaching civic or global education. Graduates from ethnic minority schools do not migrate as intensively as their peers from Moldovan schools. Mariana, a teacher of Bulgarian origin, who teaches in a high-density ethnic minority school, shared her insight about the importance of a citizenship education approach:

> We, the Bulgarians, should always know and not forget that even if we are small people, we are also citizens of Moldova, citizens of this country. But our students sometimes do not feel that they are [full] citizens of this country. They are not to blame for having been born in a Bulgarian village in Moldova and not in Bulgaria, as historical circumstances developed. But they must study the state legislation of the Republic of Moldova. So, today in classes, the Bulgarian kids would study not only the history and culture of the Bulgarian people, but also study the culture of Ukrainian, Romanian, of all people who live in Moldova, and even the culture and history of other nations around the world.

This teacher refers to ethnic education for minority groups, emphasizing the fact that Moldovan legislation provides important guaranties for ethnic minorities, based on core-concepts such as non-discrimination, equality, protection, affirmation, and access to education. Teachers also mention that the multicultural approach to social studies has been introduced in the Moldova educational system gradually by the authorities. Mariana claimed:

> So far, we are somewhere in the first stage of substituting civic education discipline with education for society for the 5th and 10th grades, heavily promoting multicultural education. The Ministry of Education also has clear intentions develop a new history curriculum, and we hope to have it in school by September 1st, 2018. For civic education and education for society disciplines, the Ministry of Education promised to provide new

teacher' guides and textbooks. It will contain topics oriented toward democratic citizenship education and multiculturalism.

Maria's hopes of a new curriculum reveal social studies teachers' desire to incorporate multiple perspectives and knowledge construction processes into the classrooms.

Moldovan social studies teachers also combine citizenship education and global education, looking for ways how these two approaches can inform each other. Teachers try to make the citizenship education look more universal, international, and cosmopolitan—transcending the curriculum's narrow focus on ethnicity by expanding its goal as the creation of cosmopolitan citizens—citizens of the planet Earth. Many Moldovan citizens have double or even triple-citizenship, and thus have cosmopolitan identities and commitments. Teachers from such backgrounds, such as Mariana, are more interested in combining global and citizenship education:

> I tell my students: Respect your culture, language, religion, and history, but also respect other people and their culture too. There are many cultures and religions around the world, and this diversity is a great thing. There is a uniqueness in any ethnicity, including ours, which they must value and respect. Thus, my students become interested in how other people live overseas. Often, for specific lessons, there are asked to prepare projects/reports about the lifestyle of different groups of people/nations in different historical epochs. They research and then teach/perform the topic to their classmates. They are allowed and encouraged to talk in any language: Bulgarian, Russian, or English, and they are very motivated to do this. (Mariana)

The teacher stipulates to the fact that she harmoniously integrates multiculturalism in her classes. However, this is a difficult job, which needs constant teachers' commitment and efforts, as Zlata stated: "If you really care, if you really want to change something in the civic-global approaches tensions (including multicultural education)—put the shoulder. Do not expect immediate change and gratitude; the result will bring you satisfaction later." The teacher suggests taking initiative, to be agents of change, to make a strong commitment toward multiculturalism.

Emigration has become a familiar and natural phenomenon in Moldova. Around a million of Moldova's citizens sought a passage to Eastern or Western Europe in the last 20 years. This situation made teachers shift their approach of multiculturalism from people's rights toward their duties and civic participation in our country and toward topics of globalization. The fact that

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interviewed teachers did not emphasize civic and citizenship approaches denotes the failure of educational practices in building a common civic identity in the Republic of Moldova.

The teachers themselves may not fully believe in the possibility of genuine social cohesion and cannot envision the future on Moldovan statehood. Boris, a veteran teacher from South of Moldova, stated:

> It is how I teach my students: We want to live in an independent state of the Republic of Moldova and have good relations with the European Union, and with Russia, and with America, and with China. But the most important thing is to observe the interests of Moldova. We should not be good for Romanian or Ukrainian people; we should be good for ourselves first. We can cooperate with other states but only care about the interests of Moldova.

Even if the number of ethnic minority migrating students is much smaller than Moldovan ethnic youth, the teacher confessed that the number of children in his school was reduced by almost a half during the last decade:

> Many people left for Russia and other countries, where they earn better money. They got married, created families. However, the majority of Gagauz and Bulgarians are leaving for further education to Russia, where they later can find a job much more easily. (Boris)

The vignette above shows the existing civic-global education tension.

Teachers witness their own and their students' struggles, as modern people with ambitions and endeavors, to overcome themselves, to innovate by learning and unlearning, to create, affirm, and aspire for better. They acknowledge their need for a strong personal socio-economic environment to develop originally. As citizens, we all want to know that we have a system behind—a kind of security, a safety-net on which we can fall into if we fail. Moldova cannot offer this now. This ironic statement circulates on the internet: "If you don't like where you are, move; you are not a tree." For many of us, leaving the country is a kind of protest and nonconformism, which snatches us from the flock but opens a window to an original personal and professional development.

Moldovan teachers prepare students for the global village more than for a life in their own country. On one hand, this approach has the benefit of showing how multicultural education works in the world beyond the school gate. The teachers are proud of their students who go abroad and quickly adapt and succeed there. They even encourage students to learn these

competencies just to go abroad. The possibility of studying abroad is a huge incentive for Moldovan students, aligned with honing language skills, exploring the world, and gaining multicultural experience. However, this results in not encouraging students to stay in or return to the country and make a real change at home. A few teachers mentioned that when it comes to teaching about democracy, they fail to find good local examples because they do not see them as relevant. For teachers, what Moldova has today is "a mockery not democracy" (Zlata). Instead, the teachers look for global ideals and models of democracy. However, ethnic minority teachers, who come from more mixed backgrounds may be more likely to prepare students for national citizenship and build a civic nation.

Wrapping up the ways in which study-participants described their experiences of balancing between civic and global approaches, I conclude that teachers are inclined to teach the global approach to multiculturalism, rather than to local multiculturalism. Also, Moldovan educators' underlying considerations for addressing citizenship and civic education differ and look weak in comparison to their attention and commitment to global stance. Thus, it seems that teachers prepare students to accept mostly foreign distant cultures, rather than local diversity and national cultures.

Theme #4 – Conflict of National/ Ethnic Identities

The fourth most mentioned theme combines two interconnected concepts—national and ethnic identity. Teachers often interweave these two elements in their narratives, especially when teachers were explaining what motivates them to teach about multiculturalism and diversity, what obstacles exist in teaching multiculturalism and diversity, and what difficulties exist in getting cultural diversity broadly accepted in Moldovan schools. The teachers see the identity and language issues as two prominent elements in this process.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moldova's post-independence dynamics led to the establishment of a post-communist democracy (Bodean-Vozian & Soltan, 2014, p. 31). During the Soviet time, identity issues were either removed from some ethnic minorities or, often, the ethnicities were constrained to convert to other ethnicities (majoritarian—Russians). This fact complicated the situation and reflect on today's tensions around the identity topic. The decline of the Soviet interest created a vacuum in which historic tensions between Moldovan and Romanian identities began to arise. The study-participants'

narratives reflect the ongoing debate on disputed identity, where two competing ethnic nationalisms—Moldovan and Romanian—battle over the name and content of the national identity of its citizens (Cojocaru, 2015; Baar & Jakubek, 2017). Moldovanism is a political term used to refer to the support and promotion of the Moldovan identity and Moldovan culture, ascribing this identity to the medieval Principality of Moldavia, while Romanianism is a term applied to describe the Romanian identity proponents. Thus, a Moldovanist is seen as a supporter of the Republic of Moldova statehood, while a Romanianist—as a supporter of the neighboring Romania state. The Moldovanist identity was promoted by the leaders of the Communist Party of Moldova in power between 2001 and 2009 and continue to be promoted today by the Socialist Party of Moldova in power since Fall 2016. Yet, although some see the Moldovan and Romanian identities largely political, most teachers also see them as ethnic, among other ethnic identities (such as Jewish, Roma, Gagauz, Bulgarian, etc.).

The teachers articulated the divide between Moldovanism and Romanism in their narratives, seeing the conflict highly indigenized/ ethnocisized, where indigenization can be described as a central strategy of an atoned and reformulated approach to outside intervention, able to change the parameters of conflict (Ihring, 2009, p. 386). Teachers see this dichotomy as dangerous, labeling Moldovanists as having "pro-Russian sympathy" (Dimitrie) and being "sponsored by Moscow propaganda" (Dragalina). Some teachers see Moldovanism as a crucial part of constructing civic/national identity. The competition is fueled by nationalist historians from both sides, which is often used by political elites and counter-elites during elections and nationalist movements. The tension between Moldovanism and Romanianism appears in a variety of social venues, including politics and cultural-societal relationships. The teachers' narratives point out that people in the RM are still in the process of negotiating their identities, as well as the state itself, searching for its geopolitical and national identity.

Some of the interviewed teachers believe that the Romanianist model of identity is perceived as divisive by ethnic minorities, because The Romanian identity starts with the affiliation to Romania (as a country), and not with a Moldova (as a neighboring independent country) or to Moldovan ethnic identity. According to the ethnic model of identity that posits that belonging to social groups serves an important basis for one's identity, all foreigners (Russians, Jews, Roma, etc.) do not feel represented as part of the nation. It conveys to them a clear message: You are not really a part of our nation. Because of this, any dissent in opinion against

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Romanian history or identity, any disagreement with the pro-Romanian or pro-EU views, are seen as a red flag by the Romanianists and vice versa. The Moldovanists tend to articulate a more pro-Russian trajectory of foreign politics of Moldova; the aggressive tropes and awful rhetoric from the opponents quickly follow. In general, the dispute around identity among the Romanian-speaking population of Moldova is only inside the country, related to the question of whether Moldovans constitute a subgroup of Romanians or a separate ethnic group, and about the existence of a common language. This discourse affected popular perceptions and the way people self-identify. Thus, the Romanian model of identity is about regarding oneself as a part of the Romanian nation, while the Moldovan model of identity is about internalizing a Moldovan ethnic identity as a local separate ethnicity, reiterating the post-independence Moldovan politics.[5]

The interviewed teachers represented both identities. Thus, teachers' opinions are divided into two camps: Moldovanists, leaning Pro-Kremlin and Eurosceptic, while Romanianists are Pro-NATO and Euro-optimist. Whichever identity model they hold, all the interviewed teachers struggled with understanding how past experiences influenced national and ethnic identity formation issues in Moldova. This situation has a negative effect on authentic implementation of MAPE.

Mariana, a Bulgarian ethnic teacher stated: "I never felt any outrageous oppression on the part of the Moldavian people. We go to seminars and courses; we all, Moldovan and Russian speaking teachers, collaborate and communicate together. I would not say that I faced any oppression." This is a unique statement among all 30 study-participants.

Most of the interviewed teachers, whatever their identity, felt that they faced various forms of marginalization, disrespect, or exclusion under imposition of the Romanian identity model. Thus, Boris, a Gagauz teacher from the Southern part of Moldova, claimed:

> It happens that we Gagauz are pressed/ accused for not [willing] to know the Romanian language. I don't agree. We understand that the state language needs to be studied. We studied it even during USSR time, when we did not need it that much. Now, we slowly learn it, by taking special courses. We teach Romanian language in school four times a

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[5] In Romania, the inhabitants from the Republic of Moldova are colloquially called Bessarabians (after the Bessarabia region), in order to be distinguished from the inhabitants of the Romanian Moldavia region who also generally refer to themselves (or are referred to by the inhabitants of the other Romanian regions) as Moldovans, but declare Romanian ethnicity. (Wikipedia)

week. Many of our students when going to college, try to study in the Moldovan groups, because if you master the official language, you are more likely to find a good job. Radmila's experience contributes to the story. She stated with bitterness:

> In our means of public transportation, you can often feel the identity tensions, when a simple question asked in an "inconvenient" language can be escalated into an argument, when civilized discussion fail in face of open chauvinistic intolerant attitudes. You may often hear such replicas as: "Russians, suitcase, train station, Russia!", or "All Moldovans must be sent to Siberia!" or "Romanians, go home to Romania!" I face this permanently while using public transportation every day for work, where I hear these ugly comments. (Radmila)

The above comment shows how common competing nationalistic public discourse eloquently reflects the picture of society. It offers a clear glimpse of the level of tolerance and acceptance in Moldovan society. The teachers see this phenomenon as appalling, disgusting, and intolerable. The teachers encounter this in their classrooms too, connecting it with family upbringing and educational background. Thus, teachers face daily the daunting task of questioning parents' authority in terms of multicultural education. Liliana, an urban Moldovan teacher from the capital, remarked regarding the issue: "We face and combat hate message against each other (Romanian - Russian) almost daily. We try to erase intolerance and other bad habits learned at home, by trying to help students develop a critical lens and humanistic attitudes." The teacher not only analyzes the issue, but also comes up with a concrete educational strategy. Doing so, she empowers her students to come to their own conclusions and make their own decisions.

Some study-participants were more preoccupied with looking for solutions for conservation of national identity and traditions in a globalized world. Cătălina, for example, fears and opposes multiculturalism as an invisible force of leveling and uniformity of identities. She believes this comes from the overarching phenomenon of "internationalization and globalization led by modern empires—corporations." Teachers connect the recent waves of migration and relocation of populations from original places as some sort of conspiracy that ultimately leads to dangerous result — "losing identity and fragmentation of small ethnicities, such as Moldovans" (Cătălina).

Looking through the prism of the Moldovanism-Romanianism dichotomy of ethnic identity, linked to pro-Eastern or pro-Western preferences, one can attest how Moldovan social

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studies teachers construct their teaching practices in history and social studies classrooms. Dragoș shares his story:

> I accepted teaching history through multi-perspective from the beginning, as if something natural. In fact, I discovered that I was already doing this, without waiting for someone to ask me. It was a natural thing at the right time. This principle could be applied much earlier. But, it would have been much harder, because at the beginning, since Moldova's independence [1991]—when the nationalist rhetoric replaced the 'proletarian-internationalist' one, and when we went to teach 'The History of Romanians', clearing it of falsehoods, communist ideology and other Soviet myths—we were so proud to openly say that we are Romanians and we are from Râm [term used in Moldovan medieval chronicles for Rome and Roman Empire]. Because of that, many teachers would have had more barriers in accepting and teaching this multicultural approach. It took time for me to get over the euphoria of rediscovering our national history to a gentler patriotism – a multicultural one, that incorporates the others. (Dragoș)

In many teachers' stories, the blame and the guilt of being intolerant comes from both sides—the majoritarian ethnicity (Moldovans) and the ethnic minority groups. Here is Florin's explanation:

> Throughout educational institutions and media, students are infused with general human values and taught that everyone is equal. However, the oral history that people assimilate from family and through nationalistic school curricula, which mostly ignored minorities of all sorts, socialized them into seeing each other in negative clichés and patterns (such as Romanians are fascists, Russians and Gagauz are incomers, aliens, strangers in this land, the non-Christians / Muslims are potential terrorists, the disables and invalids are ugly, the gays are immoral, etc.). This view of the world through a narrow perspective and "othering" lens, learning to label *the others* instead of understanding them, communicating, and collaborating with them, has built us up as an ignorant, intolerant, insensitive generation. (Florin)

As a solution, the teacher suggests:

> We must stop looking for whom to blame and who is guilty, or who is ours and who is not. Instead, we must re-learn and act from a praxeological (human action) perspective to think critically and constructively. If someone does not like something, it does not mean

that he/she is right. We must acknowledge that there is diversity, plurality, multi-perspectivity around us. We are all equally guilty and responsible for the change we make. However, our identity as a *people* and as a *nation* has not been yet fully developed. We still argue; we are not yet united in stating clearly who we are—Moldovans or Romanians. Those who consider themselves one way or another are involved in this rivalry, want to reinforce *their way as the only way* of perception of national dignity and identity. And as a logical consequence, this process leads to the closure and marginalization of the values of other ethnic groups. As a result, the minorities try to get up on their own. Of course, this common process is a part of a nation's consolidation. But today, we have come to a moment when we all must understand that we, those from the city, must help those from the countryside, so there is no difference between us. Those who consider themselves Romanian or Moldovan or Russian or Ukrainian must understand that we all have equal rights, not only on paper [declared in Constitution] but in real life. (Florin)

The above comment demonstrates how the teacher perceives the ways in which a diverse population can be silenced within mainstream discourses and institutions. It implies that it is teachers' responsibility to learn and teach about diversity and celebrate all cultures and ethnicities for the history, traditions, gifts, and knowledge that they carry, which might help solve the Romanian-Moldovan identity rivalry.

Cătălina pointed to the necessity of investigating and clarifying the ethnic identity of Moldovans:

As a teacher and as a citizen, it bothers me that we, the Moldovans, in the independent Republic of Moldova, are kind of *lost in our search for identity*. Most of us encounter difficulties in clarifying what our national identity is. Much of the Moldovan population is oriented towards the Moldovanism, identifying themselves as 'Moldovans' instead of 'Romanians.' And here is my duty as a history teacher—I must intervene with a solution that might put an end to this misperception of our ethnic identity—I come with examples of patriotism and the education of love for the country and nation. Unfortunately, the lack of national dignity, the pride of the country are the basic features of the Moldovans today. Because of the lack of ethnic/national identity puts us, the Romanians, in the 2nd position/role. I am convinced that the lack of national identity has a negative impact on

us, equal to the lack of self-esteem, and can lead to the risk of the country being broken down. Look, the center of our capital Chișinău is heavily Russified. That's why many students come on the idea that they are Moldovans, not Romanians.

This teacher tries to re-canonize national identity after the break-up of the USSR. She uses both names in her narrative—"We, the Moldovans" and "Us, the Romanians," thus proving her own constant battle and search for identity. Thus, she acknowledges that she is a part of the Romanian nation, but not ready to cede the Moldovan aspect of her identity. The same teacher sees citizens' confusion around identity as something unacceptable and disrespectful:

Calling us Moldovans is an inconsiderate attitude from the minority ethnicities. It is disrespectful towards our Romanian language and our Romanian identity. Also naming ourselves Moldovans in incorrect and unacceptable. So, to combat this I give students true examples of patriotism and love for our nation—this is my main job. Therefore, when teaching medieval history—I use the personality of the Principe Stefan the Great, Vlad Țepeș, or Dimitrie Cantemir. I want my students to develop a love, admiration, respect for our national historical personalities who have cared for and promoted the ideas of nation, homeland, country, love of homeland. (Cătălina)

Cătălina highlights the feature of traditional nationalistic history curricula—the need for heroization of history and the importance of national/ethnic heroes. This is also reminiscent of Soviet education when teachers had not become accustomed to a critical view of our past. Instead, they learned to idealize the rulers, inscribing them in the pantheon of nationwide heroes. The teacher uses the version of history of Romanians written as a history of heroic deeds. The Moldovan history textbooks in this vein, present the history of Romanians as a series of extraordinary heroic actions, intentionally hiding the less attractive facts. These history manuals portray Moldovans as if our ancestors were always heroes or victims of historical circumstances. However, these stories tell less about the need to restore the truth about the past or about equal inclusiveness and treatment of all ethnic groups and cultures. All Russians or migrants are depicted as occupiers, not as contributors to the prosperity and culture of the country. Therefore, what happened to the Jews or the Roma during the Second World War does not fit into the acceptable nice format of the perception of our past. Embracing this mentality, the teacher does not see this method as a venue for reinstalling nationalism. Later in the interview Cătălina argued:

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The situation is a little reversed vis-à-vis the prevention of *nationalism*. I think we do not have nationalism [in Moldova]. Instead, I believe, we lack the *love and pride of the nation*, we lack a *clear national identity*. I see students who are deprived of *national identity*. Seeing that this is lacking, I teach it, I emphasize it. This is my duty as a history teacher. I do not think it is the case that students might adopt a *nationalistic* or *chauvinistic stance*. Rather, they might understand and restore their *national pride and identity*. This is what I try to cultivate. It is an element of the *identity crisis*. My students do not perceive themselves as Romanians, rather they perceive themselves as Moldovans. And they call the language they speak Moldovan, although the language is Romanian. Same about the Romanian history. That scares me the most. If only 4,1% of the population is of Russian ethnicity[6]—why does the Russian language need a special treatment/role? The fact that most of the titular/dominant ethnicity—Moldovan— identify themselves as Moldovans and not Romanians—that hurts me too. (emphasis added) (Cătălina)

The above comment shows the teacher's worries about identity construction and perception. She uses the media discourse of identity crisis but does not acknowledge the possibility of multiple identities. This teacher also points to the lack of a complex understanding of *national/ethnic identity* education in social studies in Moldovan schools. Her story is a direct indication of the two competing identities among the majoritarian Moldovan ethnicity—to call themselves Moldovans or Romanians. Also, Cătălina touches the painful language issue, which will be discussed in the next theme.

