

Оригиналан научни рад

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Original scientific work

Dorin Lozovanu**ETHNOHISTORIC AND ETHNOGEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERIZATION OF THE POPULATION OF MOLDOVA**

Извод: Циљ рада је да анализира еволуцију етничке структуре популације Молдавије. Главна пажња је посвећена садашњој етничкој ситуацији и ово је једна од првих студија из ове области од задњег пописа 2004. године. Етничка разноврсност одсликава различите историјске периоде, регионе и описе етничких група на територији Молдавије. Утицај етничког фактора на политичке процесе је такође поменуто. Надамо се да ће ова студија допринети знању о прошлости и садашњој етничкој ситуацији у Републици Молдавији.

Кључне речи: Етничка структура, етничке групе, етноисторијски процеси, територијални размештај, Молдавија

Abstract: The paper attempts to analyze the evolution of ethnic structure of population from Republic of Moldova. Main attention is paid to the actual ethnic situation and it is among first studies in this domain after the last census from 2004. Ethnic diversity is characterized by the historical periods, regions and description of the main ethnic groups presented on the territory of Moldova. Importance of the ethnic factor on the political processes is also mentioned. Hoping this study will contribute to the knowledge about past and present ethnic situation in the Republic of Moldova.

Key words: Ethnic structure, ethnic groups, ethnohistoric processes, territorial distribution, Moldova

Historical reasons for the current ethnic structure

The territory of the actual state of Republic of Moldova is a consequence of several changes inside the area of historical Moldova. Until the 19th century the most part of today's territory of the Republic of Moldova belonged to Moldavian Principality. The distinct evolution of Moldavian state eastern of Prut River started after this territory was included in Russian Empire in 1812. The province of Basarabia was established between the rivers Prut and Nistru, but the territories eastern part of the Nistru which became a part of the Russian Empire earlier, at the end of 18 century, belonged to the provinces Podolia and Herson. The existence of an independent Moldavian state lasted until 1859, between Carpathians and Prut, after that a common Romanian state was established.

As a consequence of the revolution from 1917, which ended with a breakdown of the Russian empire and founding of the USSR, the first independent Moldavian state in the borders of Basarabia province was proclaimed. But in 1918 this Moldavian republic was included to Romania. On the Moldavian territories eastern Nistru in 1924 the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was created.

The borders of the actual administrative territory of Republic Moldova were established in 1940, after uniting the territories of Basarabia and Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Almost half of the both territories were included in Soviet Ukraine (northern, southern and eastern regions of historical Moldova). During the Second World War the whole territories of Basarabia and Transnistria were under administrative control of Romania. The reestablishment of MSSR after Second World War was in the same borders as in 1940. The soviet period in Moldova continued until 1991 when the declaration of independence followed. During the process of establishing an independent state, Moldova had to confront several ethnic and political problems. After the short war period in 1992 which ended with declaration of Independence of Transnistria region, Moldova was actually divided into 2 parts. This conflict situation continues till nowadays and ethnical factor is one of the reasons of separatist movements. Several border changes during the last 2 centuries at the level of Moldavian country together with instability of internal administrative-territorial divisions, makes the exact evaluation of ethno-demographical structure much harder.

The actual territory of the Republic of Moldova was first inhabited during prehistorically periods but the ethnic character of the first population is difficult to establish. Beginning with the 3rd millennium before Christ, the Indo-European population spreads throughout Southern Europe. From the 5th century B.C. the Thracian population is distinguished in South-Eastern Europe. Very important impact for the creation of today's ethno-linguistically structure was the extension of Roman Empire in South-Eastern Europe with the following process of Romanization. Although a small part of Moldova was influenced by Roman administration, the ethnical processes of early centuries A.D. resulted in general Romanization of population in the Carpathian – Danubian region. The ethnic evolution of the following period in Moldavian region was influenced by numerous migrations of different ethnical groups (Germanic, Turkic, Ugric, Celtic, Iranian and Slavic). Although the autochthonous population managed to preserve the Romanic ethno-linguistic character, important influence in ethnical evolution was exercised by Slavic and Turkic elements. The establishment of Moldavian entity was influenced from the beginning by Hungary (1352–1359) and afterwards by the Ottoman Empire (1538–1812). During this period the capacity of assimilation of different ethnical elements by local Romanized population was quite high, but we can mention that only the hilly-forested

