

The aim of the project is an attempt to determine, on the basis of the analysis of historical processes, the conditions which determined peaceful, stable and effective cooperation within medieval multi-ethnic societies that inhabited particular political entities of the Latin Europe. The ability to communicate between ethnic groups and resolve conflicts without breaking cooperation was of key importance for the functioning of state organisms in the times before the formation of modern nations in the 19th century and nation-states in the 20th century. a starting point for reflection on the situation of contemporary, increasingly multinational European societies.

In order to ensure the coherence of the cultural conditions of the political entities studied, it was decided to limit both the analysis and syntheses to communities dominated by Roman Christianity. The detailed analysis will focus on societies which inhabited the Iberian Peninsula and Eastern Central Europe between 9th and 15th centuries. The two spaces were chosen due to the importance of multi-ethnicity in their history, and the repeated efforts of political actors to establish ways to ensure its smooth running. Both regions belonged to broadly understood Latin Europe in Middle Ages. Both are also treated as its 'periphery'.

The first stage in the analysis will be devoted to the role of communication, both intimate communication between individuals and more public messages that aimed to create cultural patterns which acknowledged 'others' who lived next to 'us' as part of the same society or as internal enemies. Communication practices played a key role in transmitting social norms in pre-industrial societies, in building the cohesion of multi-ethnic societies or in creating the emotional climate that enabled the destruction of the social fabric and the re-modelling of political structures through inter-ethnic conflicts within communities.

The second research stage will focus on inter-ethnic conflicts. The studies on the mechanisms for building cohesive multi-ethnic communities are conducted separately from the analysis of ethnic conflicts within multi-ethnic states. Meanwhile, both of these elements (cooperation and conflict) are very closely related to each other. Therefore, one should look at the reasons which led to conflict within them since these are phenomena that are, paradoxically, important for maintaining the stability of these societies or that cause their breakdown and perpetuate a state of long-term conflict.

The results obtained through the detailed analyses will then be compared with recent historiography on inter-ethnic relations in post-Carolingian Europe and British Isles in the same time period. The comparison will begin with images of 'our' and 'their' past, in order to find moments of both strong differentiation of these images and their synthesis into a vision of the political community's common past. Just as collective memory is the basis of identity politics, law is the framework of collective life. Therefore, the second step will be the analysis of legal systems and traditions in terms of the approach to multi-ethnic relations within the political community. But both the legal and identity discourses have been closely related to the social and economic needs of everyday life. Therefore, the third stage will focus on the points of intersection where different ethnic groups encountered each other in their daily lives. The last part of research will be devoted to political activities which relate to ethnic discourses. Politics is a place where all the previously indicated elements: visions of the past, law and the problems of everyday life come together to stabilize inter-ethnic relations or change their shape.

The results of the analysis will provide a factual basis for an outline of the theory of how multi-ethnic communities functioned in medieval Latin Europe. It will have a particular emphasis on the verification of the hypothesis of the flow of cultural and social patterns between the 'center' and the 'periphery' of Latin Europe.

It seems important that the results of the project will support a rational discourse on the multi-ethnic past and present of European societies.