A teacher from another capital school has a similar analysis. Radmila is indignant at the fact that Moldova's citizens do not understand the identity concept: "Practically, we [Moldovans] still do not understand who we are, what [our] identity is." As disclosed, other teachers are also saddened by the current situation. Many study-participants are frustrated by the fact that Moldovans choose to call themselves Moldovans instead of Romanians. Thus, they fear that multicultural education can be an impediment to assuring the "right" identity for the dominant-ethnic students, in whom they want to instill the "pride" of being and openly calling themselves Romanians. Teachers link the identity issue with other dominant narrative

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[6] https://www.indexmundi.com/moldova/demographics_profile.html

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discussed—the language issue, which will be discussed in the next theme (#5). To emphasize his point, Bogdan states:

> The identity issue is really a huge problem. *Volens nolens*, we come to talk about this when talking about multiculturalism and the status of minorities in a country. The state should be objective, but at the same time, understanding. It must correctly value the majority, by insisting, on certain moments, of minority integration. One thing must be stressed—that all ethnic minorities, especially the Russians, must learn the state language. It is good for them to speak the language of the state in which they live. Because it is a right thing. Otherwise, when we get to graduation exams, the *alolingual* [non-titular/minor ethnicities] students are not able to talk or answer simple questions in Romanian when interviewed. (Bogdan)

The teacher here points out to the superficial attention that minority students and teachers pay to learning and teaching Romanian language to ethnic minority students. Also, this teacher supports the idea of enriching their students' pride of belong to a particular (Romanian) ethnicity/nation and put less emphasis on the pride of belonging to the country—the Republic of Moldova.

Other study-participants expressed similar anxieties concerning national identity. Language and identity issues are often used as synonymous concepts when it comes to defending a national and patriotic stance. Thus, the lack or absence of this type of patriotism in schools is seen as the main threat to the development of Romanian identity and building the Moldovan nation. Departing from a nationalistic spirit is viewed as a symptom of national weakness and degeneration. This standard post-Soviet nationalistic narrative embroiled in public discourse plagues the society. The ongoing appeal to "correct" the way we see our identity, encapsulating nationalistic views, slows the full adoption of MAPE and removes schoolteachers from implementing authentic multiculturalism in their classrooms. It also contravenes the cornerstones of the Moldovan constitution—individual freedom, freedom of opinion and expression, and the right of all citizens to preserve, develop, and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity (Art. 10) (Constitution of the Republica Moldova, 1994, n.p.).

Most teachers try to find viable ways in dealing with this difficult issue. Ariadna shared her vision:

> Moldavans consider that they are the dominant ethnicity in Moldova. But the fact is that, in Moldova, there are so many implications that make it impossible to find *the purebreds*.

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> At large, if you look, is there any real difference in what language we speak, or does a person feel himself Romanian or Moldavian, Ukrainian or Gagauz? In my opinion, the most important is how a person behaves. Whether he/she litters everywhere or teaches his/her children to respect the elderly and teachers, or vice versa. This is important.

This teacher touches the possibility of accepting multiple identity aspects as a solution for the existing crisis and personal tensions, as well as a starting point to teaching MAPE. The teacher pointed to the dominant rhetoric that led some voices to dominate the conversation, excluding the others, subjecting the conversation to no progress or development, and making this look as a norm.

Then, the teacher offered an example of how she overcame her own prejudices and biases about *the other*.

> I never knew the Gagauz people closely, but recently I had the opportunity to see one mixed family. What amazed me is how they respect their elders, parents, family. It is so strong that it makes me admire this ethnicity. It is one of their main values; they have it in their blood. I believe that it is the goal of our society to prevent these values from fading into the background. Each nation and ethnicity have something to bring to the table. It is necessary to find leverage to unite not divide us. (Ariadna)

In the same vein, Aliona's story was full of deep resentment to the ongoing underestimation, rejection, and nonrecognition of ethnic minorities by the majoritarian one, where "a medium of coldness and isolation persists, paving the alienation between them." Her statement points to the hypothetical prospect: when people feel they have no voice and agency, sooner or later they will find a way to take them. This does not mean that the teacher was worried exclusively about injustice in relation to the ethnicity she belongs to; rather, she was in solidarity with the tapestry of all marginalized groups. No justice—no harmony, no peace. Despite personal resentments, conflicting ideas and beliefs, the teacher is encouraged to continue supporting the cause of multiculturalism and diversity, stepping away from political and social divides that have been driving fear deeper into our society. Aliona's appeal is not a call for vengeance. She stated: "Revenge it is uncapable of creating positive relations; it is at the expense of our dream to live in peace and harmony." Instead, the teacher clearly portrayed a strong humanistic message to all educators and intellectuals: "We must cultivate humanness and justice

for all." The teacher urged taking steps in the right direction to becoming a more united supportive solidary society, instead of being segregated and divided.

Teaching blindingly by the book, without employing critical thinking, the teachers shared the epistemic responsibility with the textbooks' authors, as members of a privileged group, which makes them accountable for their actions when speaking and claiming knowledge. All educators, including ethnic minority teachers, must be treated with appropriate respect by giving them the rights of epistemic agents. Opening a dialogue about the causes and results of epistemic violence might lead to eradicating old historically created prejudices. Acknowledging the legitimacy to be part of the curriculum and textbooks (not only in negative contexts) might lead to protecting minorities from the damage of exclusion and othering. Teaching MAPE allowed teachers to create a space in their classrooms for students to analyze, understand, and appreciate difference and diversity. The teachers also believe that multiculturalism engages in studying and appreciating across cultures, without enforcing union or assimilation. Eliza argued: "We do not teach it to unite with someone. Rather, we do this to get know each other better and to erase mutual stereotypes and prejudices."

The narratives reveal that, in teaching MAPE and multicultural values, teachers are locating themselves in the tradition of "teaching as the practice of democracy" (Ayers, Kumashiro, Meiners, Quinn, & Stovall, 2016, p. 3). However, members of the same teaching guild still do not always see *the other* as an equal member of society and as an ally in the professional social studies teaching guild. Bogdan, an urban teacher from the central part of Moldova, stated: "I have to admit that the dialogue between us, titular ethnicity teachers and their colleagues that belong to ethnic minorities during professional development trainings or working in the same local department of education) does not really take place. At least, my interaction is zero." The teacher acknowledges his lack of interest to meet and collaborate with his Russian speaking colleagues in professional settings and forums, nor to create supportive networks. The dialogue between these two groups is almost absent. The representatives of the titular/dominant ethnicity are ready to start the conversation under one main condition—learn the state language. As we see the issues of identity and language are tightly intertwined. The next section will focus mostly on the sub-theme of language issue.

Theme #5 - Language issues: Still an Apple of Discord

The biggest impediment to having intercultural dialogue in Moldova is the level of mastering the state language by ethnic minorities. This section shows how ethnically diverse teachers in Moldova understand language as a part of multicultural discourse and education. Even though the teachers emphasize characteristics, such as "zero tolerance to discrimination" (Liliana), "respect for human dignity beyond the existing differences" (Mihaela), "the pleasure of keeping up with the necessities of modern times" (Radmila), and "the desire to promote good" (Luminița) as their dominant approaches to multiculturalism, still, they do not manage to overcome the *language barrier* when it comes to working together with their peers. This fact is very visible especially during events and settings when social studies teachers are invited to participate in professional trainings and seminars. Thus, Bogdan generalized the issue, directly pointing out *the others*, blaming them for their lack of willingness to speak the state [Romanian] language:

> Why are you, a Russian ethnic, who has lived here for decades, as an educated person, as a teacher, even if you teach in a Russian school or in a school with the Russian language of instruction, not able to talk and learn to express yourself in Romanian?

As disclosed, Bogdan is saddened by the current situation, viewing it as direct disrespect to the majoritarian ethnicity and as an illness that needs to be cured. This indicates that some teachers expect for ethnic minorities to make the first step, and only after that, they might be more open to teach multicultural education. The message that the data conveys is: Not speaking the state language makes one viewed through a deficit lens. Knowing/speaking the state language is a pre-requisite criterion for defining/labeling a person "ours" or "others." A level of mastery in the state language is a privileged credential for inclusiveness in social and professional intercultural groups, including teacher training and seminars. This leads the ethnic minorities to continual removal, self-segregation, and self-withdrawal from participating in interactions with Romanian-speaking teachers. This situation denies both groups authentic interaction and learning opportunities.

These tensions have an ethnocentric origin and they further the challenges for Romanian/Moldovan and other ethnic minority teachers, and thereby widen the gap between them. Competing for which language should have a higher status inside of the teachers' guild, this situation mirrors the animosities of the larger society between two divergent groups, two

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worlds operating in two different languages. Marilena, a Moldovan ethnic rural veteran teacher, stated:

> The multicultural and multi-lingual skills helped me getting along with everyone much better…. When I speak with somebody who does not speak my [Romanian] language, I will turn to Russian, the only foreign language I know, even if I may stall or stumble sometimes. This way, I want to show respect for the person in front of me.

The teacher denotes that bilingual communication, as a component part of multiculturalism that she used in Soviet times, is helpful in today's Moldova, as a multi-ethnic country. Ariadna, a Russian ethnic teacher stated:

> I have never seen in my family any negative aspects associated with the language that people speak or of another nationality. My family raised me to perceive and respect all people, regardless of what language they speak, or what color their skin is.
>
> The teachers usually discover *the ethnic other* occasionally or accidentally.

Thus, Zlata was very enthusiastic in sharing another page of her own string of life-long discoveries:

> Recently, I discovered my colleagues, Russian speaker history teachers, by attending a professional training course at The Institute of Educational Sciences. I discovered there a bunch of good, interesting, clever, wonderful, intelligent people, with whom I did not get tired of talking! And I was wondering: Where have you guys been so far? Why didn't I meet you before? Where have I been so far? Then I asked them directly: Why didn't I know, until now, about your very existence? Neither your names? Where were you hiding? Why have our paths never intersected?... Why?...

Then, the teacher characterized this situation as unhealthy tendencies:

> It is like we intentionally try to avoid each other. It is like we live in parallel worlds…. It is as if we are self-segregating…. We could do so many beautiful things together! We could learn so many beautiful things from one another! However, I was pleased to note that for them, I was a "discovery" as well. (Zlata)

The teacher acknowledged how implicit biases and state policies that segregate teacher training by language of instruction can get in the way of building meaningful relationships with guild colleagues of other ethnicities. Being at the intersection of cultures but not crossing that crossroads, keeping an expressive silence, and not having cultural dialogues, does not lead to

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anything good for either party. It also does not promote social cohesion, national unity, and identity.

Feelings of resentment toward each other, self-abashment, and intimidation make it difficult to hold a dialogue at times. This rift affects the ability to freely share opinions and offer insights, especially when teachers come from different ethnic communities. It shows an inability to work through conflict and appreciate everyone's contribution. It also does not allow teachers to open the conversation on controversial history topics, as well as on larger common social issues that affect all of them. Some teachers do their best on taking this pressure off, work to the best of their ability, and come up with novel solutions.

This section reveals the complexity of the Moldovan sociolinguistic landscape, given the official status granted to the Moldovan language as a state language and the Russian language as a *lingua franca* in comparison with other minority languages. Despite the noble aim of the national language policies to promote national unity and social cohesion (Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, 1994), the society seems to be moving into greater ethnic, cultural, political, and territorial separations. Ariadna asserted:

> Rushing from one extremity to another is bad. Although, we must admit that there were some *excesses* in the Soviet era. When the Soviet period ended, it seemed to us that here is *The Freedom*. But excesses began in the other direction. The official rhetoric: *Suitcase—Train Station—Russia*[7] forced many people to leave Moldova after the breakdown of the USSR. For me, this is unacceptable. It stupid to kick out good specialists only because they did not master the state language. This is a fixable issue. Any country with pleasure invites a foreign specialist, only because he is a specialist. The language? One will learn it in the process, if necessary. Unfortunately, we cannot understand and agree with each other, preferring to make a choice between us and them, instead of living peacefully together.

The teacher touched on the sensitive language issue, pointing out to the intelligent use of language as a communication tool, a survival skill, and as an indispensable part of democratic living. Dragoş added to the story by describing his way of re-learning and re-conceptualizing the language issue:

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[7] Meaning "Russians, go home."

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Now, I can say with certainty that multilingualism is a very good and welcomed thing in the Republic of Moldova. Having the opportunity to learn and discuss in different languages is great. But before, I was very angry and upset that many of our fellow citizens do not know/speak the Romanian language. That time, I went through the period of platonic nationalism and of blaming *the others*, my co-citizens/co-nationals. Looking back at myself since then, I am ashamed, and I ask myself: Lord, how could I think that way? Why was I so narrow minded? Unwillingly or intentionally, we believed that we had a kind of special right to have a dominant position. We created a false illusion of superiority of our [Romanian] history over the history of other ethnic groups. We praised the virtues of the Romanian people, forgetting that this is a feature of nationalist propaganda and even of a chauvinistic mindset. (Dragoș)

By reflecting on his past experiences, Dragoș unveiled his biases (special rights for some, self-illusion of special status) as well as the epiphany of being wrong. The teacher also connected his "wrong" ideas to the nationalist chauvinistic approach to teaching history.

The long-term unresolved tensions in language planning and policy in the Republic of Moldova, as a deliberate effort to stimulate the function, structure, or acquisition of languages within a multinational society, periodically hiders effective communication and collaboration among ethnicities, deepening the separation between the majoritarian and minority ethnicities. Ștefan, a Moldovan ethnic young rural teacher from the central part of Moldova argued:

In these almost 30 years since independence, in order to reconcile all parts, the State should create proper conditions for studying all languages of the ethnic groups, along with proper conditions for the ethnic minority pupils to study the Romanian language effectively and for Moldovan students to have an opportunity for studying the Russian language like it was before. Because there is already grown a generation [of Moldovan children] who do not speak Russian, that generation no longer communicates with each other, no longer understands their fellow peers—speakers of other languages, but still their co-nationals, members of the same communities. It gets ridiculous—they switch to communication in English. And why not, finally, to formalize the state of Russian language as *lingua franca*—language of interethnic communication. Here, we must think and act urgently with immediate solutions before it is too late. This, I repeat, is the fault of the system. Such concrete changes must come from above.

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Ariadna, a Russian speaker teacher from the state capital, brought her perspective to the issue, still believing in peoples' maturity and intelligence.

> With age, a person comes to understand many things. Therefore, very many who once shouted "Suitcase—train station—Russia!" on the central square, now complain that their children do not speak Russian at all. And this is bad. They think (albeit rather too late) how to teach them the Russian language because one does not know when in life it can come in handy. It is a trump card, an asset. If the government can apply it [giving the Russian language an official status], it will be able to unite society. The main problem is understanding why people leave Moldova. Because there is no unity and no mutual understanding. Therefore, children do not even try to stay here. Moldova is not attractive even for its own citizens. And, after that, do we still want to solve the problem with Transnistria?!... Moldova is not an attractive project for Transnistrians too.

Here is Ariadna's verbatim appeal "When there are scandals and showdowns in the country, no one wants to stay there, but if there is peace and harmony in society, and everyone will make a small concession, then we will easily find a way to exit the impasse. I have hope." This teacher points out the problems, but she is still optimistic. The teacher appeals directly to the sense of humanity, mutual understanding, compassion, sympathy, and willingness to compromise for all societal strata, cultural and ethnic groups, and political parties and believes that is possible. There is a slow upward climb toward inclusiveness, acceptance, and dialogue among social and cultural groups.

The study-subjects' views oscillate between "language as a right," "language as a resource," and "language as a problem/language as violence." The official language acquisition issue periodically reappears and creates resistance in communication, deepening the gap between the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities. Dragalina, a veteran urban teacher from the central part of Moldova stated:

> In the territory of the Republic of Moldova, we have several ethnic groups and the problem of spoken languages exists. In my capacity as a teacher, I always begin discussing this topic from the idea that, in the list of neo-Latin languages, the Moldovan language is not found, but the Romanian language is. Beyond that, whether we want it or not, in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, not only the Romanian language is spoken. Obviously, the discord around the name of our state language—'the Romanian'

or 'the Moldovan'—comes from the political area. If this problem would be resolved, up there once and for all, the disputes would end.

The teacher emphasizes the point that the concept 'the Moldova language' is a relic of the cold war, created in the times of I.V. Stalin. Its usage cannot longer be justified by the class struggle ideology as introduced artificially by the Soviet regime, calling for the Romanian identity, the Romanian language, and the Romanian/ European consciousness for the inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova.

Using the language issue as an excuse not to work together, in the guild capacity, might lead to failing to share great ideas about teaching and learning, which might generate more misunderstanding and mistrust. Mistrust and lack of respect are social indicators that point to the tensions and crisis in Moldovan system of education and larger society. Ecaterina, a Moldovan teacher from Northern part of Moldova, shared her opinion regarding this issue:

> When the speaker of another language is aggressive and asks insistently or naively to speak in his/her the language only, then an offense can occur, even a *reverse aggressive communication* from the interlocutor might happen. It can also get to skirmish. Everything depends on *the tone* of the discussion. If the person is trying to be civilized, saying, "Sorry, I didn't understand, can you repeat me, or explain, or translate, please?" then that is another matter. Knowing that language, why wouldn't I do that? But, if I am being brutally or naughtily demanding, then I might have a different reaction—refuse or stop communicating with that person. Everything comes from personal upbringing and internal culture.

Recognizing how little and superficially Moldovans interact with other ethnic and cultural groups, teachers acknowledged how defective the relations with our local "others" are. They also have a critical view toward history textbooks, qualifying them as being "bad in reflecting and promoting culture and cultural values of ethnic minorities" (Boris), among other flaws.

Aliona's story about the language issue brought a perspective of a minority ethnic teacher to the table:

> As for the language matter, it seems to me that under pressure nothing will ever work. If the Romanian language would be taught very well in *alolingual* schools, then our students will really graduate with great knowledge of the language. However, under

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pressure nothing works out. I have no habitat in the Romanian environment; that is why it is hard for me to speak the language. And speaking the language badly is not convenient for me, as an intellectual. It is a shame; it is inappropriate for me to say something wrong. Romanian is a compulsory subject matter in our schools. Without any doubts, we must learn it, but at the same time, it should provide the outcome—so one can go out and speak fluently, without a translator. The problem is that our students prefer to speak Russian because they do not master Romanian accordingly. And, when they are going to take a bachelors exam, they tremble like aspen leaves. Why should it be like this when they have been studying Romanian at school for eight years?!...

The teacher stipulated the flaws of the educational system toward the qualitative language education provided for minority students in schools with teaching in Russian. This is an impediment for further dialogue, socialization, participation, and collaboration between Moldovan students of different ethnicities.