regions of central Moldova kept continuity of stabile population during all this periods. Connected with creation of a distinct political entity Moldova has developed the ethnical identity of local Romanized population as Moldavians. The ethnical structure of Moldavian region for the 18th century shows the evident predominance of Moldavian (Romanian) ethnic majority. South east and east regions of Moldova were the areas where Tartars/Nohai tribes migrated up to 19th century. The ethnical mosaic until 19th century was completed by existence of Armenian, Jewish, Turkish, Greek, Polish, Russian and Gypsy communities. The recent ethnical structure of Moldova was influenced by the including these territories into the Russian Empire (beginning with 1792 for Transnistria region and 1812 for the territory between Prut and Nistru). We can identify following major transformation in ethnic structure of Moldova, for the period between 18–19th centuries, which affected mainly south and east regions:

- the continuous reduction of Tartar / Nohai population ending with the total deportation until beginning of 19th century from south-east Moldova to Caucasus, Crimea and Dobrogea.

- The Russian Empire policy of agrarian colonization on the territories, especially of eastern and southern Moldova by diverse ethnic groups from the Balkans and Central European regions.

First Balkan colonists who came at the end of 18th century (Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks) assimilated with local population. The second wave of Balkan colonists settled in an organized way in the regions of Southern and (less) Eastern Moldova, during the first half of 19th century kept their ethnic specific until present, absolute majority of them are ethnical Bulgarians and Gagauzians. The first organized groups of German colonists settled at the end of 18th century of the region of South-Eastern Transnistria, but the main part of them came in the periods of the begging of 19th century in south Basarabia. The majority of German-speaking colonists came from the territories of today Poland, Mecklenburg and Württemberg. During the 19th century there was a considerable migration of Russians and Ukrainians to the territories of Moldova. The number of Jews raised as well, those came mainly from Austro-Hungarian Empire. Although at the beginning of 19th century the total population of Moldova estimated around 300 000, then close to 1860 it raised over 1 000 000, 350 000 out of which migrated into Moldova. As a consequence the ethnical structure of population has diversified. At the end of 19th century Moldavians represent about half of total population followed by Ukrainians (arr. 18%), Jews (arr. 10%), Russians (arr. 8%), Bulgarians (arr. 5%), Germans (arr. 3%), Gagauzians (arr. 3%), Gypsies and Poles (less then 1%). Fast urbanization during 19th–20th centuries substantially contributed to diversification of the ethnical structure.

During the Romanian time of administration in Moldova 1918–1940 there were changes in ethnical structure as well, i.e. the percentage of ethnical Romanians

(Moldavians) in 1930 grew arr. 65%. Due to the high birth-rate the total population in 1940 grew over 3 000 000 inhabitants.

The events which happened during the Second World War had some consequences to the ethnical structure like:

- Migration and deportation of ethnical Germans from the Southern Basarabia and Transnistria

- Mass extermination of Jews by the Nazi regime

- Losses in the population due to the war actions which affected all ethnic groups

The process of mass deportation initiated by Stalinist regime which started before 1940 for Transnistria region and continued 1945–1953 for the rest of the territory, affected all the local population, mainly Moldavians.

The soviet period after 1953 was characterized by the relative stability including evolution of ethnical structure. The migration of the population beyond Moldova especially to the urban areas leads to the bigger variety of ethnical structure. Both mixed marriages and social-economical migration inside the USSR increased number of ethnical groups already present in Republic of Moldova (Russians, Ukrainians and Armenians) and to the appearance of some small ethnical minorities originally from other Soviet Republics (Byelorussians, Azeri, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Georgians, Lithuanians, Chuvashs, Mordvins etc.)

