

**The Formation of a Multi-ethnic Society  
in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bessarabia\***  
(Abstract)

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The paper analyses the multi-ethnic society formation process in Bessarabia, as well as the effects of this process on today's situation. It also points out the fact that in Bessarabia the ethnic diversity was generally formed by the same means as in the Habsburg provinces (especially the province of Bohemia) and it had similar consequences. First and foremost, we take into account the fact that different ethnic groups have occupied different social niches: the feudal states and the new social classes about to strengthen turned out to be different in terms of ethnic composition. The process under analysis began during the period of the Principality of Moldavia, it intensified after Bessarabia passed under the domination of the Russian Empire, it resulted in the formation of some communities which we referred to as ethnoses, namely groups whose social role is associated with a certain ethnicity. It is precisely this association that made social antagonisms look like ethnic antagonisms, a thesis supported by census data carried out by the tsarist authorities in 1897. The paper also points out the fact that this social structure has not disappeared, it is the basis of the difference in the attitude of town and village residents, of the urban intellectuals who can write in different foreign languages. We can conclude by saying that the conflicts in the current Republic of Moldova cannot be seen as linguistic ones, they are mainly geopolitical ones.

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