Then, Aliona made a connection between the role of MAPE in erasing stereotypical views of *the others*:

I believe that the hatred and mistrust, prejudices, and bias, in our country are the legacy of the past, of what was once here. It was dishonest and unjust towards the indigenous population. I empathize with this a lot. Today, it is also happening with periodical influx and from both sides [Moldovans and ethnic minorities]. To end this tendency, we need to have a good education based on multiculturalism, a higher level of culture of each person. And then, they will be better prepared to face any provocation. When this understanding, there will not be hostility, rejection, and vigilance anymore among ordinary people.

The teacher criticized the ethnocisized dualistic thinking of Moldova's people that locates the roots of societal vices in the common history. She also pointed out the reverse hegemony, the change of oppressor: The Soviet/Russian oppression shifted toward the indigenous/Moldovan one. Thus, the teacher sounded skeptical about the quality of a culture of peace both inside and beyond the classroom, at promoting language and ethnic equity. This is a stone thrown into the field of peace education pedagogy, as a remedy in reducing structural and cultural violence. It is also a call for more just and embodied peace education praxis, which must be introduced by Moldovan educational authorities. This might help "transcend[s] the structural and cultural violence of the field" (Kester, 2019, p. 4).

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Study-participants pointed out the existing symbolic acknowledgement of our others (ethnic minorities co-citizens) instead of their genuine recognition. Teachers recognize that real acceptance and mutual respect lag far behind the ideal, having as essential impediment the language (ethnic minorities not mastering the state language) and identity issue (regarding oneself as one or another identity), unveiling people's lack of culture and tolerance; and the manifestations of disrespectful claims on ethno-cultural grounds happen at the household and everyday level, turning apparently innocent conversations into verbal violence.

The teachers also questioned Moldova's acclaimed democratic ideals—justice and equity for all [ethnic groups and languages], calling to end the non-democratic treatment and discrimination against minorities. Boris came up with a solution:

> We introduced the history and culture of the Gagauz and Bulgarian peoples in our school, so our kids do not forget their own history, traditions, and customs. It was our initiative to create such subject-matter, as well as to teach Gagauz and Bulgarian languages in schools, so we do not fail to speak our own language. Our kids' future begins with our people's (hi)story. Thus, the past is slowly failing into the present.

This teacher attached great value to the ethnic heritage of his students. The language, culture and history of ethnic groups are appreciated as key elements confirming the group distinctiveness and identity.

Yet, the ethnic minority teachers are proud that their students learn more languages, seeing this mostly as a reward and benefit. Boris stated with pride, "Our students learn in middle and high school four languages: Gagauz, Romanian, Russian, and English. Therefore, they are more competitive. Although this is a big burden on students." Here, the teacher emphasized the fact of language acquisition as a valued symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991). He also touched on the issue of failing to pass the final Romanian language exam by some ethnic minority students. This fact made their parents and ethnic communities unhappy, turning into anti-ethicist comments heard from politicians from all sides. The teachers considered these types of statements inappropriate, exclusionist, hateful, and discriminatory. Zlata argued, "Moldovan society remains deeply in its provincialism, prone to prejudices regarding other races, ethnicities, languages, religions, or sexual orientations. The hate discourse is a twisted, narrow, very dangerous thought for these times." The teacher suggested that we must embrace our common history, "setting it free from myths, incorporate ugly pages, and make it all-encompassing." This

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teacher articulated something that I have been pursuing personally for a long time—the challenging of our personal beliefs and biases, in favor of a more nuanced and complex understanding of the world around us.

After all, in Moldova there are clearly two parallel discourses, two cultures, two languages—Romanian and Russian, and, thus, two opposed worlds. The data shows that mastering the state Romanian language becomes a challenge and cultural barrier that disconnects teachers who belong to the same social studies association. Teachers who belong to the non-titular/dominant ethnic minorities often feel excluded from the conversation about curriculum and education. Moldovan educational authorities strive to balance the interests of the majority with those of the minority. However, often, minority teachers find themselves in a difficult situation—being dominated by the "*One way—my way*" approach (only one, only mine, Romanian language). Because of this, the ethnic minority teachers feel disarmed and deprived of sharing their narratives and equally participating in dialogue about educational issues. Moldovan teachers also suffer from lack of hearing experiences outside of their own stories and perspectives, which is in contradiction with the right of equal participation in a pluralistic democracy. Imposing one language use—the authentic Romanian—is devaluing the other languages and brings a disfavor to their colleagues and threatens to alienate them.

The data revealed that the main element that crystallizes the hatred and intolerance is language. The war of languages is the background of countries' cultural-identity malaise. The insistence for ethnic minorities to learn the state language is a huge part of Moldovan culture. Why does it bother Moldovans so much? Being rooted in a nation-state idea and narrative, this milieu dominates the scene. In this case multicultural education fails to erase the old habits and remains simply a *veneer* of diversity, when other cultural or ethnic groups are seemingly (re)presented but still marginalized.

The results indicate that all the participants acknowledged that a multicultural democratic society is best served by operating with a culturally responsive curriculum. However, there are some things/ aspects of multiculturalism that many teachers cannot openly teach their students—it might occur because it is in contradiction with teachers' own beliefs, values, aspirations, or philosophy, or it could be because teachers are not ready or do not feel free to make a radical change. I saw it clearly in an interview with Bogdan, an urban Romanian ethnic teacher. It is not that the teacher does not know how to be a 'culturally responsive' educator or that he refuses to

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embrace his students' different cultural backgrounds. If he will not include and "teach multiculturalism on purpose," he understands that "this might create strife and tension in class, school, and community" (Bogdan). However, he fails to acknowledge his own limits, trying to make someone else accountable—the state and the policymakers. This teacher realizes that multiculturalism can have a negative consequence too. He shares:

> Speaking of state policy—the state neglects the majority and encourages the minority, mainly the Slavic minorities. This led to our big national identity issue! We now have what we have. Moldovans do not know how to identify themselves correctly. Many Moldovans, in a too-large proportion, make the difference between calling themselves 'Moldovans' that is incorrect or 'Romanians', which is a correct way to say. (Bogdan)

The teacher argued that too much "multi" in the bouquet of cultural flavors is deteriorating the Moldovan/Romanian cultural fabric. When asked what he meant by "correct," the teacher answered without hesitation: "when both sides are equally presented and represented." Aha! Even though he has not openly acknowledged his chauvinistic stance, his beliefs are opinionated.

Despite the official status granted to the Moldovan language as a state language and the Russian language as a *lingua franca* in comparison with other minority languages, teachers do not manage to overcome the language barrier when it comes to working together with their peers and language continues to divide teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the research findings, grouped in five themes: Between Legacy and Choice: The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers; Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority; Balancing Between Civic and Global Approaches; Conflict of National/ Ethnic Identities; and Language Issues: Still an Apple of Discord. These themes that emerged from the teachers' narratives reveal that their understanding of teaching peace and multicultural education was shaped by their experiences of ethnic and linguistic nationalism and historical experiences of identity. The teachers' narratives show that a challenge of teaching multicultural and peace education in contemporary Moldovan secondary education social studies classes comes in part from the inconsistency between teachers' values, beliefs, moral sensitivity, and the social studies curriculum's directions and principles. Reflecting on their own perceptions of MAPE gives teachers a clearer insight on race, ethnicity, (im)migration, and national identity,

that arms them with proper tools to provide their students with a more reflective space in which they can try to make sense of their own multiple identities in relation to the other people's identities, considering the historical undercurrents. However, some teachers are still struggling to adopt a "normative balancing," between transferring their own values and perspective and praising communication of diverse perspectives. This means that teachers did not perceive all perspectives as equally valid or politically desirable, thus showing their own limitations in terms of multiculturalism and multiperspectivity. Some teachers still do not realize the fact that the multicultural and multiethnic societal problems are not to be viewed and dealt in isolation, but in interconnectedness and addressed collectively, with recognition, compassion, empathy, respect of the others. These aspects will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 - MAPE ASPECTS: WHAT IS TAUGHT AND WHAT IS LEFT BEHIND?

For many teachers, the conscious maturing of multicultural skills through learning to connect and communicate with people of different ethnic and cultural groups evolved into ideas of multiculturalism as a personal brand of educational philosophy. However, there are still some aspects of MAPE that are omitted or ignored by some teachers. This chapter centers on the last research question: If teachers do not think they teach Multicultural Approaches to Peace Education (MAPE), what are those aspects, why do they think they do not teach them and what do they think are the barriers and obstacles to such practice?

The Moldova social studies teachers reported that they often avoided teaching some aspects of diversity and multiculturalism in their classes for many reasons, including: feeling personal discomfort, ethical and moral sensitivity, lack of expertise and professional preparation, lack of resources about the topic, and concern about political implications of the curriculum. Central among these issues, and discussed in this chapter, are four topics: LGBTQ, general sexuality issues, the perception/inclusion of ethnic minorities with a special concern about the topic of the Romani people, and political abuse of history education curriculum by different political actors. "Political abuse," or bias, is a common theme, and it happens in many countries. But in the case of the RM, by "political abuse" I refer to ideological biases in the interpretation of the curriculum, meaning the subtitle or direct control of the curriculum by diverse political forces being in power, which happened widely during the last 3 decades. Teachers teach history in a biased way because the government tells them to do that through the curriculum approval process.

Scholars define 'political abuse' as politically irresponsible, deceptive, or negligent behavior (Da Baets, 2013, abstract; Ferro, 2003). Accordingly, political abuse in history teaching is the nonscientific and biased method of instruction and curriculum. (Da Baets, 2013). (Da Baets, 2013, abstract; Ferro, 2003; Da Baets, 2013). In the RM, "political abuse" in education means the way in which the national government influences the standard curriculum by inserting biased historical interpretations into the standard curriculum. In addition to these curricular biases, teachers are subject to their own political and cultural biases because of their own educations and living in a politically turbulent society.

This chapter was structured around teachers' narratives around their struggles with teaching these four topics: LGBTQ, general sexuality issues, the perception/inclusion of ethnic minorities with a special concern about the topic of the Romani people, and political abuse of history education curriculum by different political actors.

a. LGBTQ: "No room" for it in Social Studies curricula

Teachers stated that they are reticent to teach some aspects of multiculturalism and diversity, explaining why. They draw clear distinctions among patterns of differentiality such as ethnicity/race, language, gender, class, religion, and sexual orientation. Thus, the most excluded facet of diversity from both the curricula and classrooms are topics around Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) identities. Most of the teachers are still in the stage of negotiating their way to this topic. On one hand, all teachers stated in chorus that they "permanently emphasize in [their] classes that all nations and ethnicities must live in peace and reciprocal respect" and they "do not have any obstacles in teaching multiculturalism and cultural diversity in schools." On the other hand, teachers can (consciously or unconsciously) make exceptions to the norm/rule, proving their bias and intolerance, thus leaving the LGBTQ topic far behind. Mariana said:

> Teaching multiculturalism is a norm in our school. As for other cultures, subcultures, or microcultures, we do not have such ardent statements or contradictions on the part of the students; they perceive this as a given that is today. Besides one—they do not perceive and stand the topic of sexual minorities. For them, this is not acceptable, a categorical rejection. I explain to them that these people are not to blame, it is natural, and you should accept it. But there is strong resistance on their part. We are trying, but it does not work out a bit here yet.

Some teachers think that the experience of excluding sexual minorities from the general picture is also a legacy of Soviet education. Marilena recalls that the Soviet sex(uality) education can be comprised in three popular slogans of those times: 'Moral virtue as protection against any social vice,' 'there is no sex in the USSR,' and 'homosexuality exists only in putrefying capitalism.' Being an LGBTQ member was considered an illness or a consequence of other circumstances (such as being in prison). The Soviet education stressed that LGBTQ is another vestige of capitalism. Similarly, sex education was aimed at combating the bourgeois deviations and controlling the early development of adolescents' sexual instincts.

By contextualizing their experiences of, and the evolution of attitudes toward, sexual minorities, teachers accept the fact that LGBTQ people were and still are oppressed, just as much as people with disabilities. Florin argued:

> Living on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain was difficult for many minorities, especially for sexual ones. Many of us were blinded by the ruling ideas of that era, so we did not properly see and understand many things. Unfortunately, the lingering effects of this type of inequality persist today.

This teacher used critical thinking to reflect on his own biases and prejudices and how they lead to discrimination of the other. This critical framework provides teachers a platform to come to the ideas of fairness and construction of what is seen as normal and abnormal by the dominant culture and ideology. Thus, critical thinking helps teachers link their reflections to knowledge construction and knowledge brokerage. Tackling the topic of curriculum formation, teachers can see how power, politics, privilege, and oppression in knowledge construction are in relation to various minoritized social groups.

However, not all study-participants had an open-minded stance. Paşa, a veteran teacher from the southern part of Moldova, shared her cultural assumptions in an uncompromising way:

> I do not recall any nationalist incidents occurring in our school and community during my 40 years of teaching experience. We do not have cases when someone extols one nation or infringes upon another or one language on another. We participate and organize different festivals where our students can share and learn about their and other people's culture and traditions. All people are equal. But…we do not accept gays. How can we accept them? They have no other problems, just acting idle and stupid. The constant marches [pride parades] of *these* sexual minorities insult us personally, the Bulgarian people.

This vignette shows that even though the teacher tries hard to embrace tolerance, she has her limits beyond which she cannot go. The teacher does not question her bias at all; it is a gesture toward her moral rigor. Her affirmation is quite dehumanizing, not giving proper credit to this particular social group, construing it only based on her personal beliefs rather than humanistic, moral, ethical, or social justice values. Thus, imposing her own beliefs and conceptions of justice, the teacher supports the conventional perception of LGBTQ people.

This narrative invites few questions: do teachers accept only some aspects of diversity (such as ethnicity)? Why they fail to accept the LGBTQ community as equal members of their community? In this case the findings illuminate discrepancies between teachers' statements and feelings: accepting the fact that "all people are equal" but rejecting certain subcultures and groups as fully equal and rightful. This teacher promotes inadequate sexual equity, rather she boosts inequality. The teacher acts as a gatekeeper and censor, privileging one group (heterosexual centricity) and disadvantaging others (homosexuality). Paşa addressed LGBTQ people from a place of narrow cultural relativism. Her assumptions grew from her own culture, values, and beliefs. Her pedagogy leaves some social groups at the periphery of curriculum and classroom, forming a distorted value system for her students, which might distort students' definitions of justice and equality, downplaying them. By shutting down alternative ways of being and knowing, Paşa promotes the hegemonic/selective view on diversity and tolerance. Her line of argument shows the relevance of the role of all multicultural factors and aspects in social studies classrooms. It is not the difference that separates us, but the refusal of acknowledging it and misnaming *the other*. Even teachers have a mandate to emphasize inclusiveness and anti-oppression and think they host good intentions, yet sometimes they bring negative attitudes to the entire cause of education.

In contrast, other study-participants acknowledged their fears, also trying to find ways to overcome their resistance in dealing with delicate topics. In providing reasons to teach diversity issues, some teachers claimed the need to teach about nontraditional sexual minorities. This fact suggests the humanistic multicultural mindset of those teachers. Thus, Rucsanda, a young teacher, argued:

> Everyone has a right to embrace the identity they choose. Nobody has a right to restrict someone else's rights. We must respect everybody not based on his/her ability to fit into the boxes or adopt the belief systems of the dominant culture [including faith], but because we are all human and we all deserve to live a full happy life on this planet. We must teach this pedagogy from early years.

This teacher applies the key-concepts of the field to prove that educating youth in empathy and respect for human rights is significant. By teaching about this topic, the teacher contributes to eradicating her personal bias as well as her students' bias at both the individual (sexual prejudice) and society-wide (heterosexism) levels.

The teachers' testimonials about personal limits and their willingness to learn from students gives hope that we are on the right track to have classrooms that are more inclusive. Rucsanda shared her insights:

> We all must accept each other, starting from the prerequisite of general human values. Thus, 'life' is one of the most important human values and rights, as well as 'peace and 'tolerance'. Therefore, we must accept each one, regardless of race, spoken language, or eye color. Starting with this premise, why should I not accept a homosexual person.... I do not think that, for the choice he/she made, he/she must be marginalized, ostracized, or I cannot talk to him/her in the street or if I have him/her in my circle of friends or in the same collective. We are all Humans. Moreover, we all have the same rights.… I plead for helping each person to integrate into our society.

The teacher's language of "choice" in this regard also reveals a bias/prejudice that would no doubt have an impact on teaching. The teacher points to the early stages of educating young and older adults to address their hate and biases.

The interviewed teachers explained that intellectualizing and teaching sexual identity aspects is more complicated than other multicultural subjects because teachers must deal with children coming from a slightly more conservative environment, from families with patriarchal principles. Zlata argued that at home students "are exposed to ugly talk about sexual minorities, and it is very hard to break those clichés and stereotypes." To overcame this and challenge preconceived biases, she uses a *Get out of the box/Thinking outside the box* activity. "Through this I provoke my students to reexamine their assumptions and come with innovative solutions to the case study. It helps them to get out of their [outdated] mindset" (Zlata).

While teaching this topic, some teachers use examples of notable historic and cultural figures of non-traditional sexual orientations who have made great contributions to changing the world. By doing this they demonstrate how valuable people from world and national history have done a lot in every branch of culture and science "without harming anyone (such as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Chekhov, etc.)" (Zlata), regardless of the degree of inclusiveness, acceptance, and public support in their era. Thus, the teacher fights against the prejudice toward sexual minorities rooted in socially constructed sexual stigma using the method of comparison and makes students compare famous LGBTQ people with those who have "declared themselves great connoisseurs and followers of Christian values

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and traditionalists in terms of democratic principles and sexual orientation" who have done many "destructive things for society (such as Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and many others, including current political figures)" (Zlata).

Other teachers overcome their discomfort when approaching this aspect of diversity by inviting experts or Youth NGO members to speak to their classes. Dragoş shared his experience in this regard:

When we talk about Sexual Diversity, I invite trainers from Y-Peer [NGO], and they talked about LGBT and these taboo things. After the presentation, the children draw their own conclusions. Some have stated that LGBT people must be tolerated, while others believe that we must treat LGBT individuals with lenience [indulgence]. Therefore, we must have a discussion with reference to students' own measure of *tolerance* or *leniency*. If we do not discuss it, if we avoid it, it remains misunderstood and leads to hatred, contempt, and violence. If we teach students to talk in a peaceful way about it in class, then, being on the street, they will certainly follow this example. (Dragoş)

The teacher gave his students a chance to learn from their peers and to think, to conclude, for themselves.

Florin's story shows the teacher's acknowledgment of his own limits and his willingness to learn from his students, to be more open-minded:

I admit that, as a teacher, as an adult person, I can have some reservations about sexual minorities (LGBTQ), because in Moldova we do not have a culture and adequate training [on this topic]. I admire how students very naturally discuss it, through in- and out of-class projects, research, scientific communications, where they analyze certain experiences. I have noticed that they have a very open attitude. Personally, I am not ready to understand and accept LGBTQ people. However, looking at our young people, I find that they are much more open-minded than us, the adults. I let them teach this topic. Thus, the youth change us and our obsolete mentality, which comes from the historical contours we lived in and from the [conservative, patriarchal] society, we come from.

The teacher's reflection pointed out his personal feelings of discomfort as well as new possibilities that emerged—co-teaching with his more open-minded students, thus applying MAPE to context. This is a better choice than working quietly as during past years, behind closed doors, and teaching just traditional comfortable acceptable topics. The teacher's new

improvisational approach is a brave alternative that brings social change and personal growth at the same time. It is an affective and effective MAPE implementation.