Even though the migration from other regions of USSR increased the number of non-indigenous population, the percentage of Moldavians managed to maintain around the same level (arr. 64%) due to the high birth-rate. The last period in the ethno-political evolution of Moldova is connected with the disappearing of USSR and the declaration of independence in 1991. The movement of national emancipation of Moldavians, including the form of Romanian nationalism, brought to the inter-ethnic tension in relationships with ethnical minorities. One of the main problems of misunderstanding between the Moldavians and ethnical minorities (who are mainly Russian-speakers) was the language barrier and different visions for linguistic policy. Although the ethno-linguistically factor is neither the only nor the main factor in starting the conflicts on the territory of republic of Moldova, it had a quite important formal role. The discussions over the ethnical identity of main population transformed into a conflict concerning the use of ethnonym and glottonym Moldavian versus Romanian. The official language which was established was Romanian but the ethnical identity for the majority of the population remains Moldavian

The conflicts from Transnistria and Gagauzia started in 1990, reached the points of military fights (1992). In Gagauzia came to the compromise with according a statute of autonomy (1994) based on the ethnical criteria. In Transnistria case the situation is much more complicated, in fact it leads to the split of the territory of Moldova, into Moldova itself and so called Dnester Moldavian Republic, which includes tiny strip along the eastern border of Moldova.

Current ethnic structure

The ethnic structure of the population of Moldova after 1990 maintains the territorial distribution of ethnic groups which was characteristic from the second half of 20th century.

According to the ethnical variety we can distinguish four major regions, which have their own geographical, historical and economical significances: Northern, Central, Southern and Eastern (Transnistria).

1. Northern Moldova is characterized by Moldavian ethnical majority which is over 80% in North-Eastern part (rayons of Sorooca, Floresti, Șoldănești, Rezina) and less than 80% in North-western part (rayons of Briceni, Ocnîța, Edineț, Rîșcani, Glodeni). Here we can find the compact areas of Ukrainian population, more numerous in the rayons of Ocnîța (30,8%), Briceni, Edineț, Glodeni, Rîșcani (between 20 and 25%). Bălți, the main city of Northern Moldova has a relative majority of Moldavians (52,3%), but high percentage of Ukrainians (23,9%) and Russians (19,2%) as well. Other representative ethnic minorities in this part of Moldova are the Gypsy communities from towns Otaci and Sorooca and small Polish community in the village of Sîrcea, Glodeni rayon.

2. Central Moldova was always the core of ethnic Moldavians. Here from the beginning of medieval Moldavian State and until now the percentage of Moldavians remains very high, generally over 90%. In this region we can observe also the higher percentage of population that has declared themselves as Romanians according to the results of 2004 census (7,1% for Orhei rayon). Other ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians, Russians and Gypsies, make small communities surrounded by Moldavians. The main city in the region is Chișinău, the capital of Moldova, where the ethnic structure is more complex and the predominance of Moldavians is not as evident as in rural areas. There was a growth of more than 15% of the Moldavian population from 1989 to 2004 census, (Today they are constituting 68,4% of Chișinău population, we can add also the 4,4% of whom declared as Romanians). Anyway, the persistence of Russian-speaking community is still quite evident as well in Chișinău and some other smaller towns.

3. Southern Moldova has the most complicated ethnic structure from long time ago. This region was traditionally on the way of migrations, also the natural conditions of steppe make the population not very stabile during the history. This region was much affected by political-administrative changes of territory, beginning from the time of Turkish Empire, to the anexation of bigger part of South Moldova after 1940/1945 by Ukraine, which made big disturbance for the political, economic and ethno-cultural development of the region. The remaining part of the territory under Republic of Moldova in this region has suffered also the biggest territorial-administrative changes after 1990, compared to the other parts of the country. The organization of current administrative

structure depends on the ethnic criteria as well, due to the fact of establishment of an autonomous territorial unit for Gagausians – Gagauz Yeri, and also we can consider somehow as ethnical unit the rayon of Taraclia, with majority of Bulgarian population. For the South Moldova we can identify 3 different regions, according to the ethnical predominance:

