

Thinking Differently, Acting Separately? Heritage Discourse and Heritage Treatment in Chişinău¹

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Abstract: *This article compares how multi-ethnic heritage is conceptualized and how it is treated in reality. Focusing on the case of Chişinău—a borderland city that was once known for its cultural diversity—the article examines the complex nature of opinions about the city’s multicultural heritage expressed by representatives of its cultural elite and collected as an interview corpus in 2012. Then, the article looks at several recent heritage projects in Chişinău and beyond (2010–2018) and analyzes to what extent the heritage discourse is realized in practice, in a context where the emergence of an approach focused on reconciliation and the promotion of diversity is only a very recent development.*

Keywords: Chişinău, heritage discourse, heritage treatment, cultural diversity, competing victimhoods.

Introduction

In May 2018, the first round of mayoral elections took place in Chişinău, Moldova’s capital city. In spite of an abundance of political contestants representing a variety of political and ideological camps, many Chişinău citizens left the polling booths dissatisfied with the selection of candidates on offer. This was a

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