Teachers' personal limitations can lead to pigeonholing and, thus, contribute to even greater stereotyping of LGBTQ persons. Instead of pushing the need to learn more about how to teach this area of diversity in a natural informative way, providing students with information about them, they can fall into the trap of denying the very right of existence of 'the exotic others.' It is not the purview of social studies teachers to be judgmental about the past and biased toward different cultural groups. The subject continues to be one of the most uncomfortable topics in teaching multicultural education, which makes teachers "forget" and avoid it. The teachers still equivocate on teaching about sexuality and LGBTQ people. Teachers still find difficulties seeing how those who have been labeled as "the sexual minority other," continually being viewed as less valued citizens, must fit into mainstream education. In the range of common societal anxieties, these delicate themes: LGBTQ and sexuality, which will be discussed in the next section, remain taboo, both in society and school. Teachers must come to an understanding that the youths' safety and physical and mental health are more important than the discomfort of teaching and openly discussing these themes.

b. General sexuality: An inconvenient topic to be discussed in [civics] classes

The first attempt to introduce sex education in Moldovan schools was in 2005, when *The Life Skills* school discipline was included in the socio-humanities school curriculum. This school subject was an attempt to initiate young people into the issues of puberty, sexual life, STDs, the dangers of drugs or tobacco, and other topics related to health (Training Life Skills for Preventing Human Beings Trafficking Guide*, 2004*). The reaction of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Christian organizations was very harsh; they criticized this course and asked to exclude it from the school program, labeling the course as pagan and as a propaganda. As a result, the discipline ended up on the list of elective courses. However, since 2005, the share of young people with complex knowledge about HIV and access to health education has dropped from 40.5% to about 32% (in 2013) (Educația pentru sănătate, UNFPA Moldova webpage, n.p.). Harshly criticized was the children's book *Sex told to the little ones* (2004); while some stated that such a book is necessary for the development of children, others condemned it and cataloged

it as pornography. Subsequently, sexual education in Moldova became a taboo subject in schools.

In January 2012, an alternative elective course called *Health Education* was introduced and approved by the National Council for Curriculum. According to the *Health Education* curriculum, 5th and 6th grade students are to learn about body changes during puberty, sexual hygiene, and reproduction topics. In 7th-9th grades students discover the consequences of early sexual life, the biorhythm of the female and male body, the consequences of pregnancy in puberty, and STDs. High school students explore how to maintain a healthy relationship between partners, the legal aspects of sexuality, and social-physical influences on the expression of sexuality (Gaţcan, 2017, n.p.). *Health Education* is taught to students on request. In the 2018-2019 academic year, over 19,000 adolescents have requested to learn this discipline, which accounts for only 10% of the total number of adolescents (Parteneriate Pentru Fiecare Copil [Partnership for Every Child], 2019, n.p.). As a result, the "*Health Education—My Right, My Choice*" campaign was launched in the spring of 2018. It aims to educate the public about adolescents' health risks and the need for health schooling in educational institutions. Moldova's Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research, with the support of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA, 2019), began providing quality health education at the secondary education level. Especially when parents are abroad or young people are far from family, the role of the educational institution is extremely important to provide knowledge and skills to help them stay alive (UNFPA, 2019). The recent Civic Education and Education for Society curricula do not shy away from these sensitive topics. However, many teachers still grapple with the challenge of teaching these aspects.

Some study-participants shared their experiences. Cristina's narrative is persuasive, unveiling the parents' lack of involvement in this delicate endeavor:

Often, during sexual education classes, discussing the topics of relationships between girls and boys, after looking into students' eyes, seeing their reaction, I realize that nobody talks at home about this with them. Usually, mama thinks her 14-year-old daughter is still too young, and daddy has a psychological discomfort, or…he is not home, or both parents do not know how to approach the subject. As a teacher, when I meet the parents, I draw their attention to the fact that their children are not babies

anymore, that they may already know more that parents think they know. Students understand and receive these topics naturally, as mature people.

This teacher believes that parents' approach to avoiding discussing sexual reproduction topics is unacceptable. She points out the school is a singular provider in giving quality health education to students, otherwise "they will learn about this in a vulgar way from the street, on social networks, or the internet" (Cristina). The teacher shared one eloquent example:

> We have an example when a girl gave birth at the age of 12. Bam! Anyway, even after that, parents are still afraid to touch subjects of sexuality. They remain taboo in the family. I often notice, at the teacher-parents' meetings, even between us, adults, the parents lower their gaze when we discuss these topics. I conduct these conversations carefully, from soul to soul.

Teachers' concerns are supported by alarming statistics: According to the National Bureau of Statistics,

> In 2016 there were born 1625 children whose mothers were under the age of 18, and in 2015 were born 1579 children whose mothers were minors. In 2016, 202 young people between the ages of 16-19 became fathers, and in 2015 the number of young fathers was 281. Voluntary termination of pregnancy, or abortion, is another topic of concern for society. Official statistics show that approximately 15 thousand tasks are interrupted annually in the Republic of Moldova. In 2016, 912 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 have aborted, in 2015 they have aborted 983 girls, and in 2014 this figure has passed by one thousand. In the Republic of Moldova abortions are registered in the case of girls under 15 years. Thus, in 2016 10 girls under the age of 15 were aborted, in 2015 - 8 persons, and in 2014 - 4 minors. (Gațcan, 2017, n.p.)

Thus, the questions of how and who must guide teenagers through the sexual wilderness in educational settings remain vital. Some teachers do not feel that they are qualified or properly trained for that work. In this case, the schools often invite experts to offer quality and accurate information on these topics. There are many public awareness events and actions that aim to promote health education in Moldova. The teachers and students often invite Youth and Health NGOs (Y-Peer, Youth Friendly Health Center, The Adolescent, etc.) to work together on disseminating health education among Moldova's adolescents. Another method of delivering sexual/health education in school is inviting medical stuff. They (co-)teach about pregnancy,

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contraception, STDs, consent, sexual behavior (safe sex practices), etc. as a part of a "pro-life" education module. These trainings on the sensitive topic of sexual and reproductive health are offered in gender-separate classes. As a compromise, some schools collaborate with religious "pro-life" NGOs and faith-based organizations that teach to abstinence-only (sex-)education.

c. The perception and inclusion of ethnic minorities: The case of the Roma(ni) people

Since 2000, diverse European non-governmental organizations, such as EUROCLIO, the Georg Eckert Institute, Council of Europe (Pestalozzi Program), and the Körber Foundation, in tight collaboration with Moldovan Ministry of Education and historical associations (ANTIM – ANTIM - National Association of Young Historians of Moldova), have periodically organized conferences, workshops, and seminars for continuing education for history teachers (including Moldovan educators). The trainings were concerning diverse topics such as women's history, the history of daily life, teaching history in a changing world, and the position of minorities in national history. Thus, in 2002, the first seminar on teaching history was organized by representatives of the Association of History Teachers of Europe (EUROCLIO) in Moldova and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. After the seminar, the Council of Europe published its recommendations. Starting from the acute concern that the school must do more to prepare young people for a life in a world characterized by ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, such trainings happened regularly. Reference works have been translated and published in Romanian and Russian languages by The Council of Europe and by Moldova or Romani publishing houses. Among them are: *Intercultural Dialogue and the Image of the Other in Teaching History* (Council of Europe, 2011); *History Teaching in Conflict and Post/conflict Areas* (Keaveney, 2009), *Recommendation Rec(2001)15 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on History Teaching in Twenty-First-Century Europe* (2001), *Crossroads of European Histories* (Council of Europe, 2009), as well as Robert Stradling's (2003) work, *Multiperspectivitatea în Predarea Istoriei: Un Ghid Pentru Profesori* [*Multi-perspectivity in Teaching History: A Guide for Teachers*]. All of them are available for free on the Council of Europe site. All of them in unison recommend revisiting the unilateral approach of history from the perspective of ethnocentric identities. The approach of shared histories and multiple perspectives of non-political aspects of history is recommended. It allows the deconstruction of

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stereotypes, myths regarding identities, and negative visions about the other, and this can lead to intercultural dialogue and a possible transformation of conflict.

In 2013, the Moldovan government appointed the *Council to Ensure Equality*, as the main national mechanism to combat discrimination, ensure equality, and develop pluralism in the country. International organizations confirm and support the progress made by the Moldovan authorities on reforms undertaken in "fighting against ill-treatment and impunity, protecting the rights of persons belonging to minorities and anti-discrimination" (Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2017-2020, 2017, p. 9). The program emphasizes trust-building measures, such as: "strengthening cooperation between education professionals, on both banks of the Dniester, especially with regard to teaching methods in the field of languages, intercultural communication, and promoting the competency-based approach in education" (p. 22). Priority areas for cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and the Council of Europe are:

> promoting human rights education/education for democratic citizenship through official educational and youth activities; promoting cultural heritage; increasing social cohesion and democratic participation in society; and promoting equal opportunities for vulnerable groups (with emphasis on women, children, and young people). (p. 9)

In 2016, the Moldovan government issued an action plan to support the Roma population for 2016-2020, in which the promotion and integration of the Roma(ni) people are declared as "a priority of the Government, which has assumed, in the medium term, the improvement of the Roma population situation in the Republic of Moldova" (Republica Moldova [Republic of Moldova], 2016, n.p.). It recommends "the elaboration of yearly action plans at the local level," as well as the allocation of necessary "financial resources in the budget" (n.p.). At the same time, the government assumes that "the recent financial crisis and constraints prevent the implementation of similar long-term action plans" (n.p.). The document stated that "raising the standard of living, creating a friendly social environment for all citizens of the Republic of Moldova, but especially for those living on the outskirts of society," is a natural yearning, thus, proposing the creation of conditions necessary for the preservation and transmission of cultural values of the Roma people (n.p.). Also, the Government of Moldova is pursuing the implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), adopted in 2016. The report mentions that "there are no reliable data on hate

speech and hate violence yet," while acknowledging that the presence of "racist and intolerant hate speech in public discourse is growing; the main targets are LGBTQ people, the Roma community, and communities of color" (ECRI, 2018, p. 8). The report then states that "national strategies regarding the Roma have not been fully implemented" (ECRI, 2018, p. 10), and it also stipulates various causes of the low enrollment rate of Roma children in all stages of education. For example, in 2013 only 21% of Roma children attended pre-school education (compared to 79% of the general population) (ECRI, 2018, p. 26). While in the same year this rate increased to 54% of Roma children attending primary school (compared to 90% of the general population) and reached 16% in middle school (compared with 78% of the general population) (ECRI, 2018 citing UNDP Report, 2013, p. 14). The obstacles that contribute to the phenomenon of early school abandonment include widespread poverty, the hidden costs of education, problems related to school transport in rural areas, and the persistence of poor-quality education for Roma children (ECRI, 2018, p. 29). School drop-out rates among Roma students are still high in RM.

In 2016, also with the assertion of the Council of Europe, the Moldovan educational authorities included in the school curricula topics related to the Holocaust against Jews and Roma people. As a curricular outcome, the increased awareness of young people derived from the memory of the Holocaust is expected, regarding the need to prevent all forms of discrimination against any cultural groups and minorities. According to Ion Duminica (2012) (the leading Romanilogist in Moldova, the Head of the "Ethnic Minorities" Section, Ethnology Center, Cultural Heritage Institute, under the aegis of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova), the number of nomadic Roma expected to be deported by Romanian authorities to Transnistria was estimated at 11,441 people (p.11). However, the total number of Gypsies deported to Transnistria between June 1942 and December 1943 is estimated to be around 25,000, including nomadic Roma, sedentary Roma, and "recidivist Roma" released from prison in June-September 1942. (Duminica, 2012, p. 12).

More than for 500 years, the Roma(ni) people—a community with a unique culture and contorted history—were established on the territory of Moldova, living practically in each locality (both villages and towns). The first documentary attestation of the Roma(ni) in the Danube Principalities, takes place on 1385, October 3 (in Valahia) and 1414 (in Moldova) (Duminica, 2020, p. 5). Most of the Moldovan population has some knowledge about this ethnic minority, in relation to other cohabiting ethnic groups. Often, the information about Roma is

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inaccurate or false, often marked by preconceived negative assumptions and prejudices. Historians, scientists, or ordinary people rarely decide to approach them and find out the objective reality; the Romani (Gypsiology) studies in Moldova were institutionalized merely in 2004 (Duminica, 2020, p. 1). Throughout the ages, Roma people's experience has often been marginalized or written out of history textbooks altogether in many countries, facing racial, social, and political attitudes. Roma(ni) people are one of the most discriminated ethnic minorities in Europe. Moldova is not an exception. Just recently, both Moldovan authorities and society began to make a genuine effort to hear Roma voices. The new school history curriculum suggests teaching Roma history, especially the forgotten Roma Holocaust. However, study-participants reveal that it is not enough to give the full recognition that the Roma people deserve.

Teachers believe that Roma people themselves must be allowed to tell their own history. Dimitrie, a veteran teacher from the Northern part of Moldova, stated:

> We must let Roma(ni) people tell us how they perceive their history. As a history teacher I am curious how they uncover their legacies and identity and how it has changed through different history epochs. They must tell us their story, not us. How is it to live in Moldova as a Roma(ni)? How is the Roma(ni)'s life in the interwar period? How was it in postwar communist Soviet Moldova, in current RM? This will help us enormously in mutual understanding. Then, it will contribute to eradicating our prejudice and biases about Roma(ni), which are still a common thing in Moldova.

Thus, this teacher links the learning and teaching about the others to the issue of control and power over who must write the history. Dimitrie stipulates the importance of asking Roma themselves to tell us their perspective, their version and understanding of the past. This must include far past and current events, as well as recent social changes.

While teaching about ethnic minorities, even with a great lack of educational material, teachers try to include them in historical context and show their importance of collective efforts to the progress of this country. Study-participants recognized how often common people, including teachers themselves, make unconscious, offhand, insensitive comments and hurtful remarks. Doing so, they do not realize how their preconceived assumptions about other ethnicities or cultural groups may increase ethnic disparities in their communities and in society at large. Eliza emphasized the role of living together in same community as a medium to better understanding of *the other*:

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Only through direct interacting with Gagauzians [and Roma], living with them side by side in the community, getting to know them better, I discovered the real them. I understood that they are people like all people. I understand that there is no "bad nation/ [ethnicity]" and "good nation/[ethnicity]," but rather, there are good and less good people. This is the school of life. I must pass on this lesson and show it to others—my students and colleagues.

This teacher acknowledges a crucial aspect of MAPE: learning about *the other* by interacting and discovering the sameness and humanity in them. She also sees the process of passing this knowledge to others as her mission as a teacher, citizen, and agent of change. This attitude will lead to better understanding within and between communities.

The scarcity of resources about the "our ethnic others" (Dimitrie) is claimed by teachers to be the main obstacle that impedes innovative, inclusive teaching. The scarcity of resources does not allow the individualization of ethnic minorities, their heroes' stories, thus, obscuring the contribution of many ethnic minority people. Letting minorities write their history and positioning themselves in the history curriculum is a recent trend. Though it appears to be a transformative piece for larger societal change, which might lead to an improved social atmosphere/environment, it is still difficult. There is a lack of academics and professional history textbook writers among the Roma people, and creating "History of X, Y, Z people" textbooks as independent school subjects may benefit the ethnic minority groups but still disadvantages them. Thus, Moldovan education still leaves certain ethnicities at the periphery of history education, ignoring their contributions to Moldova's history and progress. This is a form of social injustice, which leads to deeper isolation and resistance of ethnic minority communities.

Even though the multicultural pluralistic approach applies to all local ethnicities, languages, and cultures, Moldovan society still perceives the Roma people as second-class, low prestige, thus, continuing their stigmatization. The teachers' insights about the integration of Roma students express their concerns related to coexistence and social harmony. It may be that minorities tend to segregate themselves based on ethnic consciousness based on the pre-existing historic patterns of discrimination; teachers acknowledge the historical oppression of Roma people. However, the teachers often remarked on self-imposed separateness and social distancing of Roma people. Cristina stated: "Even school and civic society implement various projects regarding the inclusion of Roma in society; they are still detached, self-isolated. That is why the

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integration of Roma people into society is difficult." However, teachers admit that changes are difficult but possible. Cristina argued:

> I try my best in building bridges between the ethnicities here, in my town. Especially I work on helping "us" and "them" [the Roma people] open-up to each other and communicate. Beginning a dialogue with the rest of the population is important because we want the world to know them *in all their beauty*.

The teacher points to the fact that what all non-Roma people of Moldova know about the Roma people is not necessarily nice, positive, and attractive. Cristina continued:

> We do know anything beautiful about Roma(ni). We have too many negative feelings and stories about them because living with them in the same community is sometimes…difficult. They have locked themselves in their world, in their neighborhood, and do not interfere too much with the outside world. I have the impression that they do it intentionally, often playing the victim role. They frequently complain, "We are treated like this," "You do not respect us," "We're putting up obstacles," "We are not allowed to express ourselves," "No one wants to hire us to work," etc.

Despite blaming the Roma, the teacher sees that there are other "positive" examples to "re-educate" and integrate Roma students. Cristina explained:

> Once a town councilor came to school to defend the rights of the Roma children. He accused the school administration of pushing away Roma children, insulating and marginalizing them, not creating proper conditions for their integration in the school community. Many non-Roma students refuse to communicate or even sit at the same desk with them. As a response, the Deputy Director invited the counselor to an ordinary class, in order to show the real situation. In that class, there were many Roma children, all from underprivileged families. They smelled bad, are unwashed, wrinkled, disheveled, unkempt, etc., come to school in not fresh clean clothes, unhealthy, dirty, filthy, miserable. Then, the Deputy Director directly asked the town counselor: "Tell me, please, would you like your own child to sit at the desk next to 'these' Roma kids?" … Shortly after this case, the change took place: the very next day, all those Roma children came to school properly dressed, washed, cleaned, and ironed. Conclusion: If we really want it, it can be fixed. Where there is a will there is a way.

This anecdotal vignette indicates how stigmatic harm is often willingly-unwillingly done to Roma children in Moldovan classrooms. The role of teachers is to mitigate that harm. The above vignette shows that what is theoretically accepted or what is theoretically "good" and "tolerant" is not always what is personally accepted. The challenge is to find a way for the theory of diversity/acceptance to meet reality. Change in a bubble in isolation is not always possible. We are a part of a community that is isolated from others. The teachers must attempt to treat this issue with the nuance and delicacy it deserves, thinking through complications from their position as educators with knowledge of different theories.

Unfortunately, in the Republic of Moldova, there are not any schools only for Roma children, teaching in their language or in any other language chosen by them. Ecaterina, a teacher from the northern part of Moldova, shared her experience.

> Working concomitantly in two schools—in an urban high school and in a mixed village secondary school, teaching in both Russian and Romanian languages, I have noticed that in both institutions, each class has at least one or two representatives of the Roma ethnic group. However, I have never encountered labeling situations among students, such as: "You are Roma and, therefore, I will not talk to you," or that someone would talk ugly things about someone else because he/she is Roma.

Additionally, Ecaterina claimed:

> The Roma are very fond of their traditions. For example, girls get married in grades 5-6; if they reach the 7th grade and are unmarried, in the conception of Roma people, they are spinsters. Thus, few Roma children continue education in middle school and only units in high school… Yes, we must understand and respect their culture and traditions. Yet, we must continue to convey the idea of the need of education and its impact on their lives.

The teacher's narrative points out to the need to find a new way to teach multiculturalism—the first step is understanding and recognizing the other by seeing them in the whole picture. The exclusion of any ethnic minority group is a manifestation of non-recognition. The lack of unconditional recognition is palpable to every ethnic, social, or cultural minority group member. Yet, such aspects of diversity as gender, ethnicity, race, or sexuality appear to affect the teachers' practical positioning of themselves toward the curriculum and the way they teach MAPE. Thus, MAPE is for some teachers a "pedagogy of discomfort" (Zembylas, 2018).