– Western part, along the Prut River (rayons Leova, Cantemir, Cahul) with the absolute ethnic majority of Moldavians (arr. 80%). The main town here is Cahul, ethnically mixed, but with high predominance of Moldavians;

– Central part of Southern Moldova, named Bugeak, with the interference between the Gagauz Yeri autonomous region, which was constituted after the referendum in each locality and does not have the continuous territory, where the Gagauzians have absolute majority of 82,6% and the rayon of Tarklia, where the Bulgarian population forms majority of 66%. Somehow ethnically mixed, but with the predominance of Moldavians (69,9%) is the rayon of Basarabasca. Main urban center is Komrat, the capital of Gagauz Yeri region.

– South-East Moldova, which include today rayons of Căușeni and Ștefan Vodă, where Moldavians are forming over 90% of population.

4. Eastern region of Moldova, today controlled by the authorities of so-called Dnester Moldavian Republic, have specific situation also in ethnical structure. For the total population of this territory we can mention the relative balance between 3 ethnic groups: Moldavians, Ukrainians and Russians. Moldavians predominate in all the rayons, forming over 60% in Grigoriopol and Dubasari rayons, and lightly over 45% in the Camenca, Rîbnița and Slobozia rayons, but they are less than 30% in urban centers of Tiraspol, Bender and Rîbnița. Ukrainians are present in all of the rayons and towns, but more numerous in Camenca and Rîbnița (arr. 40%), also in urban localities.

Russians represent mainly urban population of Tiraspol, Bender and surrounding area. Many of them was coming after 1945, some are from older communities.

Ethnical processes in this region are totally different from those in the rest of Moldova, the main used language here is Russian, although officially the Dnester Moldavian Republic has 3 state languages: Moldavian, Russian and Ukrainian. It is important to mention that Moldavian language in this region have not accepted the Latin alphabet, like in the rest of Moldova, but still uses the Cyrillic one.

Small ethnic communities in this region are also Bulgarians (in the Parkani village near Bender), Jewish, Gagauzians, German, Polish and Byelorussians.

We can talk about substantial differences in the ethnical structure also between rural and urban population. The percentage of Moldavians, Gagauzians and Bulgarians is much higher in rural areas, opposed to the Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and other minorities which are mostly concentrated in urban areas.

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For the Territory of actual republic of Moldova during the Soviet time the censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979, and 1989 were organized.

For the entire period 1959–1989 we can remark the relative stability concerning the percentage of main ethnic groups according to the table shown below:

Ethnic groups %	1959	1970	1979	1989
Moldavians	65,4	64,5	63,9	64,5
Ukrainians	14,6	14,2	14,2	13,8
Russians	10,2	11,6	12,8	13,0
Gagauzians	3,3	3,5	3,5	3,5
Bulgarians	2,1	2,1	2,0	2,0
Jews	3,3	2,7	2,0	1,5
Other ethnic groups	1,1	1,4	1,6	1,7

The first census organized after the declaration of independence was in October 2004. Total population of the Republic of Moldova, including Transnistria region, is 3 943 571 inhabitants (2004), on the territory of 33 700 square km, from which 4163 square km is under control of self-proclaimed Dnester Moldavian Republic. Density of population in Moldova was the highest among former Soviet republics and remains around 130 inhabitants per sq. km. Also Moldova can be considered among the most rural countries in Europe, with 53% rural population. For Moldova are also specific quite large rural settlements, many of them having more than 5 000 inhabitants.

The period 1989–2004 is characterized by numerous transformations in the political, economical and social systems, which affected the ethnic structure of the population. The demographical changes among the main ethnical groups in Republic of Moldova, according to the statistics from 1989 and 2004, in the territory officially controlled by Republic of Moldova, without self – proclaimed Dnester Moldavian Republic, are presented in the following table:

Ethnic groups	1989		2004	
	persons	%	persons	%
Total population	3 595 660	100	3 388 071	100
Moldavians	2 513 447	69,9	2 579 202	76,1
Ukrainians	405 160	11,3	83 367	8,4
Russians	350 899	9,8	198 144	5,8
Gagauzians	148 679	4,1	147 661	4,4
Bulgarians	73 489	2,0	65 072	1,9
Romanians	2 477	0,1	70 275	2,1
Other ethnic groups	101 509	2,8	44 350	1,3

Comparing to the previous period, the statistics of 2004 present following aspects: **1.** The official census was realized only on the territory under Moldova administration, without Transnistria. **2.** Total number of population of Moldova (without Transnistria) has decreased from 3 595 660 inhabitants in 1989 to 3

388 071 in 2004. The natural growth of the population considerable decreased for all ethnic groups, as a result of socio- economical crises. The decrease of total number of the population is a result of both factors: the natural balance of population, which became negative and the intense migration out from Moldova. **3.** Percent of ethnic Moldavians/Romanians has increased from 70% in 1989 to 78,2% in 2004. **4.** According to the ethnic self identity, the same ethnic group has split up into Moldavians (76,1%) and Romanians (2,1%). **5.** The percentage of ethnic minorities has decreased substantially, as result of migration and lower natural increase among the urban population of Slavic origin. Among the ethnic minorities only Gagauzians and Gypsies have increased in the total percentage. A substantial number of ethnical Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and other ethnic minorities migrated to the regions of their historical origin, especially in the first years after the declaration of independence. **6.** Important changes in the territorial-administrative units have resulted in the creation of ethnically based Gagauz Yeri autonomous region (for Gagauzians) and Taraklia rayon (for Bulgarians). Also the borders between other administrative units inside Moldova have changed, which make comparative studies more difficult.

There is a specific situation the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, which is called Transnistria. In fact, after 1990 this territory it is not under administration of the official authorities of Moldova, but under the self-proclaimed Dnester Moldavian Republic, with the capital in Tiraspol. Besides the international recognition, this "independent republic" has all the structures of a separate country, such as political, economic, military, cultural-educational, separate money, state symbols etc. The territory of this republic is 4163 square km. The authorities of this region have not participated in the organization of the official census in Moldova, but they organized a separate one in November 2004. Although this census was not officially recognized by the Moldova and international authorities, other veridical date is also difficult to establish.

According to the Transnistrian poll of November 2004, entire population of self-proclaimed republic is 555 500 inhabitants, which shows significant decreasing of the population, from 679 000 in 1989. Some evident changes can be noticed in ethnical structure as well. According to the Transnistria statistics from 2004 Moldavians represents 31,9%, Russians 30,3, Ukrainians 28,8% and others 9% (Bulgarians, Poles, Germans, Jews, Gypsy etc.). Comparative, in 1989 Moldavians were arr. 33%, Russians and Ukrainians arr. 29% each. Although in conflict between Transnistrian separatists and official Moldova ethnical factor is not the main motive, some importance of ethno-linguistic aspects is evident as well.

Brief characteristic of the main ethnic groups in Moldova:

1. **Moldavians/Romanians** are representing the main and autochthonous population in Moldova. By origin, Moldavians are the Thracian-

Dacian population linguistically Romanized in the first centuries AD. Several other ethnic elements, especially Slavic and Turkic origin were assimilated among Moldavians until present. Although the language and origin is very similar with the rest of Romanian population, Moldavians have mainly separate ethnic identity as distinct ethnic group. Historically Moldavians are the same population as in the eastern Romania - Moldova region, where the integration in common Romanian ethnic identity was successful. Separate ethnic identity as Moldavians is kept in the regions eastern of Prut River. Total number of declared ethnic Moldavians is over 3 millions, more than 80% living in the Republic of Moldova. Moldavians form over 50% of the population in 33 out of 35 territorial units of the Republic of Moldova (over 80% in 24 units), and also over 50% in 2 from 7 territorial units of Transnistrian region.

As the titular nation of the country, Moldavians have an active development of national culture, in many aspects common with Romanians. Officially state language of Republic of Moldova is called Moldavian, but the writing language is the same standard Romanian language, some differences being just in spoken language, as dialect.