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However, it is important to note that many teachers deliberately stand up for the rights of all ethnic groups that live in the community and larger society. The teachers see the dilemma of MAPE, but not only the problem part of it. They see the solution too. Ecaterina argued:

> On the one hand, we want to teach multiculturalism—this means accepting people from other cultures with all their traditions and customs, in one case, Roma people and the custom of marrying their girls at an early age. On the other hand, we have educational laws; we have compulsory secondary education and compulsory high school education (from 2014) for all students of Moldova. How do we reconcile multiculturalism with reality here? We cannot go against the traditions of this people, traditions formed over centuries. We cannot destroy them, nor do we have the moral or legal right to do so. We must try to understand, to accept the situation, for this moment. At the same time, we must show them the benefits of education in the 21st century, in an ever-changing world, especially for girls.

By advocating for all ethnic members of the community, including Roma, Moldovan, Russian, and Gagauz, teachers serve as role models for youth: active, nondiscriminatory, democratic citizens and community builders.

Eliza provided one example of how school colleagues and the entire community unanimously support her in her multicultural endeavor:

> Slowly, the Gagauz teachers also understood that they had to deal with prejudice and discrimination, because everyone suffers! They understood that we must make a common front—teachers of all ethnicities—in the fight over hatred and the fear of *the other*, in the struggle against perpetuating stereotypes and societal prejudices. Finally, our city— Vulcanesti—has established a partnership with a city in Romania. Now, Vulcanesti and Darmanesti are sister-cities. Who could have imagined that five years ago? Our mayor is a Gagauz ethnic, but he understood the need and the advantages. He worked extensively with the City Council (formed almost entirely by Gagauz), convincing each counselor of the benefits of this twinning. Then, we went further—we made a similar partnership with a city in Bulgaria. Often, we make reciprocal visits. All these have contributed even more to the elimination of stereotypes and prejudices on both sides.

Eliza's story shows that, even living in a society imbued in a legacy of systemic bias and the fear of being accused of moving too far right or left (too pro-Romania, pro-EU, or pro-minority), the

teachers do not see social rejection, rather the opposite. These prejudices could not be erased for a long time due to the lack of opportunities to travel, meet, and openly dialogue with people from other neighboring countries. The Iron Curtain and then the strict EU and US visa regimes for Moldovan citizens caused the perpetuation and maintenance of these biases. Thus, teachers must go beyond their classrooms in building cultural dialogue, reconciliation, recognition, understanding, and mutual trust between peoples. It led to learning the art of living together as equals and with dignity.

Most study-participants, both the representatives of majoritarian ethnicity and of minorities, mentioned the overloaded program as a reason for the absence of topics related to ethnic minorities. Aliona, an urban Russian ethnic teacher, argues:

These themes do not exist at all. The history of minorities that lived on the territory of Moldova from time immemorial—are not studied or are covered superficially in our schools. When we study the culture of different nations or ethnic groups, we usually go to the museum.

Cristina, a Moldovan ethnic teacher from the northern part of Moldova, shared her insight about the scarce representation of ethnic minorities in history curriculum and textbooks:

Unfortunately, at school we did not learn enough about the history of culture and civilization, but the political history. We teach many political units and very few economic, social, cultural, or minority ethnic history topics (Bulgarians, Gagauz, Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Roma). It would be normal to do this. Because they also live here, in the Republic of Moldova. On the one hand, I understand them [ethnic minorities] when they are unhappy, because they do not find themselves on the pages of our textbooks, or if they are mentioned there, it is in an unfavorable light. However, because political history has captured so much space, it simply does not leave room for themes that would have been more interesting to students. Doing so, they would learn to know each other better, and therefore, the fear of the other would disappear. A 45 minutes-long lesson on culture is not enough to cover all its aspects. I think the solution is this: by shrinking and juggling some subjects, we could find space for those topics that would help to teach about acceptance and diversity.

Study-participants unanimously pled for building new social studies curricula by infusing more pages of ethnic and cultural minorities' history and knowledge across all subjects and

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grades. However, the public vitriol and intolerance toward some groups and subcultures is still in play, which shows one of the limits of MAPE. Tolerance and inclusion, the degree of accepting diversity, is always a *relative matter.* The social factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, educational background, class, ability/disability, sexual orientation, that intrinsically are the main features of MAPE *per se*, the basic areas that need to be addressed in schools, are, at the same time, powerful influences on what teachers teach and how they make their decisions about curriculum and pedagogy. No single factor is the ultimate key. Multiple teachers' attitudes and beliefs, values, and educational philosophies informed them and, thus, complicate their professional and social actions, which vary over time. However, teachers experience the tensions, exploring different trends, interpretations, and meanings of the myths they must teach. They oscillate between the dominant, negotiated, and oppositional meanings of multiculturalism.

Teachers, as any other members of society, identify themselves with various social identifiers or -isms. Some personal values and beliefs depict moral obsolescence. How does one proactively, conceptually, professionally, religiously engage the simultaneous existence of a professed commitment to equality and liberty alongside the fact that they literally do not digest *the other*—those with whom they otherwise share the polity? On one hand the teachers admit the freedom and autonomy to make curriculum changes, but on another hand they deliberatively, at their own risk, make mishmash in the class-books and in classrooms. Radmila confessed, pointing to the shortcomings of the history curriculum:

> Our history curriculum offers only one lesson on multiculturalism. The curriculum does not motivate me as a teacher, but it gives me the *freedom* to choose what to teach. Yes, I must teach what it said in curriculum and in the long-term plan. But, if the inspector comes to my lesson, and if I write one theme in the class-book but teach another—I must face the consequences.

This is an interesting finding. Even though the curricula allow room for autonomy, the burden of being held accountable for test preparation makes teachers not respect the curricula. As a result, she makes duplicitous notes in the class-book—the official institutional document. Ultimately, this practice looks unethical or abnormal for teachers. The teachers are forced to make ethical, professional choices for the sake of quantifiable high scores, to do what is "most important" for their students, as well as for the prestige of the school and of themselves. However, the teacher is aware of what she does, and she is ready to "change this practice" before more damage is done.

Unfortunately, by "changing" Radmila meant resigning from the school. The teacher has the stamina to sacrifice her career in education in the name of resisting compliance and refusing to please the system. The teacher's quitting decision also looks like a mark of professional maturity and protest in the current situation in Moldovan education. Regrettable, yet, these aspects largely remain unaddressed in the Moldovan educational system. In the guise of being a part of such social constructs as a "top-tier accredited school" with a "high quality faculty," the teacher's autonomy is lost in the process, and moral imperatives are foregone. This is far away from the ideal contour that Moldovan teachers envision for the country's modern educational reform. Even though Radmila's story is not typical, I am inclined to believe that this case is not an outlier in our schools.

The study participants' narratives suggest that the social studies teachers' teaching of MAPE is affected in some way by the political and socio-economic realities of the country. This section analyzed the challenges and obstacles to teaching the multicultural approach to peace education and indicated their failure to recognize forms of domination, power, and privilege in contemporary education. The data revealed that both ethnic minority teachers and teachers belonging to the titular ethnicity reported high levels of multicultural content integration in teaching history and civic education disciplines. In addition, the study disclosed that teachers working in schools with a higher share of ethnic minorities incorporate more multicultural education than teachers working in rural or mono-ethnic schools.

There is a wide variance in the extent to which teachers live up to the mission of commitment to MAPE. Considering this discrepancy, the Minister of Education, responding to the internal needs as well as to its international partners' requirements, proposed to revise the existing social studies curriculum and implemented a new discipline—Education for Society, thus, urging civility, active democratic engagement, leadership for social change, diversity and multicultural awareness, understanding oneself in relations to the others, re-examining one's values and beliefs, and challenging one's stereotypes and biases.

Discrimination is not a foreign phenomenon to Moldova. Even today, we encounter various forms of discrimination of a religious, ethnic, and/or sexual nature, as well as different political phenomena, such as various forms of deeply anchored nationalism. Vladimir claimed:

> We need more room in our curriculum that teaches about cultural interactions, exchanges, and systematic contacts, which have resulted in mutual influences, convergences, parallel

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advancements. Of course, we must teach about tensions and conflicts but also about reconciliation, evolution, and transformation, processes of cooperation and collaboration. All cultures and ethnic groups have made their contribution to the construction of Moldovan society and national civic identity.

The teaching of monolithic nationalistic and ethno-centric epistemology fully penetrated Moldovan social studies curriculum, especially its history program and textbooks. Moldovan educators must accept the over-politicized consciousness. Doing so, they willingly or unwillingly commit epistemic violence, despite engaging in non-oppressive ways of knowing people across different ethnicities and subcultures. The teachers' stories are, in this sense, in line with Gayatri Spivak's theory (2014) of epistemic violence and ethnic othering.

The issue raised in this section is teachers' perceptions of ethnic and sexual minorities. The teachers explained not only their frustrations and limits with teaching all aspects of multiculturalism. The study-participants did not make excuses. Rather, they hold both themselves ("I am chauvinist" (Carmen)) and the system ("I was not taught" (Dragoş)) accountable for their weak professional preparation in this regard. The teachers also exposed their strong determination and responsibility—"There is always room for me to grow" (Dragoş); "I am not a passive bystander" (Ştefan), as well as the responsibility of all educators and society at large, to challenge all types of inequity—"I must teach students to speak up and actively care for the rights of all citizens, especially for those marginalized" (Mihaela); "If one person is unhappy, how can the rest of us be happy" (Rucsanda); "We must be allies with each other in face of oppression" (Zlata). "We must continually cultivate ourselves in terms of tolerance, acceptance, inclusion through dialogue and conversations, using all platforms: political, mass-media, church, and education. How we act is a mirror of our values and beliefs," argued Dimitrie. Thus, the study-participants suggested that social studies education needs to integrate MAPE content in social studies curricula, adding content that transcends the nationalistic patriotic pedagogy, using the multiculturalist angle of vision, illuminating multiple perspectives, and reconsidering relevant contexts and practices. Moldovan social studies teachers, overall, suggest that such an integration is possible and needed.

d. Political abuse of history education curriculum

Most teachers were trained in old fashion style, with an idea of a single and universally acceptable version of history. Originally, in the years immediately after World War II, the curriculum was shaped by Soviet influences; later the curriculum was changed to have a more nationalistic emphasis. Today one universal version of history is an illusory concept and teachers gradually get disabused of it. The political abuse of history education curriculum is enacted by national elected officials who advise history textbooks' writers to present national history in a certain way. This practice is seen by study participants as one of the main obstacles for teaching MAPE. The study-participants' narratives believe that the history education in their required curriculum is biased to present a certain version of Moldovan history that furthers nationalistic and ethnic divisions. For example, some teachers suggested that governmental officials often over-emphasize unification rhetoric [with Romania or EU], drawing on mass media and that this presentation of Moldovan history furthers tension amongst Moldovan people, and, particularly, ethnic minorities' fears of being excluded. "We need common history for Moldova without demarcation lines," argued Vladimir, an ethnic minority teacher and textbook author from the south of Moldova. He pointed out that the focus of history exclusively on nationalistic/ ethnic identities endangers community and societal relationships and the building of a civic nation.

Teachers see the political abuse of the history curriculum as a direct consequence of the over-politization of curriculum. Natalia, for example, pointed to how media, in tandem with politicians' rhetoric, influence the public to think in clichés and patterns:

> Difficulties arise with a huge influx of refugees to Europe and different political leaders' statements on that. Thus, due to this inciting discourse, many children see immigration as a danger since this topic is actively discussed in the media and at home. The teachers must talk about it in classes. Our task, as history teachers, is to make the right emphasis on this issue. It would be logical and appropriate to include this topic in the current history curriculum.

Dragoș, a young urban teacher from the central part of Moldova, continued in the same vein:

> We, Moldovans, continue to perceive and convince ourselves that we are good, hospitable people. However, we do not welcome Muslims, homosexuals, and other entities. Inside the country, ugly things happen. I think that in these times, people no longer must live surround by fences. We need to educate ourselves and learn to live in an

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environment painted with different cultural and religious colors. Otherwise, multiculturalism remains a false slogan.

Political abuse of history by the state is a common pattern in recent history. Many study-participants mentioned that this issue confuses both teachers and their students and creates an aversion: "Let's not learn this history because tomorrow someone else will come [to power] and will say that we do not learn what we need to, and they will bring another history [textbook and curriculum]" (Ștefan). This teacher points out how opportunistic statements pronounced for the sake of narrow personal political goals can lead to a greater division instead of building bridges among people. This goes hand in hand with Dimitrie's story about Moldovan society being dominated by hate speech encouraged by political leaders. She shares his concerns: "It is paradoxical that the divisive rhetoric and hate speech comes from officials, including the current president of Moldova. Unfortunately, we live in the era of populism and demagogy" (Dimitrie).

Related to the concept of "political abuse" is the textbooks' and curriculum's lack of inclusiveness of ethnic minorities. The teachers claim that there is a dominant ethnicity in the curriculum—Moldovan/Romanian. Ethnic minorities rarely come up in history textbooks. Boris, a Bulgarian ethnic teacher from the Southern part of Moldova, argued that this norm must be challenged. Trying to hide his emotions, with a trembling voice, he argued:

> In the textbooks issued in Chișinău [Moldovan capital], very little attention is paid to national minorities such as the Bulgarians and Gagauzians. The main narratives are about the Romanians/Moldovans. And it hurts. We often feel dislocated from the past. We are hidden in history, disappearing into it. This cannot be a norm. Our authorities always herald that we are a democratic state.

This teacher bitterly communicated the idea of unarticulated and inappropriate representation of ethnic minority groups in history textbooks—omitting them from the curriculum is the continuing unjust treatment of non-native ethnicities.

The study-participants hold that politicians and educational decision-makers are responsible for the current division and polarization of the country because of the way they bias the curriculum. Mihaela pointed to politicians' deliberate interventions in influencing the revision of social studies curricula, characterizing this as "the manipulation and politicization of the history curriculum" that "has impeding effect on unifying the country." The teachers harshly

criticized the politicians who incite tension and hatred by their influence of the curriculum. To emphasize her point, Paşa indignantly raised her hands to the sky:

> How can we react to such statements as that of Mr. Ghimpu, being an acting president, who called the Bulgarians and the Gagauz people "*the callus on the body of Moldova*"? The same, his declaration toward Russians: "*Suitcase, station, Russia!*" These kinds of affirmations do not do anything but lead to inter-ethnic conflicts, instead of mutual respect and tolerance.

This teacher suggests that dominant ideologies can negatively impact the very purpose of multicultural education. Other teachers pointed to the ways in which teachers themselves politicize their classroom: "Some of my colleagues, ethnic minority teachers, use the classrooms to make electoral propaganda. It is not ethical nor correct!" (Cătălina)

A related problem is some historians' inclination to make the history of a particular ethnicity to have a longer more established history in the RM. The ethnicity that came first and has a longer history, consequently, has more reputation and more rights. Teachers understand that "the proclivity of 'getting old' does a disservice to the country and furthers disunity. This approach is not correct," concluded Florin.

Study participants' narratives reveal their hopes that Moldovan historians can find their way to a de-politicized, non-ideological, and comprehensive historiographical practice, revealing "what actually happened" (Dimitrie), by using an objective multi-perspective approach while presenting historical knowledge. Teachers understand the inevitability of ideological intrusion— we cannot have a history totally free of ideological involvement—history education is not neutral. However, Moldovan social studies teachers object to an overly ideological or politicized history curriculum that has certain ideological and normative expectations. This textbook debate situation happened during the rule of the Communist Party in Moldova (2000-2009) when the government wanted to replace the "History of Romanians" curriculum and textbooks with the "History of Moldova" when Moldovan politicians and government officials have initiated a curriculum reform necessary for the consolidation of national identity, attempting to reconcile Moldova by building its own national identity separate from Romania. The teachers and students (mainly of Moldovan/Romanian ethnicity) across the country vehemently protested against this "mock reform" of the history curriculum. While some teachers (mostly ethnic minority) found that the textbooks subjugated Moldovan history to Romanian history, making students believe

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that there is something "fundamentally temporary and unhealthy about present-day Moldova" because it is not part of greater Romania (Solonari, 2002, p. 439). Similarly, study-participants are not pleased with the liberal leadership that ruled after 2009 until today, which does not pay adequate attention to all ethnicities that lived in Moldova, emphasizing the celebration of the dominant ethnic group. This case demonstrates that when national history is contested, educators have an important role in constructing the meaning(s) of reforms and aiding in their implementation (Anderson Worden, 2011, p. 231). Rather, teachers expect to have a viable, integral shared history curriculum that teaches history simply 'as it was,' welcoming the diversity of historical narratives, seeing them as complementary and harmonizing rather than competitive. Thus, the RM is still a component part of the post-Soviet "laboratory of modern national identity formation" (Suny, 2005, p. 93).

Conclusion

This chapter was structured around four topics that teachers reported that they struggled with in the classroom: LGBTQ, general sexuality issues, the perception/inclusion of ethnic minorities with a special concern about the topic of the Romani people, and the political abuse of history education curriculum. The chapter disclosed how there are some aspects of multiculturalism that remain untaught, omitted, or ignored by many Moldova social studies teachers, and it offered teachers' reasons for doing that. These teachers understand they do not teach all aspects of MAPE, thus not fulfilling the aspirations of all the members of Moldova's multicultural society, and they explained their choices and the obstacles to such practice. Why do teachers not teach all of MAPE's aspects? The main reasons are that they center specifically on just comfortable, less controversial aspects of MAPE, meaning that their own personal biases greatly impact them. Centering specifically on just comfortable, less controversial aspects of MAPE, teachers continue to omit the whole multicultural picture. The curricular topics of LGBTQ, general sexuality, the Romani ethnic minority of the Romani, and the political abuse of history education curriculum, are the main omitted topics. Teachers also expressed discomfort about broader topics, including ethical/ moral/ spiritual/ religious beliefs and values, the historical disregard and marginalization of "unworthy" ethnic groups, as well as their own lack of expertise, professional preparation and proper available resources, as barriers and obstacles in teaching MAPE in its full component.

Wrapping up this chapter, I see how teachers employ a selective way of teaching, by not perceiving all perspectives as equally valid or desirable, thus, showing where their efforts at multi-perspectivity ends. By picking the approach that they like best teachers do limit MAPE. The teachers' narratives revealed that when the topic on the table does not include their own values, not feeling an emotional or ethical connection with the topic, or belonging to the particular group, they are more likely to find excuses to not teach about it. Consequently, when teachers have some moral or political considerations against teaching a specific aspect of diversity or debatable history topic, they also might be reluctant to teach it from MAPE of view. Thus, they use their internal filter as a justification for avoiding teaching the undesirable topics. When Moldovan teachers identify themselves with a certain type of historical victims (for example of the foreign occupation, assimilation/ Russification, Holocaust, deportations, GULAG, or oppression against a certain ethnicity or cultural group), they incorporate their bias and moral standards, thus, they fail to approach these topics from the MAPE points of view. Similarly, when teachers reject a specific narrative (for example of Roma victimhood during the Holocaust, or of Russian aggression on Moldovan/Romanian people), they tend to think negatively about this topic/people. The paradox is that for some Moldovan teachers it is easier empathize with the foreign oppressed "others," rather them with the local "others," such as ethnic minorities or cultural groups.

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes a discussion of major findings of my research on Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers' perceptions of multicultural approaches to peace education (MAPE). It summarizes the conclusions presented in previous chapters answering the research questions that have guided this study. It also includes a discussion of the implications for practice of teaching social studies in secondary level education. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, areas for future research, and a summary. The chapter is structured according to the themes and findings.

Analysis and Interpretation of Study Findings

This study explores the narratives of 30 Moldovan secondary social studies teachers who have been teaching during a time-period in which the Republic of Moldova (RM) has been liberated from the Soviet regime but remains engaged in a protracted frozen conflict. In particular, this study focused upon these teachers' perceptions and experiences in relation to peace education. The study-participants have similar professional training—all graduated from history departments in local pedagogical universities, and serve in public schools, teaching in one of two languages of instructions (Romanian and Russian). They are all citizens of the RM but belong to different ethnic groups.

The study resulted in five major findings. The themes that resulted from the findings are: Between Legacy and Choice: The Stories of Becoming Multicultural Teachers; Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The Matter of Priority; Balancing between Civic Education and Global Education; Conflict of National/Ethnic Identities; and Language Issue: Still an Apple of Discord.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to identify Moldovan secondary education level social studies teachers' perceptions of and theorizing about the multicultural approach to peace education and what inspires them to invite it into their classrooms. The findings offer possibilities to help answer the research question and sub-questions:

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To what extent do history teachers think that they teach the multicultural approach to peace education?
a. If they do not teach for it, why do they think they do not and what do they think are the barriers and obstacles to this?
b. If they do, why do they think they do it, what does it look like, and how do they navigate it?

The study relied on participants' responses from a semi-structured interview designed to answer study questionnaire and research questions (Annex 2). The five themes that emerged have a dynamic dimension, important to every individual's personal and professional growth. Next, I analyze and interpret these themes, reconnecting with the academic literature.

The stories of becoming multicultural teachers: Between legacy and choice

This study's first conclusion is that study participants' narratives show that the past Soviet legacy and memories about those times, for all the challenges, are one of the stimuli that motivate Moldovan teachers to embrace MAPE in their teaching of history and civic education. Moldovan social studies teachers, as multicultural educators, do not hesitate to respond to past and present forms of oppression, since many ethnic and cultural minority groups still face it every day. Teachers' narratives are aligned with the research in their practices that shows that multicultural education and peace education are the primary contributors in cultivating well-educated citizens (Baldwin, 1963; Dewey, 1916; Giroux, 2013, McLaren, 1994, Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Employing critical awareness of their own personal backgrounds and historical legacies, teachers link their micro-level teaching practices in the classroom with macro-level patterns of social justice and equity in larger society (Schoorman, 2020; 2016). Research in multicultural education explores the significance of historic, economic, and sociopolitical patterns of discrimination, and suggest that reflecting on those legacies might help teachers become critically aware of patterns of inequality and the potential for collective and individual agency to struggle against those patterns (Ladson Billings, 2006; Freire, 2000). The study findings suggest a binary view of the past legacy: some teachers remember their historical background as a positive factor, reflecting on the way in which the Soviet regime incorporated multiculturalism and proletary internationalism, while others recalled that period more critically, emphasizing patterns of marginalization and discrimination of the Soviet regime. Whatever they thought

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about the Soviet regime, teachers drew on that experience in their conceptualizations of multicultural and peace education.

The educational legacy of the Soviet Union is only one of the influences on teachers. Many teachers suggest that the Soviet legacy is less important than modern Western influences. Moldova's political, economic and social progress in recent years has come mostly due to Western investment, primarily from the World Bank, the EU, the Council of Europe, Romania, and the USA, and some participants admitted to being exposed to MAPE by this Western legacy. Whether influenced by Soviet or Western influence, teachers believed that their commitment to teaching MAPE was their own conscious decision. All study-participants described a genuine passion for the profession, as well as for the importance of multicultural perspectives in their daily lessons. Most teachers expressed enjoyment of the new overall challenge of the social studies curricula, and particularly the work of infusing pluralism and multiperspectivity into their classrooms, which they often described as cultivating students' essential skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, peer-mediation and negotiation, and other types of engagements in their pedagogical work.

Thus, Moldovan secondary education social studies teachers' perceptions of MAPE result from different contexts and personal values, including historical ideology, geopolitics, and most recently, separatism. The study results indicate that each story of becoming a multicultural educator has its roots either in Western Multicultural pedagogies, Soviet Legacy, or is the result of teachers' deliberate choice in their struggle to overcome the patriarchal mindset and unacknowledged biases. The MAPE helps teachers explore larger domains, including democratic education, human rights, and social justice in society.

Multiculturalism or Patriotism: The matter of priority

The Moldovan national social studies curriculum is a blend of patriotism, civic education, and multiculturalism content. However, the study identified an important dichotomy that exists for social studies educators' understanding of MAPE. On one hand, teachers see their roles in educational institutions as continuing to pass patriotic education to the next generation. On the other hand, some teachers are confused when multiculturalism is promoted by the curriculum. Throughout most interviews, while expressing their choices to teach MAPE, the teachers' main concern was searching for an appropriate balance between patriotism and multiculturalism.

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While some teachers admitted to some discomfort and imbalances in teaching controversial history subjects, most expressed their inclination to teach a balanced, inclusive, multicultural curriculum overall. Specifically, the results of this study included two opposing sentiments: a high commitment to cultural diversity and pluralism in the classroom and a high commitment to patriotic education, with less emphasis on multicultural education. The second stance is advocated by the state, even as the state claims to support multiculturalism. This binary is consistent with multicultural scholarship, which finds that there is a debate between teaching the foundations of patriotism or diversity (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006).

Teachers' narratives indicate their reluctance to teach the multicultural approach over the patriotic approach of history, in part because they fear being accused of betrayal of patriotic causes. Some teachers acknowledge their chauvinistic stance believing that it is right/proper to promote national values. By recognizing their biases, teachers acknowledge how their views are systematically built into state structures and institutions, its procedures, discourses, and interactions (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013, p.14).

The study is inconclusive as to whether or not multiculturalism is a clear barrier to patriotic or citizenship education. Rather, this study reveals that teachers try to find a balance between the two. Ideological battles are still being waged in the name of patriotism in Moldova's social studies classrooms. On one hand, teachers want students to learn to live in peace and cherish multiculturalism, have pride in nonviolent living, and welcome diverse neighbors. But on the other hand, they favor patriotism. Teachers' emphasis on patriotism through history and civic education in this study is consistent with research which shows that many educators see multiculturalism as a threat to patriotic education, leading to divisiveness, instead of bringing together a nation (Kalita, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 2006). Such a perspective sees disunity in people claiming their primarily ethnic or cultural identity (Blum, 1997). However, Moldovan social studies teachers value multicultural-sensitive teaching, struggling to make more room for it, stumping the traditionalist canon. This struggle characterizes educators' search for a compromise between patriotic-nationalistic education and an education that values pluralism and cultural diversity, throughout the inclusion of all ethnic and cultural groups, as core MAPE elements. However, the teachers are more willing to employ multiculturalism if it is instituted in educational policy, social studies standards, school curriculum, as well as having a proper professional training. The results of this study argue for the development of clear peace

education standards infused into the social studies curriculum. Flexible teaching of history and civic education through multiculturalism combined with the patriotic approach is still highly valued by the teachers who participated in this study, which is consistent with conclusions found within existing literature (Kissling et all, 2018; Young & Sharifzadeh, 2003; Osler, 2009; Westheimer, 2006).

Moldovan secondary level social studies teachers did not totally shift the teaching of history away from a nationalistic-patriotic approach toward a multicultural one. Even though MAPE reshaped their way of perceiving and teaching history, the standard nationalistic narrative significantly prevails in classrooms across the country. Although teachers are conscious of and largely supportive of MAPE, they still face challenges in instituting multicultural teaching, while stepping aside from a nationalistic-patriotic teaching approach. Thus, patriotism should be regarded and taught as a civic virtue rather than a moral one (Ben-Porath, 2007).

Balancing Between Civic and Global Approaches

One of the noticeable differences in the results of this study, as compared to existing studies, was the teachers' emphasis on global multiculturalism versus the importance of local multiculturalism. Global education is overwhelmingly located in the study-participants narratives about their understanding and teaching of MAPE.

The findings suggest that multicultural education is understood by Moldovan social studies teachers as related to the world community, accentuating the international dimension of multicultural education, even at the expense of local diversity. Moldovan teachers' inclination to teach multicultural education relying on global examples, comes from their resistance to include and respect all local cultures, having difficulty finding good local examples (local ethnic heroes). When such practice occurs, it points out school and societal flaws that need to be addressed. This phenomenon also resonates with the research which suggests that MAPE helps enhance teachers' sense of interconnectedness, cultural pluralism, and other complexities of internationalization, helping them apply multiculturalism easily (Gorski, 2000; Quashigah, 2014). Teachers must find a balance between adopting a local civic or global approach, so that they can teach the global dimensions of multicultural education and their own country's cultural and ethnic diversities.

In my view, and based on the findings of this study, the definition of patriotism needs to be revised—patriotism must be seen as a bidirectional and reciprocal relationship between the

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country and its citizens. The traditional definition of patriotism [and patriotic education] emphasizes only the manifestation of this relationship in one direction, from the individual to the homeland, that is the citizens' feeling towards the country. However, for this relationship to be balanced, the country's devotion to its citizens must also be considered—how the country shows its love, care, and devotion to its citizens. The findings revealed that this is a thing that Moldovan citizens today are looking for. The patriotic education taught in school implies not only a good knowledge of the country's history and national values with which its citizens identify. It also implies that the country must offer citizens the opportunity to realize their maximum potential at home. One cannot claim patriotism if the country does not offer its citizens national dignity, as study participants claimed. For Moldovan teachers, national dignity is not a statement that fills the chests at rallies under the tricolor flags, but is a visible reality in the public order, the prosperity of the economy, the respect that every citizen enjoys from the authorities, the mutual respect between citizens and their uplifting feelings for the country, people, traditions, history, and language. But because of the great political and cultural turmoil and corruption in the RM, teachers reported finding it difficult to promote local pride. History teaching needs to be reframed, helping teachers to place more importance on local multiculturalism concepts and practices in their curriculum. Armed with positive and affirming attitudes towards multicultural education literacy, teachers must equally recognize that our youth are not only emergent multicultural cosmopolitan citizens living in the global village, but also Moldovan citizens of a state and a young pluralistic democracy that needs them (both at home or overseas) to prosper.

Conflict of National/ Ethnic Identities

The findings suggest that an identity crisis still dominates Moldovan society at large and directly affects teachers' pedagogical choices. The results outline the way that conflicting identity perspectives determine the teaching of history by Moldovan social studies educators. Thus, Moldovan teachers face two forces: The nostalgia for the USSR and demands for modernity. On one hand, the former pulls a big part of population toward the past, keeping prejudices and inertia. On the other hand, the latter requires constant adaptation to the new standards of the multicultural world. The findings show that this force/factor leads to teachers' lack of envisioning a national /ethnic/ cultural identity and understanding of their crucial roles.

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There are still teachers who believe that national Romanian history should be taught in order to build a strong nation.

Debates on national/ ethnic identity occupy the minds of Moldovan social studies teachers. One pitfall here is that teaching MAPE is not merely an ethnic issue, but a complex question. Teaching social studies in a multiethnic country and a globalized world, is a difficult matter. Also, the ambiguity in the identity feelings of being Bessarabian, Moldovan, Romanian, or an ethnic minority from Moldova, is reflected in interviews and larger public discourse. This underscores that identity is a socially constructed, fluid, and everchanging concept.

Study-participants are concerned about the relations among Moldova's ethnic communities, inter-ethnic unity, and cultural pluralism in a post-totalitarian country. Related research on Moldova and other Eastern European countries show that the common main goal of both ordinary people and the political elite is providing a kind of education that allows the cultivation of the art of living together that leads to attaining a level of ethnopolitical stability within the country (King, 1993, 1994, 2000; Cașu & Șarov, 2011; Cașu, 2006; Musteață, 2018; Dowley, 2010; Suveică, 2017). This research also shows that participants worry that, since Moldova's independence, each government has tried to promote unity, peace, and inter-ethnic harmony, but the struggle has not been always successful. However, despite their diverse identities (ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional), Moldovan teachers strive to nurture the art of negotiation and compromise through dialogue, co-operation, and acceptance of multiple views.

Moldova still faces both tensions and challenges to its social and inter-ethnical relationships, which present threats to social cohesion, as well as territorial integrity and statehood. The path to social-ethnic stability and democratization in Moldova is much longer and more difficult than it was envisaged in the 1980s-1990s. In Moldova, education has been manipulated to serve political and authoritarian agendas, which has presented a barrier to peace (Saward, 2019). As an alternative, MAPE is needed for critical social studies curriculum, thus allowing for the knowledge of counter-narratives, multiple perspectives, and the inclusion of all ethnicities and sub-cultures.

The Language Issue: Still an Apple of Discord

The main goal of the Moldovan educational system, which serves students who speak diverse languages, is that all Moldovan children, regardless of their ethnic origin, must also have

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a high command of the state (Romanian) language, to be able to operate and cohabit in society. The Russian language is not a priority in schools; thus, the young generation of Moldovan ethnic students do not master it. Yet, when ethnic minorities do not master the state (Romanian) language and the Moldovan ethnic students do not master Russian (lingua franca) language, diverse ethnic youth struggle to communicate. This language issue undercuts efforts to dialogue, socialize, and collaborate between/across different groups.

Many study-participants acknowledged that they often feel marginalized because they belong to an ethnic minority. However, in contrast, the teachers who belong to the ethnic majority do not see this as something abnormal. Rather they see it as norm in a democracy, where the minority must accept/obey the majority. Language heightens these differences: since some ethnic minority teachers do not properly master the state language, they are marginalized and left out of the social studies teachers' guild and professional network. This finding proves the lack of recognition of the other among teachers, due to the country's goal that all must master Romanian language. For many ethnic minority teachers, it is difficult to learn and practice the state language. Thus, the majoritarian ethnicity' teachers judge their capabilities to teach multiculturalism. The teachers' credibility in being a multicultural educator is dependent on their 'other' colleagues' judgment of their language capabilities, rather than their own capacities.

Moldovan social studies teachers, as educators living in the poststructuralist world of the 21st century, must learn to nurture language diversity first. Doing so might help them accept different ethnic and cultural identities, accept non-standard narratives and epistemologies, and embrace a critical approach to multiculturalism.

This study's conclusion emphasizes the importance of both the majoritarian ethnicity and the ethnic minorities to learn both languages to communicate efficiently, to state their perspectives and needs, to exchange their knowledge, in order to understand that each culture and perspective is unique and has an equal validity for the country. Thus, the study is consistent with the literature that discusses the impact and importance of accepting the use of minority cultures and languages in a democratic society (Harrison & Papa, 2005).

MAPE aspects: What is taught and what is left behind?

The findings suggest that MAPE is somehow valued by Moldovan social studies teachers. However, while they say they care, they do not all enact it. Moldovan secondary

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education social studies teachers have begun to systematically introduce the principles and practices of MAPE into the curriculum and operation of their respective schools. Yet, the current situation with teaching MAPE in the RM is still dependent on the discretion of the individual teacher. Some topics remain ignored by individual teachers.

Historically, most Moldovan teachers do not include in their curricula and daily practice themes about ethnic minorities (especially Roma people) and topics such as sexual reproduction or LGBTQ community issues, due to their own education gaps. All teachers, despite their own personal experience or ethnicity, cited discomfort and lack of confidence as a motivator, reason, or barrier for staying away from the LGBTQ topic. Teachers invoke their religious and spiritual beliefs as their reasoning. This subject also often raises the ire of some educators, school administrators, parents, and religious or political leaders in community.

Although most teachers correlate the missing part of their professional education with social genuine interaction with 'the other,' their views on what must be taught and what must be left aside inevitably rely on their own individual preference and biases. Not all study-participants allow themselves to question their biases, knowledge, and values, and I believe this prevents some teachers from seeing the mosaic of social diversity. By continuing to avoid 'the unknown other' with his/her divergent culture, faith and belief, teachers further self-segregation (Gay, 1994a; Gay, 1994b; Sharma, 2005).

What can be done to challenge this cultural insularity? One answer is proper training that will reinforce the idea that real equality isn't possible if we don't celebrate our differences. Studies show that when teachers adapt to diversity over time, they grow multiculturally as a result. The findings suggest that most Moldovan teachers admire and support the climate of progress and modernity, exhibiting their readiness to embrace new pedagogies, to adapt to new progressive educational philosophies, and to make changes in curriculum. However, not all of them are ready to challenge some of their old beliefs. Social studies teachers are not completely free from biases, assumptions, and other remnants of the past and a patriarchal mindset. The LGBTQ issue is the most-cited example of multiculturalism that is still a barrier to multicultural education. This phenomenon goes in congruence with multicultural research that finds that often teachers have a simplistic, romantic, and humanistic vision of multicultural education (Costa, 1997; Pena, 1997) and show too little willingness to be disturbed (Wheatley, 2002). Thus, teachers must acknowledge their own responsibility to critically engage in examining their

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prejudices, biases, and perceptions (Gorski, 2000, Sharma, 2005). Being able to clarify and sort their biases, teachers might open a new window in looking anew to diversity, beginning a rational dialogue based on respect that it seeks to instantiate.

The teachers who affirm that they teach MAPE believe that this pedagogy helps students to understand and fight such social vices as chauvinism, nationalism, racism, ethnicism, classism, and sexism, social injustices such as prejudice, discrimination, oppression, powerlessness, power, inequality, equality, and stereotyping. The teachers view MAPE as including more ethnic and global topics, such as women's and children's history, human rights, human relations, and special education. Doing so, teachers believe that this kind of multicultural education would reach the utmost goal—building a nation and strengthening social cohesion.

The positive steps towards MAPE are seen in recent educational policy changes (see Chapter 1). Such policies appear to motivate teachers to do their best on cultivating themselves as multiculturalists who ultimately will lead to educating new generations of tolerant peaceful citizens.

Despite or due to Moldova's historical meanderings, diversity, and conflict between people, backed up by the Moldovan legislation, its citizens were able to develop good neighborhood relationships with the local 'others'/ ethnic minorities. These relationships are marked by the ongoing development of cultural, religious, and inter-ethnic tolerance, respect for the people's languages, identity, customs, and traditions, and the ability to sustain peace and harmony. Citizens benefit from large constitutional and legal provisions offered by Moldovan laws concerning equality and ethno-cultural pluralism. These are the foundations that give social studies teachers an initial support to stay at the front line in offering a pedagogy that guarantees the implementation of a critical multicultural peacebuilding education.

The Other Takeaways

The presentation of my findings' analysis effectively demonstrates how they are linked to some other takeaway points. In this section I will be presenting few minor discoveries of my research that help showing how this research fits into the bigger picture.

Naming the MAPE: How do Moldovan teachers define Multiculturalism?

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Even though the concepts 'Multicultural education' or 'Peace education' are missing in teachers' terminology, the study-participants' narratives contribute to our understanding of factors influencing their conceptualization of MAPE. The Moldovan history educators' professional experiences also indicate the level of flexibility that teachers had in naming this pedagogy. Study-participants title and define this pedagogy in different ways. However, for them, MAPE is not just a complex philosophical statement, but a practical pedagogy. To get the laconic essence across, teachers deeply reflected on it first. Here are some of study-participants' versions of assigning a name to MAPE, showing how diverse and profound they see it: "*Multiculturalism through Intercultural education*" (Dragalina); *"Together we build the future," "The color does not matte,r" "Looking into the mirror I see my colleague"* (Sorin); *"Popular pedagogy"* (Viorel); *Pedagogy of mutual leniency*" (Bogdan); *"Pedagogy of Life and for the Life*" (Carmen.); *"Education for Life"* (Radmila); "*Intercultural Dialogue" or "Multicultural Dialogue"* (Rucsanda); *"Pedagogy of Goodness/ Kindness"* (Ariadna); "*Pedagogy for mutual esteem*" (Dimitrie); to more sophisticated headlines such as: *"Humanistic Pedagogy"* (Florin); "*Traditionalism and Interculturality*" (Ștefan); "*Pedagogy of the present and the future*" (Aliona); "*Actual problems of social policy at the present stage*" (Natalia); "*Pedagogy of inculcating the sense of justice*" (Florin); "*Pedagogy of unifying all people*" (Boris); *"Education for the 21st Century"* or *"Education for the 3rd Millennium*" (Marilena). The last definition comes from Marilena, a veteran rural teacher from the Central region of the country. She explained her choice this way: I would define this pedagogy as "*Education for the 21st Century*" because it is the pedagogy for continuous learning. I would envision such a school in which not only students are learning, but in which we all learn.