Specific situation have Moldavians in Transnistria region, where the influence of Russian language and culture is higher and the written language still keeps Cyrillic alphabet. Moldavians in this region, same as in the territories under Ukraine's administration, have some troubles in the ethno-cultural development, lack of educational possibilities in mother tongue and of free expression of national rights.

Some socio-economic and ethno-political conflicts between the Moldavian majority and ethnical minorities in Moldova can be mentioned. The main problem is the one of misunderstanding in the linguistic aspects, due the fact that majority of ethnically non-Moldavian population in the Republic of Moldova don't speak or hardly speak the Moldavian (Romanian) language. Discrepancy in the socio-economic structure of population, with mainly urban Russian-speaking community and mainly rural Moldavians/Romanians has some impact on the ethnic relationship as well.

Inside the Moldavian community the main ethnic dispute is related to the question of ethnic identity and name of language and nation. According to the self-identification of the majority of population the ethnic identity as Moldavians is prevalent. Smaller part of population considers themselves as Romanians, based on common historical origin and same language. In fact we can consider the ethnic relationship between Moldavians and Romanians very similar with the identification of Austrians versus Germans and many other examples of linguistically same population in different political units.

Outside Republic of Moldova, Moldavian communities are in Ukraine, where they form compact area in the Odessa and Chernovtsy regions in the territories formerly belonging to Moldova. As result of migrations, Moldavians are present

in Russia and other former Soviet republics, more recently also in many European countries, such as Italy, Portugal, Greece etc.

Absolute majority of Moldavians belongs to the Christian Orthodox church. The national orientation has influence on the church. Population oriented to Romania and with strong Romanian identity, has constituted the Mitropoly of Basarabia, under Romanian church authority. The majority of churches are still under the Mitropoly of Moldova administered by the Russian Patriarchy.

2. **Ukrainians** are the most numerous ethnic minorities in Moldova. First Ukrainian population in Moldova is attested from the 18th century. Number of Ukrainians was constantly increasing during the 19th and 20th centuries, because of migration in the form of infiltration from the North and East and also like colonization during the rule of the Russian Empire. According to the census of 1989 there were 600.366 Ukrainians in Moldova. Official census of 2004 shows 283.367 Ukrainians, but without Transnistrian region.

In Moldova there are 2 main regions with Ukrainian population: Northern part of Moldova, where in the rayons of Briceni, Edineț, Ocnîța, Rîșcani and Bălți municipality Ukrainians representing more than 20% of the population, and Transnistria, where in the Kamenka and Rîbnița rayons Ukrainians form about 40%, over 25% also in Tiraspol, Dubasari and Slobozia.

Ethnic identity of Ukrainians from Moldova is closer to the Russian, due the fact that majority of them, especially from the urban area, consider Russian language as their home one. By origin, there can be distinguished Ukrainian communities from Moldova and Ukrainians who have migrated from different regions of Ukraine during the Soviet time. In some Ukrainian villages one can notice assimilation with the Moldavian part. Other Ukrainians are mainly integrated to the Russian-speaking community. Ukrainian ethnic emancipation movement has also been attested, by establishing of Ukrainian schools, artistic and cultural organizations. This movement is sustained by Ukraine as well.

After 1990 some Ukrainians have migrated to the Ukraine or other regions, but generally stayed in the communities inside Moldova.

3. **Russians** numerically is not such a big community, but ethnopolitically play quite important role, as the core of so called Russian-speaking community. The origin of Russian population of Moldova is different. First Russians came at the end of 18th century as religious refugees from Russian Empire, so called old believers (staroobreadtsy), many of them have linguistically assimilated with Moldavians. Second period of Russian migration is during the time of Russian Empire, when they came as representants of authorities and rural Russian colonists in few regions. The bigger number came within the Soviet time, as specialists, official representants and as result of mixed marriages. The number of Russians was 562 069 in 1989 census for all Moldova, but only 198 144 in 2004 for the Moldova without Transnistria (in 1989 for this territory there were 350 899 Russians).

Russian community is mainly concentrated in the big cities, such as Chişinău (13,7%), Bălţi (19,2%) and in Transnistria urban localities, where they forming over 30% in Bender and Tiraspol. Some rural localities with Russian majority can be found in the regions near Tiraspol and isolated in other parts of Moldova. Many Russians have migrated to Russian Federation after 1990, but in Transnistria there can be found migration from Russia in recent years as well. Russian minority has all the rights in Moldova, what is more, the Russian language and culture is widely spread among other ethnic groups, including Moldavians.

4. **Gagauzians** have a quite interesting and still disputed origin. This ethnic group belongs linguistically to the Turkish group, similar with the Turkish. Considering their origin there are still many opinions, like the descendents of Uz / Oguz tribes from the 11th century in Balkans, Turkish population of Christian religion, Turkized Bulgarians or Greeks, some mix group between Turks, Bulgarians, Greeks etc. It is certain that Gagauzians came to the South of Moldova as result of Russian Empire facilities for the colonists in the beginning of 19th century. Because the Gagauzians were settled mainly in the territory formerly inhabited also by Turkic tribes, the toponymy and continuity of Turkic population in South Moldova remains the same last centuries. The territories inhabited by Gagauzians are generally ethnically mixed, but villages have ethnical specific in majority of the cases.

In 1989 there were 153 458 Gagauzians in Moldova (148 679 in the territory without Transnistria and in 2004 147 661 according to the official census. In 1994 the area inhabited by Gagauzians has obtained a status of autonomous unit inside Moldova- Gagauz Yeri, with the territory of 1831,5 square km, including 30 localities. Before that there were ethnical tensions between the Gagauzians, sustained by Transnistria and Russia and Moldavians, as the result of processes after disintegration of USSR. Fortunately the conflict was not transformed in the military one, but the consequences of those events still remain among the population. Gagauzian ethnic emancipation after the 1990 has also different forms. Still today the Russian language is predominant in the schools for Gagauzians and the ethnic solidarity with other minorities, based on Russian-speaking community is present. Other movement is based on the solidarity with Turkey and considering the Gagauzians as branch of Turks, but the majority of population consider themselves as distinct ethnic group with specific language and culture. Bulgarian propaganda is based on the fact of the geographical and historical origin of Gagauzians from the today Bulgaria mainly, considering them as linguistically turkized Bulgarians, but relationship between Gagauzians and Bulgarians in South Moldova is not based on high solidarity. Gagauzian language has accepted the Latin script after 1990 and some schools are teaching this language as obligatory subject. Gagauzians are Christian Orthodox believers and have no any separate church structures from the rest of Moldova.

5. **Bulgarians**, same as Gagauzians are originally from today Bulgaria territory, coming as agricultural colonists in the beginning of 19th century. The number of Bulgarians in the historically South Moldova is higher, but the majority of the territories with Bulgarian localities were annexed by Ukraine after 1945. The border in this region has divided Bulgarian community in two parts, inside today's Moldova several localities with Bulgarian majority remain, in the Taraklia rayon and isolated in the Cahul, Cantemir, Leova, and Basarabeasca rayons. Total number of Bulgarians in 1989 was 88 419 in Moldova, 73 489 in South of Moldova. In 2004 were attested 65 072 Bulgarians, 28 434 from that in Taraklia (66% from population of this rayon). Comparing with Gagauzians, Bulgarians are widely spread also in the cities like Chisinau and Tiraspol. Bulgarian community exists also in Transnistria, mainly in the village Parkani, between Tiraspol and Bender.

Bulgarians also are mostly educated in Russian language schools, but their ethnic identity remains generally strong. Movement of the ethnic renaissance among Bulgarians has as the result: creation of Bulgarian schools, mass-media and development of collaboration with Bulgaria.