The next section introduces teachers' understanding of multicultural approach to peace education advantages and gains.

The benefits of MAPE

The findings suggest that MAPE is a comprehensive doctrine helping teachers to teach about how the world is and operates, and what makes for a good life. MAPE is not neutral by any means; however, it does not have to favor one ethnicity, one religion, one culture/civilization over the others. Thus, it resonates with the literature, which endorses it as a meta-view that everyone is entitled to think freely about the essential matters, displaying appropriate political

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and ethical virtues, respecting other views, without any recourse to hatred and prejudices (Bialystok, 2014; Banks, 2017). Also, it allows teachers to help students see history and the current world through many lenses and inclusive of diverse perspectives.

The teachers' narratives also suggest that Moldovan teachers acknowledged the benefits of MAPE in a way that it helps them see the flaws of being gatekeepers and possibly get rid of this role; that also resonates with the literature (Thornton, 1989; 2001; 2008; Florence, 2009). MAPE is a platform that urges teacher to teach against the grain, to reflect deeply and to deliberately claim their role as educators-activists, based on "political consciousness and on ideological commitment' to combat societal and structural inequities (Cochran-Smith, 2001, p. 1). MAPE is also a tool that might help us to emerge victorious in the existing situation, striving for harmonious relationships with 'our others' as well as for good-neighborly relations with contiguous European countries, thus helping educators to eliminate barriers to appreciate diversity and become global insurgent intellectuals (hooks, 1994). However, the minimalist additive approach or single-group studies approach still dominates the classrooms' practices.

The next section summarizes teachers' narratives around their views on how MAPE fits into the content and structure of Moldova secondary education social studies curricula.

The MAPE in Moldova's Social Sciences Curricula: The structure and content of diversity

For my research I had prepared a list of questions for study-participants about how MAPE works in History and Civic Education/ Education for Society disciplines. I was curious how teachers view the entire social sciences curricula: an anti-biased one, constructed to be inclusive, designed to consider many diverse points of view and perspectives or one that offers symbolic recognition of diversity (linguistic and cultural pluralism). Is multiculturalism solely infused only throughout social studies curriculum or it is implemented in all areas of the school's culture and program? The finding suggests different degrees of integration of unique multicultural elements in history and civic education curriculum. The Moldovan Ministry of Education supports the reform of inclusiveness for all. Also, it provides several ways of achieving lifelong learning for teachers, such as mandatory continuous professional training. This means that any training or seminar in which the teachers complete their professional competences by deepening the knowledge not only in the field of the basic specialty, but in multicultural/ intercultural studies too, learning new methods or procedures that could be applied

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within the main discipline. Although the Education Code (2014) stipulates as a mission of higher education "the preservation, development and promotion of national cultural-historical values in the context of cultural diversity" (http://lex.justice.md/md/355156/), the teachers confessed that they did not receive enough adequate professional training in this direction.

IMPLICATIONS

This section focuses on implications for practice, research, teachers' professional preparation, textbooks writing, and educational policy-making related to language. I identify five policy changes that Moldovan educators should focus on in order to make the social studies curriculum less centered on war and violence and more centered on peacebuilding and multiculturalism

Implications for Practice

The results of the study revealed teachers' reflections on their practices of using multicultural pedagogy. Thus, teachers use many terms and statements in terms of positive and negative peace in their narratives, such collaboration, cooperation, dialogue, respect, friendship, tolerance, human rights and universal values, diversity, and pluralism. This validates the assumption that teachers understand and incorporate MAPE in social studies curriculum and content, while teaching history, civic education, and/or education for society, acknowledging at the same time the complexities, challenges, and frustrations they face. By doing that, they enable their students to acquire sound life skills necessary to address the 'us' versus 'them' phenomena, critically assess problems, deliberate about and resolve conflicts in non-violent transformative way.

Therefore, when teaching peacebuilding and multicultural content and concepts, teachers must address multiperspectivity, alternative stories, and guide students towards such important skills as critical thinking, recognition of the other, respect, care, love, and empathy. Teachers must be explicit with young generations that there are multiple factors that might be considered when we study human history. From the perspective that we live our lives amidst violence and conflict, this study supports the literature that argues that teachers should not limit their ethical roles by endorsing their individual dominant beliefs and values (Bolotin Joseph and Mikel,

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2014). The list literature on the peace education standards (Carter, 2008; 2015) and principles (Appendix, 2015) and multicultural education (Banks, 2004) might be useful.

Implications for Research

Previous research on social studies teachers' conceptualization of multicultural approach to peace education, its strengths, and limitations, identified that teachers value this pedagogy, but have limited knowledge on it, due to the scarcity of professional training available and personal bias. Because of that, it is possible that teachers hesitate to include specific cultural groups in their classroom during teaching history and civic education. Thus, the development of effective professional preparation that would include both rich content on diversity, multiculturalism, and peacebuilding, coupled with effective teaching strategies and interventions, would foster meaningful learning about the concept of MAPE. Future research is warranted to explore and describe the specific understanding and knowledge of concrete cultural and ethnic groups that teachers might use to make inferences and assertions about diversity in a multicultural society.

Implications related to Teachers' Preparation

The findings state that we cannot speak about multiculturalism without any professional preparation. Thus, another implication of this research is for training teachers. Policy makers may want to consider redesigning teachers' education programs to provide proper multicultural education and peace education for future and current teachers—a sound path of professional development. The study-participants identified support from the Ministry of Education and administrators as a major factor that impacted their level of motivation in teaching MAPE in the classroom. But they need more. Also, teachers themselves, must become aware of any trainings and ask for more seminars on critical multicultural and peace education, beyond the additive approach. Teachers progress from not believing they could teach multiculturalism (due to their preferences/focus on patriotic, nationalistic education as well as due to their continuing education effort), through a more gradual open phase, to finally to the utmost phase, when they are bold and confident about their multicultural stance in face of school and guild communities. The study found that Moldovan educators rated themselves as more multicultural due to the level of training and learning that took place in diverse formal or informal instructional settings in their career. Thus, teachers and educational authorities are both responsible for changing that.

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Educators are strengthened through collaboration and dialogue, where trust, curiosity, openness, respect, compassion, and understanding contribute to feeling equal, valued, and accepted.

Educators must add MAPE to their teaching if they get enough support and training in multicultural and peace education from the country's educational authorities. School and teachers' personal libraries must be well-equipped. Also, teachers must be encouraged to learn modern languages, that will enable them to have larger access to didactic materials. Ethnic minority teachers are using Russian books and sites, which might be another unconscious indoctrination tool, bringing more damage to the cause of multicultural and peace education in Moldova. Having appropriate resources at hand, elaborated in the RM, accessible in all languages, teachers would make more effort to use MAPE-based lessons in their classrooms.

Implications for Textbook Writing

Another implication of this research refers to authors of history textbooks. Teachers are frustrated with both the lack of curricular resource materials available at hand and the quality of textbooks. Teachers' narratives suggest that professional textbooks writers have mostly ignored the ethnic dimension or have given only superficial accounts of it in their works. Students in the RM learn from textbooks entitled *The History of the Romanians*. Alternative textbooks titled *Integrated History* or *Romanian and World History*, led in some respect to the content changes. I believe that firstly, the textbook authors must come to an agreement on the name of history textbooks that must be "History;" secondly on its content, which must be revised, paving the foundation for a democratic, pluralistic, critical multicultural, multiethnic-friendly curricula. Thus, we can eradicate the blind sides of our education, whipping out of the system such flaws as discrimination, marginalization, and segregation, benefiting all students by offering them a new version of relevant and positive history that encompasses all cultural and ethnic groups. History textbooks writers have their responsibility to change that.

The question at stake that touches on the standing of Moldovan history textbook writing and the role of textbook authors, is the adjusting of writing to fit a certain political discourse. Thus, this influences how and what should history be remembered and which and how certain cultures and ethnicities are portrayed and favored over others historically (Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2017). More critical multicultural/ multiperspective tendencies in history writing must be employed, which might lead to the transcendence of the currently dominant,

politicized approaches in the field. One suggestion for history book writers would be to stop accentuating heroization and competing victimhoods (Suveica, 2017). Thus, MAPE is not an isolated subject; it needs a more robust integration into Moldovan secondary education level social studies curriculum.

Conducting history research does not take place in a vacuum, especially when it is related to creating K12 history textbooks—education is never neutral. Thus, textbook writers must state their positionality and acknowledge their bias. Writing history books with a hidden political agenda in mind leads to manipulation of the scientific and educational processes to achieve ideological goals.

Implications for Educational Policymakers related to Language

The next implication is for educational and political decision makers. The Moldovan educational system has a few flaws and blindsides. Before I explain this, a little history is needed. In 1989, two years before the collapse of the USSR, the Supreme Council (Parliament) of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) passed a few Language laws: The Law on the Official Language (Law No. 3464, 08.31.1989), The Law on the Functioning of the Languages Spoken in the Republic (Law No. 3465, 09.01.1989), and The Laws on the Reintroduction of and Putting into Operation the Latin Script/Alphabet (Law No. 3462 and No. 4363, 08.31.1989). These regulations were supported by the State Program Ensuring the Functioning of Spoken Languages, designed to pave the way for the Romanian language as a main means of communication in all societal areas. The Law on the Official Language assigned a special status to the Russian language—"a language of inter-ethnic communication," mentioning it in 20 of the 32 sections of the law. As a result, the Russian language was granted a status to be equally used in official documents. The language laws contain the notion—"the Moldovan language," while the declaration of independence of the Republic of Moldova (the decision No. 36 of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Moldova of December 5, 2013), and the amendments of the General Assembly of the Academy of Science call the state language "Romanian." Thus, the ambiguity remains. The state authorities still name the official language as "Moldovan," while the schools, universities, mass-media, and intellectuals use the term "Romanian language." This situation divides the society. The laws have not been altered, even though everybody uses the benefits of bilingualism. In the absence of new modern state

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multicultural strategies and language policies in the RM, a stalemate remains—a political and polemical debate rather than a scientific one. (Re)writing history in accord with the whims of politicians is unprofessional, unethical, and non-scientific. Thus, policymakers may want to address the language issue by developing a program of bilingualism or multilingualism.

Also, another pitfall is that the Romanian language is written with two different scripts in the territory of the RM, with the Latin alphabet on the right of the Dniester River (mainland Moldova) but with the Cyrillic alphabet on its left bank (Transnistria). The public discourse continues to manipulate people in Moldova, making them believe that Moldovan and Romanian are two different languages. Thus, we follow the old doctrine created in Soviet times as a weapon of propaganda - uncritically taking the obsolete Soviet dogma born in 1924. This is unacceptable—it puts in danger the integrity of the RM, giving some people the idea that this territory which once belonged to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, gives the Russian Federation the right to keep its 14th army on Moldova's territory (in Transnistria). Moldovan political elites of all colors have the responsibility to come to a consensus in this regard. Thus, despite teaching multiperspectivity and integrating multiculturalism in Moldovan's social studies classrooms, there is no common view of identity and language that would lead to social consensus and harmony. Thus, the antagonism between "Moldovanism" and "Romanianism" continue to exist in public discourse, deepening the societal cleavage.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitations of the study include the relatively small sample size (the study draws on interviews with 30 social studies teachers, out of a national teacher force of 1462 [Volontir, 2019, np]), the relatively narrow demographic representation of teachers, and the language of interview (with seven interviewed ethnic minority participants [2 Russians, 2 Bulgarians, and 3 Gagauz]). Cross-language can be a barrier between researchers and participants in qualitative research. Also, language, as a part of the culture, transmits evidence and nuances of the phenomenon under study, which might be lost in translation. Additional limitations to the study include the fact that audio-recording may make the interviewee less open, less truthful, and more concerned with pleasing the researcher by telling what is "accepted" and "normal." Also, audio-recording does not capture the tacit, non-verbal elements of an interview, which are crucial aspects of the study. Other limitations include the researcher not being able to

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directly observe the teachers at work in the classroom and that fact that all of the narratives are teachers' self-reporting of what they do and not observations of what they may actually do. Finally, I brought my own personal biases to the research: as an "insider" researcher (a former social studies teacher and a Moldovan citizen), I had unique access to the teachers, but my own experiences may well have colored by interpretations.

Whereas the researcher considers qualitative research as the right choice for the study of the phenomenon of teachers' understanding of multiculturalism and peace education, I must note that the main qualitative research tool, such as an interview, is not designed to grab "hard facts." Accordingly, coupling qualitative with quantitative methods might have added a degree of credibility to this study and is recommended for future studies of teachers conceptualization of MAPE. A survey and subsequent statistical analysis could offer more evidence to strengthen findings. The study also identified additional topics that need closer examination, and it is hoped that researchers will take these topics up in the future.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I argue that the goals of MAPE in the RM have not been entirely achieved in part due to the teachers' understanding of multiculturalism, diversity, and pluralism. Attempting to shed light on the way in which Moldovan high school social studies teachers perceive MAPE in relation to teaching history and civic education, this study suggests that Moldovan educators progressively, but not fully, include MAPE in their teaching options. The findings show that even though Moldovan teachers personally enjoy the idea of a multicultural approach to peace education, the reality is that when bearing it in mind, educators consider first their own past experiences and beliefs, balancing the tensions between multiculturalism and patriotism, between civic education and global education, as well as between ethnic identities and language issues. While following the national social studies curriculum and educational policies that indirectly promote MAPE, teachers still allow their preferences to interfere with their daily teaching practices. Thus, there are still lots of challenges, barriers, and obstacles that impede teachers from fully incorporating MAPE into classrooms. However, in the face of these challenges and hurdles, MAPE is the pedagogy that empowers teachers to acquire multicultural proficiencies and learn to value cultural differences. Thus, MAPE should be of paramount importance in the design and delivery of social studies curriculum. Attitudes and values necessary for active

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affirmative civic participation in community life and democratic society should be emboldened through social studies. Creating in- and-out of school environments that are supportive of multiculturalism, equality, and social justice is a paramount goal of MAPE.

Moldovan secondary level social studies teachers' understanding of multiculturalism is largely limited to the two approaches to multicultural education: the 'contributions approach' and the 'ethnic-additive approach' (Banks, 1989). This means that teachers mostly integrate ethnic and social content by adding content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure. According to the study-participants emic dimension, these approaches are preferred because they do not promote cultural assimilation of the other into the mainstream culture. Rather, these frames are chosen because they lead to real benefits such as: helping ethnic and cultural groups better understand each other, promoting equity and respect for diversity, as well as accentuating the strengths and values of all groups. As Zlata stated: "We must learn how to understand diversity, because inclusion is empowering." Thus, we may conclude that the MAPE has a history and a future in Moldovan education. Preferring to hold simplistic assumptions about multicultural education, applying only additive and celebratory approaches, rather than transformative and social action approaches (Banks, 1999), teachers exhibit tolerance rather than social justice. As long as teachers delay integrating the progressive approaches and concepts as strong constructions of their belief systems, these pedagogies risk remaining buzz-words and have a weak power. One suggestion is: by exploring issues of national identity to multicultural education, Moldovan teachers must employ those strands of multicultural education that emphasize notions of justice and social activism. Also, teachers must unite these issues with ideas about common European historical roots and common values, without having in mind the goal of Moldova's unification to Romania or it's adhering to the EU. Some teachers are against some sorts of different 'others,' stimulated by nationalism, that leads to chauvinist and separatist beliefs and resistance to change. Moldovan social studies teachers need to learn to discover, reconstruct, and accept the fluidity and multitude of ethnic and cultural identities.

The study participants' view of the current situation is that a coherent multicultural movement needs to belong to the Moldovan system of education. The last government (2018-2020) understands the vast social gains of introducing Multicultural education. The teachers' narratives show their struggles to reconceptualize their understanding of multiculturalism,

accepting the existing societal injustice and exclusion of some cultural groups and the necessity of equal rights for everyone. Teachers focus their attention on preventing classroom conflicts, teaching about human rights, conflict resolution, and tolerance, strengthening the idea of pluralism and multiperspectivity. The data show that there is a strong tendency toward understanding of the other, a shift toward consideration of human rights for all. However, often some cultural groups and topics related to diversity are left out of the curriculum and classrooms. The study-participants expressed their willingness to reflect on and re-think the ways of curriculum construction. Also, they are concerned about the Moldovan authorities' commitment to ensure the successful implementation of multicultural education in all grades and subjects of secondary education.

With all world countries and societies today, Moldova faces the global crisis of pandemic COVID 19. Also, Moldova is gearing up for the 2020 presidential election and perhaps for parliamentary elections. In this context, a thorough and thoughtful pedagogy such as MAPE could be the first aid for social studies teachers. I hope that the graduate caps that were virtually waved in the air on May 29, 2020, symbolizing a *goodbye* to childhood and school and a *welcoming* into the adulthood of thousands of Moldova's youth, is just a new page in our history writing. I hope that this generation, following its dreams inside or outside of Moldova's physical borders, is not a final *adios* to the country. I hope that one day most of these youth will come back, empowered with powerful knowledge and valuable experience that will be appreciated at home. Thus, they will help the motherland to regain its place and voice among other countries. Only from this point will Moldova's Renaissance begin. This thought resonates with the wish of one of my study-participants, Zlata, who said: "I wish we have a healthy society in Moldova—one in which there would be room not only for the 'majority'—but for as many minorities as possible. In this case, we will avoid situations when the so-called 'majority' feels its power and becomes arrogant toward the others. I hope that multicultural education has a say in this."

The results of this study imply that Moldova social studies teachers and educational policies are progressive. The multicultural mosaic in both curriculum and population persists in Moldovan society and classrooms. Thus, an effective cross-cultural and cross-ethnic communication and dialogue is needed. However, the RM lags behind many countries in implementing multicultural policies that may aid teachers in setting the lessons and classrooms up for success. This particularly refers to providing proper professional training, offering enough

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didactic materials in all languages used to teach in schools, and adding venues of collaboration and cooperation among teachers, thus providing a grand potential for success of MAPE. This situation encourages teachers to improvise in order to teach history and civic education in a more inclusive and relevant way to their students.

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Appendix 1– Personal Information Form

Dear teacher, as a part of my Ph.D. studies, I am carrying out research on the role of education in building the culture of peace and promoting coexistence.
The information you give will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and your identity will remain anonymous.
Please try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your contribution.

Please fill in the following information about yourself:

a. Name: _____
b. Gender: _____
c. Ethnicity: _____
d. Education: University(ies) attended/ degree conferred/date_____
_____
e. Didactic degree _____
f. Name of the school: _____
g. Geographical area: _____
h. The language of teaching/instruction: _____
i. How long have you been teaching in this school? _____
j. What grades and subjects do you teach now? _____
_____
k. What other grades and subjects have you taught and for how long?_____
_____
l. What additional responsibilities do you have in school? _____
m. How diverse is your school population? _____

Write any additional information on the back.