6. **Other ethnic groups** form 133 822 in 1989 in all Moldova, from which 101 509 in Moldova without Transnistria. In 2004 there were attested only 44 350 representants of other ethnic groups in the regions officially subordinate to Moldova administration. Among the main minorities included in this category are:

– **Jews**, representing 65,8 thousands in 1989 and decreasing substantially after 1990. This ethnic group was quite mobile and flexible during the recent history, absolute majority of them settled in the urban localities. During WWII the Jewish community lost a lot from the population as result of the Holocaust and deportation. After 1970 many Jews migrated to the Israel, USA and other countries, some of them have returned in recent years. Almost all the Jewish communities in Moldova are Ashkenazim.

– **Gypsies** are among the oldest minority in Moldova and one of the most assimilated by Moldavians. Non assimilated Gypsy population can be found in two main areas, one in Northern Moldova, where the Gypsy have strong communities in the towns of Soroca and Otaci, another is represented by the rural Gypsy communities in the Central Moldova, mainly in the Nisporeni and Călarăși rayons. Specific occupations and culture of Gypsy is still somehow preserved, but not so important emancipation based on the ethnic criteria.

– **Germans** were a strong community in South and East Moldova before 1940, forming important localities with colonists coming from 19th century. In 1940 and during the WWII almost all the Germans were deported or migrated from Moldova, as result of Soviet-German treaty. In Former German localities the mixed population settled, such as Moldavians, Russians, Ukrainians etc.

– **Polish minority** is present in the urban localities and also in two villages from Glodeni rayon and Kamenka rayon in Transnistria.

– **Other minorities** like Byelorussians, Azeri, Armenians, Lithuanians, Chuvashs etc. are not so numerous and have appeared during the Soviet time, as work migration or mixed marriages. Some communities have origin like refugees (Armenians, Azeri, and Chechens).

Дорин Лозовану

ЕТНОИСТОРИЈСКЕ И ЕТНОГЕОГРАФСКЕ КАРАКТЕРИСТИКЕ СТАНОВНИШТВА МОЛДАВИЈЕ

Резиме

Иако је Молдавија једна од најмањих земаља, она има прилично комплексну етничку еволуцију која се рефлектује у диверзитету данашње етничке структуре. Лоцирана у прошлим вековима на споју три највеће европске империје, отоманске, аустро-угарске и руске, Молдавија је примила утицаје све три, што се завршило поделом њене територије на различите државе. Данас је Република Молдавија независна држава која укључује само део некадашње средњовековне државе. Садашње границе је одредио Совјетски Савез 1940. године.

Етничка структура је претрпела неколико промена током историје, иако су Молдавци остајали све време највећа етничка група у границама Молдавије. Колонизација у XIX веку коју су извршиле разне етничке групе са Балкана, из централне Европе и из Руског царства има утицаја на етничку структуру све до данас. За време Молдавије као совјетске републике етнички Молдавци су остали у броју од око 64%, после независности, у периоду последњих 15 година, број је порастао на више од 70%. Највеће промене су се десиле такође у независној Молдавији, нарочито у вези са цепањем земље на два дела, једног званично контролисаног од стране државе и другог са сепаратистичком владом дуж источне границе Молдавије. Такозвана Дњестарска Молдавијска Република је де факто неконтролисана територија од стране централне власти, што се, исто тако, рефлектује на етничку еволуцију региона, без етничке већине.

Молдавци, као и Румуни, етно-лингвистички припадају романској групи Индоевропљана, док друге етничке групе припадају словенској групи (Украјинци, Руси, Бугари, Пољаци, Белорусини), индијској групи (Цигани), не-европској групи припадају само Гагозини (Турска група из Алтајске породице) и Јевреји (семитска група).

Територијална распрострањеност етничких група у Молдавији показује разлику међу регионима са апсолутном већином Молдаваца у централним, југоисточним и североисточним деловима земље, док су јужни, северозападни и источни делови Молдавије етничке мешавине. Као резултат доминације Гагозина у неким деловима јужне Молдавије аутономна територијална јединица – Гагоз Јери је формирана дајући пример за решење проблема Трансистрија.