I understand that Angela St. Trubceac will use this questionnaire and the accompanying taped interview as part of her research in multicultural education at Miami University of Ohio, USA.
I understand that my confidentiality will be respected. My name and any identifying characteristics will not appear in the final product.
I also understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time.
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact information:

Name of interviewee: _____ **Tape #:**_____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ **Email:** _____

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

1. To what extent do you help your students to deal with conflict, violence, prejudices, stereotypes, to be tolerant, respect diversity, promote culture of peace and social coexistence?

2. Tell me (a story) how do you teach about cultural diversity in your classrooms. How do you include aspects such as: race/ethnicity/nationality, gender, age, disabled people, people of various sexual orientation, different cultural and educational background?

3. Explain how you avoid *escalation of* and/or *prevention of nationalism, mistrust, fear, and exclusion of 'the other'* in your classroom? What *strategies* do you employ to promote *social cohesion, reconciliation, coexistence, the solidarity* of all ethnic and social groups?

4. What motivates you to teach about multiculturalism and diversity?

5. What are the obstacles in teaching multiculturalism and diversity in your school? Do you perceive any difficulties in getting cultural diversity broadly accepted in Moldovan schools? If yes, specify the kinds of difficulties involved.

6. How would you call this pedagogy? How would you define it? (Multicultural Education? Peace Education? Etc.)

7. Are peace education and multiculturalism the aim in the Moldovan history or civic education curricula? Does the National Ministry of Education explicitly recommended in official documents for schools that the teaching should include topics of multiculturalism? What are they?

8. Has there been some recent public discussion on the topic of multicultural education curricula and their impact on social cohesion in your school/ community?

Appendix 3 – Data Display: Participant Demographics

	Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Institution/ Graduation year	City/ Town, Region	HS/ MS	Language of instruction	Years of experience	Didactic degree	Other responses	School subjects	School population	Other distinctions
1	Sorin	M	Romanian	USM, 1992	Village, North	HS	Romanian	25	I	SP	IRU, Geography	Romanians; Roma	Teacher of the Year, 2018
2	Viorel	M	Moldovan	USM, 1992	Town, North	HS	Romanian	24	Superior	Director of DGITS	IRU, C.Ed. Politology	Romanians, Ukrainians; Roma	
3	Mariana	F	Bulgarian	USM, CSU, (MS)	Town, South	HS	Russian/ Bulgarian	15	I	SP	IRU; C.Ed.	Bulgarians, Russians; Roma	
4	Pașa	F	Bulgarian	UPC, 1978	Town, South	HS	Russian/ Bulgarian	40	II	-	IRU, Bulgarian L&L, C.Ed.	Bulgarians, Russians; Roma	retired
5	Vladimir	M	Gagauz	MSU, Ph.D.	Town, South	HS	Russian/ Gagauz	30	-	-	IRU, ITC of Gagauz	Gagauz; Bulgarian, Ukrainians, Russians; Roma; Jews; Moldovans	Textbooks author— ITC of Gagauz people (1-4 grades),Ph.D
6	Oxana	F	Gagauz	Comrat SU	Town, South	HS	Russian/ Gagauz	7	II	-	IRU, ITC of Gagauz	-//-	-
7	Boris	M	Gagauz	USM, 1982	Village South	MS	Russian/ Gagauz	33	II	SP	IRU, PE, C.Ed. Military training	Gagauz; Moldovans, Ukrainians; Turks	
8	Bogdan	M	Romanian	USM, 2010, (MS)	Town Center	HS	Romanian	6	II	HrT	IRU, C.Ed.	Romanians/ Moldovans; Roma	
9	Carmen	F	Romanian	USM, 1989, UBB Cluj, 1998,	Capital	HS	Romanian	12	Superior	SP	IRU; History of Culture	Moldovan, Moldo-Syrians, Russians, Roma	Ph.D. candidate; Former Vice-minister of Ed.

10	Dragoş	M	Romanian	USM, 2012, (MS)	Town Center	HS	Romanian	6	II	HrT	IRU; C.Ed. L&TH	Moldovans, Moldo-Syrians, Russians, Roma	Teacher of the Year (District)—2 years in a row
11	Rucsanda	F	Romanian	USM 2000	Town Center	HS	Romanian	8	II	HrT, Chair of MD	IRU; C.Ed.; Jobs	Moldovans, Moldo-Syrians, Russians, Roma, Armenians, Ukrainians	
12	Radmila	F	Romanian	UPS, 2011 UAS, 2015	Capital	HS	Russian/ Ukrainian	6	II	*personal secretary* of senior/ elderly school administration	IRU; C.Ed. Geography European Integration Sociology	Russians, Ukrainians, Moldovans, Jews; Polish	Ph.D. student Abandoned school after interview!
13	Zlata	F	Romanian	UPS	Capital, (Public and Private HS)	HS	Romanian	25	Superior	HrT; Chair of SS D.	IRU; C.Ed.	Very diverse, kids of embassies workers	Ph.D. (History)
14	Aliona	F	Russian	UPS, 1982	Capital	Technology HS	Russian/ Hebrew	34	I	HrT	IRU, C.Ed. ITC of Jewish people	Jews; Russians, Ukrainians, Gagauz; Bulgarians, Moldovans	
15	Liliana	F	Romanian	USM 1987; USM 2000 (Law)	Capital	HS (pr.)	Romanian	31	I; Grad manag. I	SP	IRU, C.Ed.	Romanian – 89%, Russians, Jews, Indians; Turks; Roma; Ukrainians	
16	Mihaela	F	Romanian	CPO; UPS, 1994	Town, center	HS	Romanian	30	Superior	VP	IRU, C.Ed. L&TH	Moldovans –90&%, Russians, Roma, Syrians	
17	Dragalina	F	Romanian	UPS, 1986	Capital	HS	Romanian	32	Superior	HrT, Chair of MD.	IRU; C.Ed.	Romanians –98%, Russians	

#	Name											Gagauz, Ukrainians	
18	Ecaterina	F	Romanian	USM 1987	Town/ Village North	HS	Russian	31	Superior	HrT	IRU, C.Ed. Economic Ed., (Junior Achievement)	Ukrainians —70%, Russians; Roma, Turks; Romanians, Gagauz	Works in 2 schools; Won many NOH with her stds
19	Ariadna	F	Russian	UPS 1993	Capital	HS	Russian	25	I	HrT, VP	IRU, C.Ed., ITC of Russian People	Moldovan Russian, Roma, Turks Ukrainian, Jews; Polish, Bulgarians; Gagauz, Armenian, German; Azerbaijan	
20	Igor	M	Moldovan	USM 1987	Town South	HS (sport)	Romanian	31	II	HrT	IRU, C.Ed., History of Culture	Moldovans, Ukrainians, From all around Moldova	Ph.D. (History) 1991, Former mayor, Former Higher Ed. professor
21	Ștefan	M	Romanian	UPS 2016 (MS)	Village Center	MS	Romanian/Ukrainian/ Russian	2	-	HrT, VP	IRU, IT, C.Ed., Environmental Ed.	Moldovans -100%, Ukrainians, Russians, Moldovans (40 %)	Works in 2 MS, Ph.D. student
22	Marilena	F	Romanian	UPS 1982	Village Center	MS	Romanian	36	Superior	SP	IRU, C.Ed.	Moldovans 99%, Roma	She used to teach in 2 rural HS; Textbooks author
23	Cristina	F	Romanian	USM 1991	Town North	HS	Romanian	27	Superior	HrT, Chair of MD	IRU, C.Ed. History of Religion,Logics, Pedagogy We & Law	Romanians —90%, Russians, Ukrainians	Many of her students won National Olympics in History

24	Dimitrie	M	Romanian	USM 1991	Town North	HS (Arts)	Romanian	27	I	HrT, Chair of Hr. T D.	IRU, C.Ed. Tourism, History of Culture, History of Arts	Romanians/Moldovans-10%, Russians & Ukrainians-5%, Roma-5%, Etc.	
25	Luminița	F	Moldovan	UPS	City North	HS	Romanian	20	Superior	HrT, Chair of SS D.	IRU, C.Ed.	6 ethnics, 5 religious' cults	Many of her students won NOH
26	Natalia	F	Russian	USM 1988	Capital	HS Arts/theater	Russian	32	I	VP	IRU	Russians, Gagauz, Moldovans, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Jews, Poles, Belarusians	
27	Florin	M	Romanian	UPS 1984	Capital	HS	Romanian	25	Superior 1999; Manag. Degree—Superior 2005	HrT	IRU, C.Ed. Debate Club, Philosophy, Economics	Moldovans 85%, Ukrainians, Gagauz, Russians, Roma, Rural-67%, Urban-33%	Ph.D. (Ed.) 1999, Textbook author, Visited the US (train.); Many of his students won NOH
28	Cornelia	F	Romanian	UPS 1993	Capital	HS	Romanian	25	Superior	-	IRU, C.Ed.		Works in a Min. of Ed.
29	Cătălina	F	Romanian	USM 1993	Capital	MS	Romanian	25	II	HrT	RU, C.Ed., HR Ed., Education through Films, PolitologyHistory of Culture, Economics; We & Law	Romanians/Moldovans, Russians, Roma, Turks, Ukrainians, etc.	
30	Eliza	F	Romanian	UPS 1983	Town South	HS	Romanian	35	Superior	HrT, VP	IRU, C.Ed.	Romanians Gagauz, Russians	Visited the US in a training.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Miami University of Ohio ● Oxford, Ohio, USA

Title of Study: Multicultural Education in Moldova: Social studies teachers' conceptualization and honoring multiculturalism approach to education.					
Investigators:					
Name:	**Angela Trubceac**	**Dept:**	EDL	**Phone:**	513-510-2993
Name:	**Kate Rousmaniere**	**Dept:**	EDP	**Email:**	rosmark@miamioh.edu

Introduction
You are being asked to be in a research study—Multicultural Education in Moldova: Social studies teachers' conceptualization and honoring multiculturalism approach to education. You were selected as a possible participant because we are interested in listening to the narratives of the practitioners, and in giving them a chance to unpack their voices. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in this study.

Purpose of Study
The purpose of the study is to determine what are Moldovan high school history and social studies teachers' perceptions of peace education and multiculturalism, by examining how the conditions and contexts of classrooms are helping the conceptualization of multiculturalist approach to peace education. How do they teach cultural diversity, tolerance, and mutual understanding? Based on multicultural education in an Eastern European context, the study aims to uncover the factors associated with the rise of violence, intolerance, exclusion, lack of respect and appreciation of other cultures. Mainly the study intends to display how multicultural education is occurring or not occurring in educational settings, through the vision of social studies teachers, that help to prepare young generations to live peacefully in a just and democratic society. The aim is to allow participants to express themselves in sharing their lived stories in a creative moving way, which will help the audience to learn a lesson and gain insight into this phenomenon.

Description of the Study Procedures
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of about 8 questions. The questionnaire should take about 60 minutes to complete.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study
There are no reasonably foreseeable (or expected) risks. All names of participants will be given pseudonyms.

Benefits of Being in the Study

The benefits of participation are that this research will deliver a detailed and faithful representation of practitioners' stories, ideas, opinions, and attitudes about teaching peace education and multiculturalism in Moldova.

Confidentiality
You will be asked to include your name on any of the questionnaires. Nonetheless, the questionnaires will be treated as confidential information, stored in a secure location for the duration of the project, accessed only by myself and my research advisor, Dr. Rousmaniere, and destroyed after the data has been analyzed. Your identity will not be disclosed in the material outside of our email and interview, as you will be given a pseudonym.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study *at any time* without affecting your relationship with the investigators of this study or Miami University of Ohio. You also have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from completing the questionnaire at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material, even after completing the questionnaire.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns
You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact me, Angela Trubceac at trubceas@miamioh.edu or by telephone at 513-510-2993. If you like, a summary of the results of the study will be sent to you. If you have any other concerns about your rights as a research participant that has not been answered by the investigators, you may contact the Office of Advancement of Research and Scholarship at 529-3600 or email: humansubjects@miamioh.edu, or contact the research advisor for this project, Dr. Kate Rousmaniere, rousmark@miamioh.edu.
If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to Dr. Rousmaniere at the email above. Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which can be found on the IRB website at http://www.miamioh.edu/irb/

Consent
Simply exchanging email messages constitutes consent in this case. Your signature is not necessary to prove that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study and that you have read and understood the information provided above.
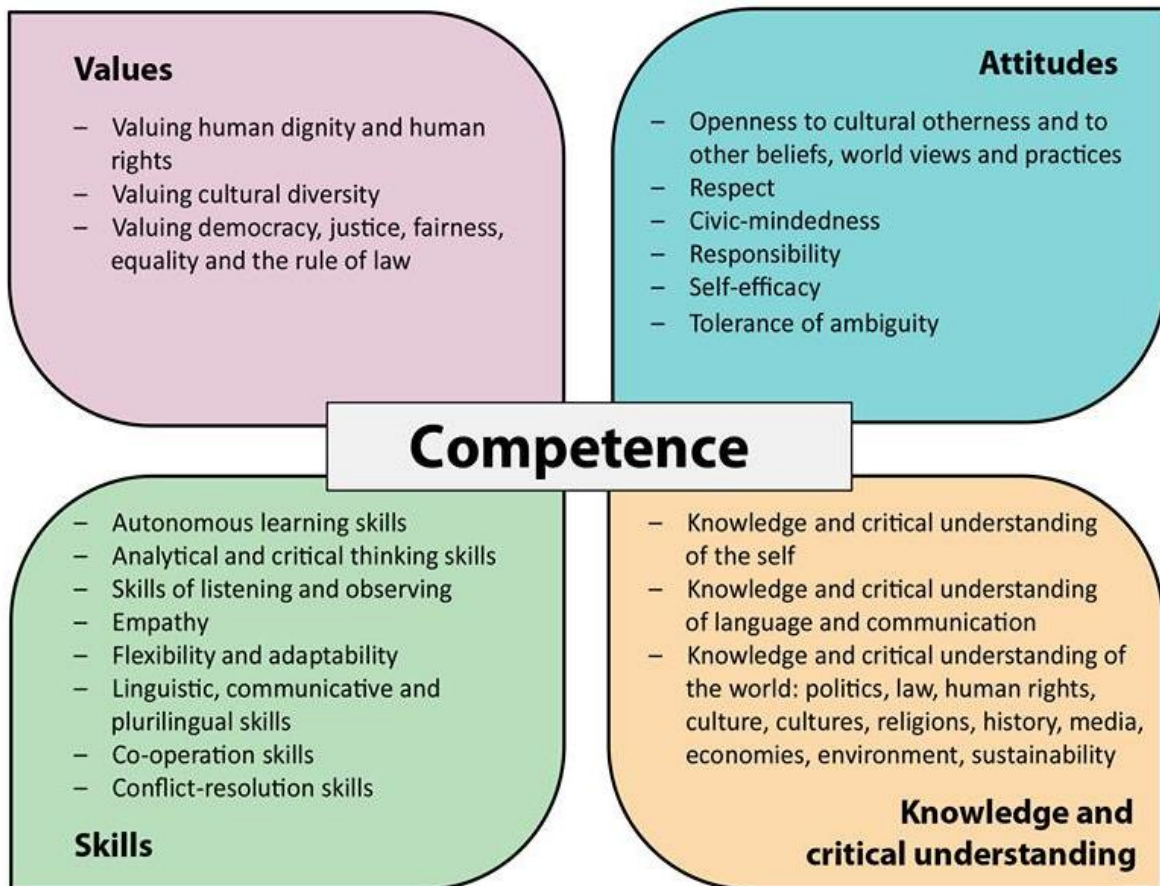
Appendix 5 – Abbreviations

IRU—Istoria Românilor şi Universală (World and Romanian History)
C.Ed.—Civic Education
ES—Eduaction for Society
L&L—Language and Literature
L&TH—Lived and Told History
HR Ed.—Human Rights Education
DGITS—Direcția Generală Învăţămînt Tineret şi Sport (Local Department of Education)
USM—Universitatea de Stat din Moldova (Moldova State University)
UPS—Universitatea Pedagogică de Stat "Ion Creangă" ("Ion Creangă" Moldova State Pedagogical University)
UBB—Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai Cluj (Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca)
MSU—Moscow State University
CSU—Comrat State University (Gagauz Yeri)
CPO—Colegiul Pedagogic Orhei (Orhei Pedagogical College)
HrT—Homeroom teacher
ITC of X,Y, Z people —Istoria, Tradițiile și Cultura … (History, Traditions, and Culture of X,Y, Z people)
HS—High school
HS (pr.)—Private High school
MS—Middle school
(MS)—Master of Science
Grad Managerial—Managerial Degree
Grad Pedagogic—Pedagogical Degree
SP—School Principal
VP—Vice Principal
Chair of MD—Chair of Methodologic Department
Chair of SS—Chair of Social Studies Department
Chair of HrT—Chair of Homeroom Teachers Department
NOH—National Olympics in History

Appendix 6 – Competences for Democratic Culture

Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies
Source: Council of Europe, March 2016

Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC)

Values
- Valuing human dignity and human rights
- Valuing cultural diversity
- Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes
- Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices
- Respect
- Civic-mindedness
- Responsibility
- Self-efficacy
- Tolerance of ambiguity

Competence

Skills
- Autonomous learning skills
- Analytical and critical thinking skills
- Skills of listening and observing
- Empathy
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills
- Co-operation skills
- Conflict-resolution skills

Knowledge and critical understanding
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the self
- Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication
- Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability

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Appendix 7 – Peace Education Philosophy Chart

	Definition	Peace Education (P.Ed.) Philosophy
Epistemology	The **theory of knowledge;** It is the investigation of **what distinguishes justified belief from opinion**.	Knowledge is constructed As a **counter/ alternative education** P.Ed. should face the changing postmodern conditions, and within it the questions of knowledge. There are 4 major conditions that <u>are prerequisites</u> of peace: Human Nature, the Power of Reason, the Rule of Law, and the Principles of Morality.
Ontology	The branch of philosophy (metaphysics) dealing with **the nature of being**	As a **counter-education,** P.Ed. should face the changing postmodern conditions, and within it the questions of life and humanity.
Ethics	The branch of philosophy (knowledge) that deals with **moral principles.**	As a **counter/ alternative education,** P.Ed. should face the changing postmodern conditions, and within it the questions of responsibility and morality.
Educational Aim	Intended learning outcomes and objectives to measured learning outcomes.	As **a counter-education**, P.Ed. should address violence also by concrete political action, a possibility of a non-repressive consensus, positive manifestations of meaning, truth, and justice. It is also a demand for responsibility, seriousness, and love. Develop communication competences: mutual interaction, international understanding and cooperation, more equity and accommodations, art of living together, art of living with problems.
Curriculum	The subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college. The lessons and academic content. The syllabus.	- P.Ed. <u>is not</u> "teaching the answers" to be memorized and recited. It <u>is not</u> for individualistic competition. It <u>is not</u> national patriotism. Rather … - P.Ed. is the "learning of ways of learning" that has to be done by the community as a whole. It is the education as learning the community to transform. It is global patriotism. - P.ED. curricula generally include instruction in conflict resolution, cooperation and interdependence; global awareness; and social and ecological responsibility.
Teacher's Role	Involves wearing multiple hats to ensure that the school day runs smoothly, and all students receive a quality education.	- P.Ed. <u>is not</u> a pedagogy of authority, rather it is a *pedagogy of liberation*. - facilitating the learning process of knowledge, skills, and attitudes - teacher must understand that multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious problems in society - Teacher becomes deeply and regularly involved in teaching peace education, this can cause that teacher to take a long, deep look at his or her values and beliefs.
Measurement/ Evaluation	How do we measure and evaluate what students learned?	- Qualitative assessment—students' interviews—giving space to the voices of the students themselves remains essential. - Observing and assessing students' behaviors, attitudes, as well as their conflict resolution, conflict transformation, peer mediation, and problem-solving skills and knowledge, their innovation and creativity.

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